



## *Paper Making, Calligraphy, and Mythology*

**Subject Area:** Visual Arts, History, Mythology, Current Issues of Appropriation

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Time:** 24 1-hour sessions over an 8-week cycle. *\*adjustable*

**Description:** In this course we will experiment making our own paper from scratch using recyclable paper, carrots, flowers, and other eligible resources. We will learn the stories in history that tell us where paper comes from and how it was invented. Using the paper we make, we will learn calligraphy and its roots in East Asian art and writing systems before utilizing calligraphy as a technique for our own creative means of expression. This will include a hand-written art-letter writing workshop (It will be a great chance to devote some class time to someone you love). Next, we will discuss mythologies, particularly Eastern mythologies of the dragon and creation myths. We will ask ourselves, what is a myth/mythology? What myths or mythologies do you know? We will research a mythical creature of our own interest (a popular database for ancient spirits, deities, and mythical creatures is Pokemon). Students may research any known myth or mythical creature of interest (or one of the original Pokemon), and create a paper sculpture based on what they learn.

**The final project** for this class will be self-defined based on the paper-making, calligraphy, sculpture and myth-making we do in this class. Using handmade paper and calligraphy, students will have the option to make a book, write/share a story, or a mixture of sculpture and writing, or any other creative combination of interest.

**The only requirement is that students create their own myth.**

**Through class discussions and art-making, we will explore the following questions:**

*What is the myth about the invention of paper?*

*How do we make paper?*

*What is calligraphy and how do we do it?*

*What is a myth?*

*What are some myths we subscribe to in our daily, modern lives?*

*How can we create our own myths?*

Other conversation topics will include: *What is “cultural appropriation”?* Culture is exchanged, but it has also been raided and stolen. *When is “taking,” “copying,” or “borrowing” from another culture ok and when is it not ok?*

**Studio Objectives:**

**Project 1:** Paper-making

**Project 2:** Letter Art

**Project 3:** Paper Mache / *Papier-mâché* Sculpture

**Final Project:** [Alternative] Creation Myth (*can be an extension of project 2 and/or 3*)

**Learning Objectives:**

- to demystify the production processes of paper-making (situated in the broader movement for DIY and self/community empowerment)
- to learn basic techniques in calligraphy for art-making and for understanding of a traditional practice
- to explore myths, including history as myth.
- to understand the role of myths in various cultures and in our own lives
- to create our own myth (situated in empowering the individual to circumvent harmful dominant narratives by taking agency of our own storytelling).
- to become socio-politically aware and thoughtful about the reality of cultural exchanges in our globalized society, particularly in multicultural NYC.

**Pedagogical Rationale:** This course was designed to demystify an object that is commonly consumed but manufactured elsewhere, beyond the consumer's realm of knowledge and experience. Students walk away with direct knowledge on how to produce a product frequently used in art-making. Having invested in the manufacturing of the product personally, students build a deeper personal relationship with the art-making process. Studio objectives of this course invites meditation, mindfulness, and creativity. At the end of the course, students walk away empowered by the demystification of the making of paper, which in turn translates into confidence and initiative when learning to build anything from scratch in a society where pursuit of such knowledge and hands-on creativity is discouraged in favor of passive consumerism. The final project invites students to shape their own reality. Conversations on culture and appropriation in the classroom also help students walk away with a better understanding of issues related to appropriation as situated in socio-political context. This particular grounding in investigative pedagogy and empowerment is influenced by theorists Paolo Freire and Bell Hooks.

**Blueprint for Visual Arts Standards:**

**Creates** artwork demonstrating mastery of one or more techniques.

**Develops Art Literacy** by identifying issues raised by a single controversial work of art; explore the historical, and/or societal climate that might account for the controversy.

**Develops Art Literacy** by writing a reflection piece on material, process, influences, unifying themes, and problems/solutions.

