

School of Pagan Spirituality

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Overview

The School of Pagan Spirituality focuses on the theology, ethics, history, and philosophy of different Pagan traditions. The long-term goal is to develop overlapping courses of study in *Wicca*, *Druidry*, *Ásatru*, *Goddess Spirituality*, and other Pagan paths, and to explore the comparison and integration of different belief systems.

The overall program of this school is under development at the present time and classes will gradually be added to the school's offerings as the program evolves.

Course Descriptions

General Paganism

Introduction to Paganism

Join us to learn about the many traditions and flavors of nature spirituality that are collectively called Paganism. We will look at Wicca, Druidry, Goddess celebration, Asatru, shamanism, and the core beliefs and practices they share. Local groups, resources, and events will be explained, and there will be experiential exercises, music, and refreshments. This program is for information and education, and does not seek to recruit or proselytize. People of all tolerant faiths are welcome.

Science, Metaphysics, and Magick

The revelations of modern science often seem more "magical" and extraordinary than the strangest imaginings of our prescientific predecessors. Modern ideas like the fluidity of space and time in Relativity theory, or the interconnectedness of observation and reality in Quantum Mechanics, seem to cry out for interpretation in spiritual or occult terms. Not all approaches to connecting science and spirituality are equally credible, however. In this class, we sort through some of the scientific concepts and look at what they imply (and do not imply) about metaphysics and magick. Scientific concepts will be presented with considerable care, but the presentations are accessible to people with little or no scientific background. Creative activities, play, and discussion are used to explore and develop the key ideas.

Asatru

Asatru: Introduction to Norse Spirituality

This class is designed to present accurate information on the practice of the pre-Christian religious tradition of the Germanic cultures and its continuation in modern times, provide an opportunity to experience some of the more important ceremonies and practices of contemporary Asatru, and suggest ideas and techniques connected with Germanic spirituality that participants might find helpful in their own spiritual work, whether or not that work happens within a Heathen setting. Taking this class should enable students to navigate knowledgeable and place in context what they might encounter in discussions of Asatru at gatherings and on-line. Some theoretical and practical work with the runes will be included.

Equally important, however, we will spend significant time exploring the ideas of Wyrð, Orlog (roughly, "personal destiny"), and Frith (very roughly, "right relationships"), as well as the symbology of the Wells, the World Tree, and the Norns. Taken together, these things provide both a basis for understanding the core perceptions and world-view underlying many of the modern efforts to

revive, reconstruct and practice Asatru, and the means by which the indigenous Germanic spiritual tradition can effectively address the “big questions” of ontology, meaning, our relationship with the Earth, and how we might constructively live and act in the world. We expect to approach these profound questions with humor, perspective, and of course, mead.

Wights of the Nine Worlds

“Wights” is a Germanic word for “spirits,” roughly equivalent to the Buddhist “sentient beings” and including gods and goddesses, frost giants, dwarves, elves, trolls, and us. We’ll begin by discussing various ways of understanding and relating with gods and goddesses and other beings whose reality seems to be on a somewhat different basis than our own. This would include, among other things, the idea that various “classes of beings” can also represent different states of consciousness of which we are also capable ourselves.

The class will work through the lore on the different “worlds” and the beings that live there, using readings, guided meditations and discussions. In addition we will look at ancient terminology and modern Asatru theories on the nature and components of the human psyche, similarities and differences between these viewpoints and popular modern concepts of psychology, the importance of Wyrð in shaping individual character, and the impact of such ideas on how we might pursue our own spiritual paths.

The History and Evolution of Frith

This class takes the idea of Frith, which can mean both “peace” and “right relationships,” as the organizing principle for discussions of ethics and “right conduct,” how Heathen legal traditions have influenced modern political and legal systems, social and group organization, how social relationships affect the well-being of the individual, and how our relationships with the gods and goddesses are living, evolving things that require our positive attention and

efforts to maintain. Traditional Heathen social groupings and institutions such as the clan/village, the war band, kingship, the Thing, and Medieval frith-guilds will be explored through readings, guided meditation and possibly role-playing exercises.

The second day concentrates on how to adapt these ideas to practice in modern, pluralistic societies. Contemporary Asatru group models will be discussed, and we will also begin looking at the idea of Megin, or personal spiritual power, and how it is affected by one's various relationships and one's skill in maintaining them. We will discuss some of the history of modern Asatru in this class, and will further develop our understanding of the offering ceremony, or Blot. For those staying over, a modest but slightly formal feast will happen on Saturday night.

Wyrd and Becoming

The Wells and Tree symbology will be examined in greater detail than we had time for in the Introduction class and with more elaboration on its value in moving toward a distinctly Heathen philosophy. The idea of the Wells as three distinct states of consciousness will be explored conceptually and in guided meditations, and some beginning formal meditation techniques will be introduced in connection with Urdh's and Mimir's Wells. Considerable emphasis will be placed on the Germanic view of orlog, or personal destiny, and how it can be shaped to a large extent by individual conduct and spiritual practice. A continued discussion of Megin, and how it is distinguished from the "luck" and the "life force," will take place in this context. There will be a further discussion of sources and scholarship, as well as a more thorough treatment of the Sumbel, or ceremonial toasting session. A formal Sumbel will happen on Saturday night for those staying on-site. Finally, we'll revisit ideas on Heathen psychology from the Wights class from the more dynamic perspective of Wyrd and the Wells, and consider possible relationships between the Heathen world view and later concerns of Germanic cultural life.

