

# *The Epic Then and Now*

**UHON 402-002 | T | 5:00-7:30 | SHC 22 | 37531**

**Fulfills A&S Group VII: Fine Arts**

Jonatha Kottler

Epic poetry has been called “the tale of the tribe.” In epics, societies define themselves. They lay out the criteria for what they consider heroic, villainous, tragic, exciting, historically important, artistic and beautiful. They detail the relationships that are important to them: man and god, father and son, husband and wife, brother and brother. And what they leave out, they may ascribe no value at all. This course will explore the epic literature of many tribes including Greek, Roman, Sumerian, Spanish, French and Anglo-Saxon. First, we will examine each epic’s own individual value and nuance. Second, we will explore how our own culture is touched by these epics—how did they come together to help us form our values? Next, we will explore our own contemporary American culture in terms of epic ideals. In what media do we see the tale of our own tribe played out? We will examine contemporary literature, films, and video games to extract our own epic story. Finally, we end the semester by creating our own epics of America, a melting pot influenced by all we have taken in over the term.

## **Readings**

Readings (selections of some works will be read): *The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Iliad, The Odyssey, The Aeneid, Beowulf, El Cid, The Song of Roland*

Selected outside readings of relevant articles.

A modern novel of the student’s choice.

Media: Students will select films to view both in and outside of class. Such films may include: Star Wars, Superman, Batman Begins, Pulp Fiction, 300, The Lord of the Rings (trilogy), The Harry Potter Films, and others.

Students will have the option to play and analyze video games as text, which may include: Halo, Fable, Dragon Age, Mass Effect, Oblivion, and others.

Required texts: Charlie Gillett, *The Sound of the City: The Rise of Rock and Roll*, 2nd ed.; Farber and Bailey, *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*

## **Requirements**

Weekly response papers

Oral presentation

Excellent discussion

12-15 page research paper

Final epic project

## **About the Instructor**

Jonatha Kottler has a B.A. in English from UNM and an M.A. from St. John’s College. She is the writer/creator of the comic book series *The Wonderverse*. With her husband (fellow UHP graduate Jason Kottler), she has written and directed seven short films and the feature length film *In Character*. She is the founder of the esert Globe Players, a theater devoted to youth Shakespeare performance.