**Make Connections through Visual Arts** by examining artworks as it relates to historical context.

**National Core Arts Standards:**

**VA:Cr2.1.IIa:** Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.

**VA:Cr2.2.IIa:** Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.

**VA:Pr4.1.IIa:** Analyze, select, and critique personal artwork for a collection or portfolio presentation.

**VA:Re.7.1.Ia:** Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

**VA:Cn11.1.Ia:** Describe how knowledge of culture, traditions, and history may influence personal responses to art.

**Common Core State Standards:**

**CCS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.RL.2:** Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

**CCS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.RL.5:** Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact

**CCS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.RL.10** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**New York State Standards:**

**Standard Intermediate 1b:** reveal through their work a broad investigation of a variety of individual ideas and at least one theme explored imaginatively and in depth.

**Standard Intermediate 1c:** give evidence that they have developed an emerging personal style.

**Standard Intermediate 2a:** develop skills with a variety of art materials and competence in at least one medium.

**Standard Intermediate 3a:** discuss and write their analyses and interpretations of their own works of art and the art of others, using appropriate critical language.

**Standard Intermediate 4a:** demonstrate how art works and artifacts from diverse world cultures reflect aspects of those cultures.

**Standard Intermediate 4b:** demonstrate the ways in which some particular art works and artifacts reflect important aspects of the diverse cultures of the United States.

## **Week 1: Introductions & History of Paper-Making. Sourcing What We Know...**

**Grade level:** 9-12th grades

**Time:** 1 hr, 3x / week (3 hours total / week)

**Questions:** *What is the myth about the invention of paper? How do we make paper?*

**Central Focus:** This week we start with introductions and overview of course. We discuss what we know about paper (how its made, where it comes from, what history says). We collect resources for making paper and begin experimenting!

### **Learning Objectives:**

- to learn about the various stories surrounding the invention of paper
- to learn how to make paper

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**screen:** material used in silkscreening and for windows, but also for making paper

**pulp:** substance/texture we need to make paper.

### **Materials:**

- staple guns/hot glue
- frames
- window mesh
- tubs/bins large enough to fit frames
- shredded materials for making paper
- blender
- cheese grater (for vegetables)
- old towels/paper towels
- Introduction sheets
- Step-by-step instructional for making paper

**Artwork/Artists:** Slideshow of paper history, different types of paper, instructions on how to make paper.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Day 1: Introductions**

- 1) Introduction sheets & share
- 2) Course overview & Questions (clarify definitions, disclaimers (I advise paper-making be approached with fun and experimental attitude!))
- 3) brainstorm/research resources for making paper. Bring to class recyclables/veggies (shredded if possible) etc.

#### **Day 2: Paper-making Preparations / Begin Making Paper**

*\*teacher will demonstrate each step // HAVE SOME PULP MATERIAL BLENDED/READY*

- 1) Set up wire mesh frames for paper making, make sure we have bins for soaking.
- 2) Blend and make pulp
- 3) Set out to dry

**Day 3: Continue making paper**

- 1) Dry and experiment again based on what you've learned in the process, to create texture/color/thickness to your liking.
- 2) Review artists/artworks/handmade paper for *letter writing* and *paper mache*.

**Self-Evaluation Criteria:**

Did student successfully make two drafts of paper, incorporating lessons learnt from first trial?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes, mostly</b>	<b>Not really</b>
<b>Overall class engagement &amp; Dialogue</b>	I demonstrate respectful participation in class introductions and overview of course. I listen and/or ask questions and/or offer suggestions/opinions.	I am somewhat present, sometimes distracted. But otherwise, I demonstrate participation through listening and/or asking questions and/or offering suggestions/opinions.	I am disruptive and disrespect the community space and speakers.
<b>Skill proficiency &amp; effort in paper-making</b>	I made the effort to bring in materials and engage in every step of paper-making. I am earnest in my attempts, and/or am able to demonstrate intelligent experimentation in subsequent trials.	I engage in the paper-making process.	I lack interest and do not make earnest effort to make paper.

