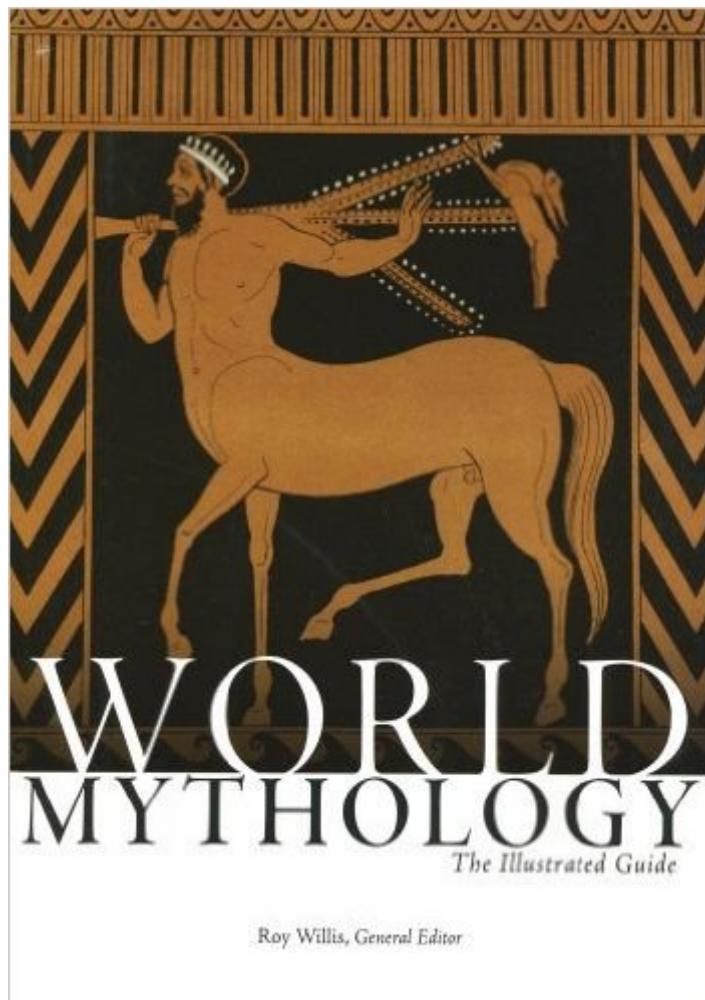


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World Mythology: The Illustrated Guide



Synopsis

The great myths of the world create meaning out of the fundamental events of human existence: birth, death, conflict, loss, reconciliation, the cycle of the seasons. They speak to us of life itself in voices still intelligible, yet compellingly strange and distant. *World Mythology* offers readers an authoritative and wide-ranging guide to these enduring mythological traditions, combining the pure narrative of the myths themselves with the background necessary for more complete understanding. Here, noted mythology expert Roy Willis, brings together a team of nineteen leading scholars navigate a clear path through the complexities of myth as they distill the essence of each regional tradition and focus on the most significant figures and the most enthralling stories. All aspects of the world's key mythologies are covered, from tales of warring deities and demons to stories of revenge and metamorphosis; from accounts of lustful gods and star-crossed human lovers to journeys in the underworld. All are told at length and are accompanied by illuminating and readable introductory text. Also included are summaries of important theories about the origins and meaning of myth, and an examination of themes that recur across a range of civilizations. Beautifully illustrated with more than 500 color photographs, works of art, charts, and maps, *World Mythology* offers readers the most accessible guide yet to the heritage of the world's imagination.

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Customer Reviews

First, its strong points: The prose was intelligent, the rich images of ancient artwork on every page added a great deal of context to the myths, and coverage of the subject matter was very comprehensive as a whole. I was impressed with the quality of the book itself. The pages were

thick, high quality paper (almost like card-stock) and the full color images were beautiful. It was a pleasure to hold and read. Second, its weak points: In the sections on several cultures, the stories were summarized so much that at times I had trouble following them. In the myths I was familiar with from previous study, I realized part of the problem was that key details were skipped over in the telling that would have made future details (which were included) have made more sense. While the slangy tone of *Mythology for Dummies* was aggravating, it did a better job than this book of telling the individual stories it covered. That having been said-- this book covered much more ground than *Mythology for Dummies*, which was concerned largely with Greek Mythology (it dedicated half its pages to this culture alone). This book covered the mythology from many more world regions, which is doubtless why the author gave fewer details.

I have used this text in my World Mythology college classes for several years now and expect to continue for some time. I like the way it is set up, with the overview of common mythological themes, then covering each of several world myths in separate chapters. The text is easy to follow -- let's face it, today's college students are visual learners -- and has many illustrations and examples of art for the various cultures. Several students have told me they also like the text and intend to keep it. They also appreciate the reasonable price.

I had to purchase this book for a class at school. It is a dry read with very fine print. I'm sure there are more captivating mythology books out there. It is very slow going getting through this text.

I ordered this for school, but I really enjoyed it! It's easy to read, and easy to understand. There were some stories that I hadn't actually heard of, and they also made the more confusing mythologies (such as the Hindu and Egyptian gods) easier to follow.

I'm using this as a text book for my mythology survey course and I'm finding it quite useful. Make sure you've got a dictionary handy to look up some words, but otherwise I find it easy to use, well organized and full of useful information like pronunciation guides and regional timelines. There is a strong emphasis on Europe and the Near East though biblical myths are completely ignored which to me is a major disadvantage having not been raised in a Judeo-Christian household. All of the Americas are also rather thinly covered as in *Oceana*.

This book was purchased by me for my class in Fantasy, Myth and Enchantment. The general

consensus is that the illustrations are beautiful, the history of where the myths come from are great and the myths themselves although good can be a bit dry.

As the title implies, this book is a comprehensive collection of mythical stories around the world, spanning a variety of cultures and time periods. The book covers the well-known ones like Greek, Norse, Chinese, Japanese and Indian. There are also lesser known ones like African, Southeast Asian and Mesopotamian. I liked that there was a section on Tibet and Mongolia. My only gripe is that there's no Vietnamese mythology, but that doesn't detract from me enjoying this book overall. It's very helpful, entertaining to read and easy to understand.

I bought this book for a class that I had over the summer. I now keep it on my coffee table and when people stop by, they automatically pick it up. Very good for some light reading on the side and very knowledgeable.

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