

# RELI 502

## Myths and Epics of the Ancient Near East



**Professor Joseph Lam**  
jclam@email.unc.edu

**Tuesdays & Thursdays**  
12:30PM-1:45PM

**General Education  
Requirements:**  
LA, WB

This course explores the mythical and epic literature of the ancient Near East—encompassing the civilizations that produced such literary masterpieces as the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Tale of the Eloquent Peasant, and the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, not to mention the many parts of the Hebrew Bible that have strong mythological overtones. Using origins, kingship, and wisdom as organizing themes, we will cover a range of representative literature from these ancient civilizations (in translation) and engage in critical discussion of ideas that emerge from these texts. We will also dedicate a significant portion of the course to a close reading of the Gilgamesh Epic and its associated literary traditions.