*Notes: (this provides a space for students to contest, reflect on, and/or articulate their learning experience and performance outside of outlined criteria above)*

## **Week 2: Calligraphy & Letter Writing**

**Grade level:** 9-12th grades

**Time:** 1 hr, 3x / week (3 hours total / week)

**Questions:** *What is calligraphy and how do we do it?*

**Central Focus:** We will use paper we've made to experiment with how the first people to use paper might have written on paper, before the printing press. Brush and ink! Depending on how our paper turns out (how absorbent it is will determine how writing-friendly our paper may be. If we don't use paper for writing this week, we will use it for paper mache) we may use paper we've created or alternative papers. Goal is to get a sense of writing / drawing with brush and ink. Cherry will lead a short share on how to write traditional Chinese/Hanja/Kanji characters, from which everyone can springboard to create whatever and however they wish, ending with a letter writing workshop.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- to experiment with the art of brush & ink
- to learn to collage material, text, and visuals to communicate a message in abstract or direct form (art / letter art).

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**calligraphy:** the art of producing decorative handwriting or lettering with a pen or brush.

### **Materials:**

- **brushes or brush pens**
- paper / alternative paper.
- India ink
- paint colors/ brushes / pencils (drawing materials for writing)
- letter writing sample / suggestions / guideline sheet
- Demonstration materials

### **Artwork/Artists:**

1) Slideshow of history of calligraphy as was begun in China and in Arab-speaking worlds.

2) Slideshow of calligraphy inspired contemporary art in graffiti, etc.

[<http://www.widewalls.ch/10-contemporary-graffiti-calligraphers/el-seed-democratizing-art/>]

Monika Lin [<https://theculturetrip.com/asia/china/articles/the-power-of-the-word-calligraphy-in-contemporary-chinese-art/>]

Calligraphy by Muslim women [<http://muslima.globalfundforwomen.org/content/calligraphy-then-and-now>]

3) letter art examples

### **Procedure:**

**Day 1: What is calligraphy?**

- 1) Slideshow review of brief history / survey of different cultures that have used calligraphy
- 2) Calligraphy demonstration / students are invited to copy to practice/ get the feel of calligraphy
- 3) Free time is used to experiment with brush, ink, its textures and possibilities on different types of paper surfaces.

**Day 2: Calligraphy art & Contemporary Art**

- 1) Slideshow review of artifacts, art, and artists that use calligraphy and/or ink in direct or abstract ways.
- 2) Sample letters, brainstorm and prep for letter writing. Choose paper, think about what pens to use, bring in, etc. Who to write it to...
- 3) Start rough draft in pencil, think about what images/textures/collaged elements you would like to bring into the letter.

**Day 3: Letter Writing**

- 1) Letter-writing workshop.
- 2) Share!
- 3) Mentally prepare for myth + paper mache.

**Self- Evaluation Criteria:**

Did student incorporate text and one other creative element in their letter-art?  
 Demonstration of creative thinking, completion.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>yes, mostly</b>	<b>Not really</b>
<b>Overall participation</b>	I demonstrate respectful listening, curiosity, and engage in class dialogue. I put earnest effort in experimenting with calligraphy and letter-writing.	I may be inattentive at times, but for the most part respect and participate in classroom dialogue. I experiment with calligraphy and letter-writing.	I don't listen,
<b>calligraphy</b>	I show creativity in experimentation.		I don't care to experiment, show disinterest, and/or disrupts others' engagement.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>yes, mostly</b>	<b>Not really</b>
<b>letter-writing</b>	<p>My letter writing incorporates at least 2 creative elements (text, visuals, collage, etc) and/or demonstrates thoughtfulness and creativity.</p> <p>I complete a letter in the traditional sense, but have not experimented beyond traditional text on paper. I am able to defend my choices to not take the class invitation for more creative experimentation.</p>		I do not make earnest effort to engage in workshop and am disruptive to others' engagement.

