

## Course details

### Course title

History: Mythology of the Summer Sky

### Course code

Q00014312

### Course date

Start: 17/07/24

End: 17/07/24

### Number of classes

1 sessions

### Timetable

Wed 17th Jul, 10:00 to 11:30

### Tutor

Jane Williams

### Fee range

Free to £5.55

### How you'll learn

You'll join a small group of fellow learners for classes online in video meetings and materials will be provided in our virtual learning environment.

Got it!

Online

### Venue

Online

## Level of study

Beginners

## Course overview

Ever looked up at the night sky, or the signs of the zodiac, and wondered how the constellations got their names? Why anyone would think those random dots were “obviously” a picture of some strange creature? Or what the stories are behind them? This one-session course picks out some of them that are appropriate to the time of year, and shows why they were important, what their myths are, and how the stories fit together. This is the time when the Perseid meteor shower is at its best, so we’ll look at the story behind Perseus, and his family: Andromeda, Cassiopeia, Pegasus, and a few less well-known. Then we go on to the Summer Triangle of the Swan, the Eagle, and the Lyre. There’s also Capricorn, the half-fish, half-goat, and many more. (57)

## Course description

This single-session course will explore the myths that lie behind some of our constellations. We will look primarily at the Greek mythology versions of these stories, including all the multiple versions, but also at the ones they are based on (Sumerian, quite often) and those from other parts of the world where they’re good stories. The Roman versions of Greek names will also be given where they’re more familiar.

While we will take a quick look at how to find those constellations in the sky, and what the “random dots” look like, this is primarily about mythology, not astronomy.

The most exciting thing to look at in the summer sky is probably the Perseid meteor shower. But the shower itself doesn’t have many stories attached to it, so we’ll take a much longer look at the story behind the constellation from which they appear to originate: Perseus. Many of his family, friends, and opponents are up there in the sky with him, and in some cases their position is explained by the story.

The most easily visible constellations are the three in the “Summer Triangle”. The Swan, which has a few stories, mostly about Jupiter chasing women. The Eagle, which gets bit-parts in many other stories. And the Lyre, which used to belong to Orpheus.

Capricorn, the half-fish, half-goat sign of the zodiac, is also in the summer sky, as are Sagittarius the Teapot (yes, really!), Aquarius the water-bearer, who was indirectly the cause of the first sacking of Troy, Scorpius, and many more than I expect to have time to explain.

## What financial support is available?

We don't want anything to stand in your way when it comes to bringing Adult learning within reach so if you need anything to support you to achieve your goals then speak to one of our education experts during your enrolment journey. Most of our courses are government funded but if you don't qualify or need alternative financial help to access them then let us know.

## What other support is available?

All of our digital content, teaching and learning activities and assessments are designed to be accessible so if you need any additional support you can discuss this with the education experts during your enrolment journey and we will do all we can to make sure you have optimal access.

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