

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S MAJOR LEGENDS AND MYTHS

Dr. Timothy Dissmeyer, Fall 2014

What can we learn for ourselves, our families and our society from the major legends, myths and traditions that we have inherited today?

Call it wisdom, insight, truth or understanding, it comes in many diverse forms and shapes. It comes from many different sources and it is used for all kinds of purposes. Whatever the form, source and use it provides ways for us to adapt to today's changing and confusing events and challenges. It can help us to make sense of things. It can enable us to agree or disagree but nevertheless to talk with and relate to other people.

Most importantly wisdom can provide us with a basis for learning, unlearning and relearning essential ideas and skills for thriving and surviving in life. It typically becomes a basic life story with which everyone holds their experiences and wisdom together. We continually update, polish and revise our life story throughout our lives as we weave our story together with the stories of our families, our generation and era and with the stories of our nation and culture.

In this seminar we will use ancient and contemporary resources, knowing our time restricts us from looking at everything and everyone. So we'll focus on major wisdom paths from historical Greek and Roman antiquity, from the Middle East and from United States history.

Since our search for wisdom delves into life stories, we will look at heroes and heroines, villains and crises, hopes and fears, dreams and values. We will apply our learnings to our daily experiences as we find ways to educate and entertain ourselves and those around us. We will use a discussion format and a variety of written and video resources to explore together how to search for and identify the various forms of wisdom. We will share our individual insights and discoveries. We will look for the limits and possibilities for our search, and will compile a toolkit of helpful and practical methods and guidelines for sharing our discoveries and motivating ourselves for future imaginative adventures.

Companion Books:

- 1. Don't Know Much About Mythology, Kenneth C. Davis, 2005,
\$6.32 + s & h**
- 2. The Path of the Everyday Hero, Lorna Catford and Michael Ray, 1991,
\$9.39 + s & h.**