*Notes: (this provides a space for students to contest, reflect on, and/or articulate their learning experience and performance outside of outlined criteria above)*

### **Week 3: Mythology! Dragons and the End of the World.** + Paper Mache

**Grade level:** 9-12th grades

**Time:** 1 hr, 3x / week (3 hours total / week)

**Questions:** *What is a myth? What are some myths we subscribe to in our daily, modern lives?*

**Central Focus:** What is a myth? We share what we know of myths, what myths we've heard of and would like to know more about. Related topics include animals in mythology—totems, zodiac, spirit animals, mythical creatures. This will be a way to source information from each other for further personal research during the course or outside of it. In understanding and defining myth, we'll review some myths/mythologies I know of, as well as those suggested by everyone else. We will review art and artworks as it pertains to mythology and Papier-mâché. Guiding prompt will be to research a myth/mythical character/deity of interest based on which you may create a paper mache sculpture. A good source of mythology turns out to be Pokemon.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

- to learn and share different myths we are familiar with, and/or interested in
- to research and interpret one myth or mythical character through art.
- to learn how to apply Papier-mâché

#### **Key Vocabulary:**

**myth:** a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining some natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events.

**mythology:** a collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

**deity:**

**totem**

**Papier-mâché:** French for "chewed paper", is a composite material consisting of paper pieces or pulp, sometimes reinforced with textiles, bound with an adhesive, such as glue, starch, or wall-paper paste.

#### **Materials:**

- computers for research
- paper we made + alternatives + pulp
- Elmer's glue, brushes
- wire mesh/frame
- Myth slideshow of questions and artworks

**Artwork/Artists:** [Slideshow of myths and mythologies in different cultures, as well as their adaptation/appropriation in contemporary imaginations including: Pokemon, Harry Potter.](#)

#### **Procedure:**

**Day 1: Mythology!** (*Folklore, astrology, Chinese zodiac, spirit animals/totems, etc*)

1) Class discussion: What is a myth? Slideshow will introduce our working definition of myth specific to this course.

2) **Key question for discussion:** What does it mean to *have* a mythology and apply it to our own unique journeys? This has a lot to do with prayer... totems... beloved and precious trinkets, etc. What does it mean to have a relationship with an object, a story, as a symbol? How right this empower you? **SHARE STORIES\*\***

3) begin researching and sketching a deity/mythical character for paper mache project.

**Day 2: Papier-mâché**

1) Slideshow / samples of papier-mâché sculptures in all their varieties and possibilities

2) Demonstration and review of available materials

3) **begin creating!**

Students will be asked to create small-scale work for this project to allow room/time for exploring myth-making final project.

**Day 3: Continue studio**

1) This class is devoted to studio-work for papier-mâché project.

**Self-Evaluation Criteria:**

Did student participate in discussion and demonstrate critical thinking, thoughtful feedback, and/or listening skills?

Did student master and apply papier-mâché skills for their sculpture?

Is the project earnestly in-progress and/or complete?

	Yes	Yes, mostly	Not Really
<b>Overall class engagement &amp; Dialogue</b>	I demonstrate respectful participation in class introductions and overview of course. I listen and/or ask questions and/or offer suggestions/opinions.	I am somewhat present, sometimes distracted. But otherwise, I demonstrate participation through listening and/or asking questions and/or offering suggestions/opinions.	I am disruptive and disrespect the community space and speakers.
<b>Papier-mâché</b>	I demonstrate my thinking and strategizing for my sculpture in my sketches and discussion, and put earnest effort in the project which is well on its way and/or completed.		I do not demonstrate strategizing, I am half-heartedly making an effort or not at all.

*Notes: (this provides a space for students to contest, reflect on, and/or articulate their learning experience and performance outside of outlined criteria above)*

**Week 4: (finish papier-mâché?) Mid-Cycle Considerations: Cultural Appropriation**

**Grade level:** 9-12th grades

**Time:** 1 hr, 3x / week (3 hours total / week)

**Questions:** *What is “cultural appropriation”?* Culture is exchanged, but it has also been raided and stolen. *When is “taking,” “copying,” or “borrowing” from another culture ok and when is it not ok?*

**Central Focus:** Last week we engaged in an examination of myth and mythical characters as passed down from different cultures and made known to us through technology and sharing. I think it’s critical that we pause and discuss cultural appropriation vs. cultural exchange. This week we will finish making our papier-mâché, make more paper if necessary, talk about what is cultural appropriation, and then begin thinking about our final projects.