Druidry

Into the Spiral: Celtic Ancestors, Beliefs, and Wanderings (Druidry 101)

Who were the real ancestors of the druids and where did they live? Where did they come from and what do we know of them? These and other questions will be explored in this one-day introductory class. Join us for discussion and meditation to follow the Celts through the mists of time to their ancestors and back to modern day practitioners of Celtic-based spiritual paths. Together, we will examine historical evidence and the controversy surrounding its interpretation. We will discover how the Celts may have perceived their world, how they interacted with the Sacred and the mundane, where they traveled and how that influenced their culture, and how modern people have attempted to reconstruct and renew the Celtic spirit.

The Bard Within (Druidry 102)

In ancient times, bards were musicians, poets, singers, storytellers, and keepers of oral histories. They trained in Bardic colleges and could entertain, punish, create magick, and inspire, all through the bardic arts. Today, bardic training is often the first stage in the education of a fledgling druid, in order to awaken his or her creativity, spirit connections, and Divine inspiration. In this weekend workshop, you can expect to:

- Examine the historical Bards and their importance to Celtic culture
- Delve into creativity in many forms
- Evoke and inspire your own innate creative force
- Learn to use the bardic arts for magick and healing

Betwixt and Between: Seers and Healers (Druidry 103)

The seer and healer often works in the betwixt and between, walking in a place between the worlds in order to serve the community. This weekend, we will examine mysticism and visionary practice as it relates to druid practice historically and in modern times. Join us for an inspirational exploration of:

- History and beliefs about the “betwixt and between”
- Celtic deities, Spirits of Place, and sacred animals
- Spirit journeys and the Celtic Otherworlds
- Celtic-based forms of divination
- Celtic healing in practice and myth

Living as Druid (Druidry 104)

The ancient druids were philosophers, advisors, teachers, and magicians. They were the academic elite and the priests and priestesses of their people. Modern druids do their best to follow in this spiritual lineage, learning and living a druidic path and holding themselves to high standards of practice and conduct. In this weekend, we will explore:

- Historical and modern roles and responsibilities of the Druid
- Living a sacred life
- Crafting rites of passage
- Myth and magick
- Ethics and spiritual practice
- Earth stewardship

Goddess Spirituality

Celebrating the Goddess

She is Queen of Heaven and Earth, Star of the Sea, Mistress of Magick. She has a thousand names, faces, and stories. Come meet Her in many of Her aspects at this intensive weekend of learning, celebration, and spirit.

The program will include storytelling, creative ritual, dance, music, imagery and symbols, dress-up, a Feast of the Goddesses, choosing a special goddess and ways to enhance your relationship, spiritual arts and crafts, and more. This event is for women only, and registration is limited to 12 participants. Scholarships available; no woman will be turned away for lack of funds. Bring food, festive clothing, and costume elements.

Wicca

Introduction to Wicca

An introduction to Wicca, a spiritual path based on nature and the old folk religions of Europe. Topics covered are Goddesses and Gods, History/Herstory, The Wheel of the Year, Cosmology and Theology, Magick and Ritual, Ethics, Folklore and Stories, Pagan Lifestyles, and Witchcraft around the world today. The program includes games, exercises, discussions, skits, and other hands-on activities. This program is for information and education, and does not seek to recruit or proselytize. People of all tolerant faiths are welcome.

The Inner Path of Witchcraft

Foundational studies for the practicing Witch. This course focuses on those building blocks (often ignored or thought of as “things you will pick up on the way”) needed to begin and/or sustain a spiritual practice and develop solid magickal skills. Topics may include the Witches’ Pyramid; the five elements; meditation; personal energy management; introduction to chakras; breathing;

running energy; grounding; clearing; shielding; and balancing the elements within. Students will use personal assessments to determine their strengths and challenges.

The Roots of Witchcraft

A survey class highlighting significant periods that inform Witchcraft today: goddess cultures of pre-Classical times, Classical paganism and mystery cults, the Celts and their influence, Middle Ages and the Inquisition, the Romantic period and the revival of Magickal Lodges, and the birth of modern Wicca through Gerald Gardner and its emergence in the United States.

Witch Lore in the Southwest

Survey of traditional, home-grown witchery and magic in the local area. Tales, folklore, songs, art, spells, recipes, and spooky fun.

The Crafts of the Craft

Magick is in the doing. Come learn and practice creative arts and crafts to make magickal tools, potions, and experiences. A weekend of multiple workshops—choose the ones that seem most intriguing to you.

Possible subjects include:

- Making a Magick Wand
- The Art of Storytelling

Ardantane School of Pagan Spirituality

- Beautiful Robes and Cloaks Made Easy
- Crafting Your Own Drum
- Creating a Ritual Witch's Broom
- Incenses and Oils for Ritual Magick
- You Can Make Your Athame (Ritual Blade)
- How to Make a Personal Tarot Deck

The final list of workshops and instructors will be posted prior to the event. Certain workshops may require a materials fee in addition to the registration fee. Come enjoy the beauty of Ardantane –and make something beautiful for yourself!

Tools of Witchcraft

This one-day course explores the practical and hermetic meanings of the traditional tools of the Witch or Magician—the athame, wand, cup, and pentagram.

We begin by looking at the physical tool, its history, origins, and significance (or absence) among religions and cultures, and end with an exploration of the hermetic and esoteric tools these physical objects represent: imagination, will, power, faith, passion, intent, direction, manifestation, and so on. Traditional uses for each tool will be given, elemental associations will be presented, methods to consecrate and dedicate tools will be demonstrated, and materials will be supplied to craft a tool. Other tools commonly used in magick and spell work will also be introduced, such as sword, staff, cauldron, stones, beads, amulets, etc. Advanced hermetic tools, such as the tattvas, will be introduced.