**Learning Objectives:**

- to learn what is cultural appropriation
- to analyze and interpret existing definitions of cultural appropriation and exchange, as well as examples.
- to reach a nuanced understanding of art and myth in socio-political context through dialogue.

**Key Vocabulary:**

**cultural appropriation:** “Cultural appropriation is the adoption or theft of icons, rituals, aesthetic standards, and behavior from one culture or subculture by another. It generally is applied when the subject culture is a minority culture or somehow subordinate in social, political, economic, or military status to the appropriating culture.”

**cultural exchange:** “an exchange of students, artists, athletes, etc., between two countries to promote mutual understanding.”

**power dynamic:** relationship between two entities as influenced by the power one has over the other in certain socio-economic, historical and/or current situations.

**Materials:**

	Yes	Yes, mostly	Not Really
<b>Overall class engagement &amp; Dialogue</b>	I demonstrate respectful participation in class introductions and overview of course. I listen and/or ask questions and/or offer suggestions/opinions.	I am somewhat present, sometimes distracted. But otherwise, I demonstrate participation through listening and/or asking questions and/or offering suggestions/opinions.	I am disruptive and disrespect the community space and speakers.
<b>Final project development</b>	I develop my idea and strategize for materials and process. I work cooperatively with others to help each other develop work.		I am disengaged from the project.

- online resources: debates/case studies of cultural appropriation  
—> [<http://www.theblaze.com/news/2017/03/09/latino-students-tired-of-cultural-appropriation-tell-whites-to-remove-hoop-earrings/>]  
—> [<https://slingshot.tao.ca/?p=111008>]
- paper we made + alternatives + pulp
- Elmer's glue, brushes
- wire mesh/frame
- computers for research
- paper + pens, pencils for sketching
- Empowerment worksheet + Guidelines for how to shape your mythology

**Artwork/Artists:** controversial artworks/ artists because of cultural appropriation.. etc.

### **Procedure:**

#### **Day 1 (finish/continue papier-mâché?) Cultural Appropriation**

- 1) What is cultural appropriation? Students will offer what they know and understand about the concept. Have you experienced appropriation in particular to cultures you identify with? When is it OK and when is it not OK?
- 2) Review of working definitions. Examples in everyday life and art on slideshow.
- 3) How can we learn about and research, and participate in aspects of another culture respectfully and responsibly? For our creation myth project, we will be original but derive ideas from different sources. Can we agree to provide citation? What else can we do to ensure we give credit where its due, and to ensure that we practice authenticity?

#### **Day 2: Share & Present papier-mâché sculptures. Review final project**

- 1) Students take turns sharing & presenting and giving feedback.
- 2) **Review final project options (slideshow and examples).** The only requirement is to create your own myth.
- 3) Partner review + inspire. We will help each other research and develop our ideas. If you are creating a myth, your partner can help develop plot as it relates to the message of your myth. If you are creating a mythical character, your partner can help develop your character's characteristics and their background.

#### **Day 3: Finalize plans and begin working on final project.**

- 1) Teacher(s) will meet individually with students to help develop and plan out the making-stages of their myth/mythical character. What materials will you need? What elements will you include?
- 2) Students will have begun, or at least know how to begin executing their project next week.

**Self- Evaluation Criteria:**

Did the student engage in and contribute to and/or demonstrate active listening during class discussion about cultural appropriation? Is student offering their own ideas and giving consideration to others'? Is the student becoming fluent in language and vocabulary pertaining to topic? Is the student actively working on developing their final project idea?

*Notes: (this provides a space for students to contest, reflect on, and/or articulate their learning experience and performance outside of outlined criteria above)*

## **Week 5, 6, 7: *Final Project Studio + Workshops***

**Grade level:** 9-12th grades

**Time:** 1 hr, 3x / week (3 hours total / week)

**Questions:** *How can we create our own myths?*

**Central Focus:** The last few weeks will be spent developing individual final projects. With paper, papier-mâché, calligraphy, and mythology, we can get super creative by combining these elements to present an artwork of our original myths. Workshops in these final stages will be done based on interest and available materials/skills which may include bookbinding and creating comic. We will continue to look at artists who use myth/mythology with similar materials of paper, ink, color, and/or sculpture for inspiration. The last stages of final project will be writing our reflections on the process & artist statements.

We will also review storytelling skills to prepare for our art-share in the form of storytelling week 8. This verbal presentation is highly encouraged but optional.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- to learn to articulate meaning through visual mediums
- to learn to articulate statement of purpose about an artwork.

### **Key Vocabulary:**

**artist statement:** A statement in which the artist describes their work and provides whatever information the viewer may need to understand and contextualize the artist's work.

### **Materials:**

- Slideshow of ongoing inspirations, artworks + myths
- ink, brushes
- paper, alt. paper
- wire mesh, wood (for building body for papier-mâché elements)
- glue
- cups for water
- paints
- paper-making supplies

### **Artwork/Artists:**

### **Procedure:**

#### ***Week 5: Studio***

- 1) Students focus/edit their ideas and steps for developing the project.
- 2) ongoing inspirations for artworks / myth
- 3) Anyone interested in book binding must collaborate with teacher to prepare paper and materials necessary for the workshop

**Week 6: Studio**

- 1) ongoing art / myth share for inspiration
- 2) Bookbinding workshop

**Week 7: Studio**

- 1) Begin working on artist statement: examples, rough drafts
- 2) finish up project + artist statement.
- 3) Review storytelling strategies to use or not use for final share & presentation.

**Self-Evaluation Criteria:**

Is the student present and actively engaging in developing their work each class?

*Notes: (this provides a space for students to contest, reflect on, and/or articulate their learning experience and performance outside of outlined criteria above)*

**Week 8: Final Project Presentations! End of Cycle Party!!!**  
**+ feedback and reflections for course.**

**Grade level:** 9-12th grades

**Time:** 1 hr, 3x / week (3 hours total / week)

**Question:** *How can we best celebrate and present our works?*

**Central Focus:** We've been working on our projects for a while! Time to share what we have so far. Even if not yet complete, we will discuss our progress, process, and our intentions for the project.

**Learning Objectives:**

- to learn to present artwork.
- to learn to articulate critical, thoughtful feedback on artworks.
- to have fun!

**Materials:**

- Snacks and party hats.

**Artwork/Artists:** City-As Students.

**Procedure:**

**Day 1:** Begin storytelling shares!

1) Students will begin sharing. Each student will present however they wish whether the artwork is on display with no commentary/background or on display with commentary, possibly reading from artist statement. Each student will receive feedback from peers and answer what myths, cultures, or ideas they were inspired by.

**Day 2:** Continue storytelling shares!

**Day 3:** Art room clean up + reflection sheet.

1) students will provide feedback on course. What went well? What didn't? What was confusing? What did you learn? What did you not learn and expect to? Etc.

**Self-Evaluation Criteria:**

*Final Project*

	<b>Yes!</b>	<b>Yes! Mostly!</b>	<b>No...</b>
<b>original myth</b>	I created an original myth, cite my inspirations, and communicate the story in verbal or art form.		I neglect to communicate and engage in course and do not create an original myth to fulfill course requirements.

<b>Visual artwork</b>	I demonstrate creative and integrated use of materials and skill learned in class		I make little or no effort to make original, intentional work.
<b>artist statement</b>	I am able to articulate for a general audience the premise of my artwork.		I do not show interest in learning to articulate my visual.
<b>reflection</b>	I demonstrate thoughtful and critical thinking and learning throughout the course and studio process.		I have been disengaged throughout the course and am not able to offer a thoughtful narrative of my journey.

*Notes: (this provides a space for students to contest, reflect on, and/or articulate their learning experience and performance outside of outlined criteria above)*