

ANTHROPOLOGY 4751
Supernatural: Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

M/W/F 11 to 11.50am at BLB 15

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Office Location: 330Q Chilton Hall (TA offices, dept of anthropology)

(For faster response, please email the TA and copy me in all your emails!)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Religion is one of the most unique aspects of human culture. As approached from the perspective of anthropology, the study of religion is both comparative and wide-ranging and has played a central role in the theoretical development of anthropology. In this course students will study that role as well as a wide variety of anthropological topics dealing with religion such as myth, ritual, gurus, shamans, health, and globalization. By comparing what is "religious" in many cultures, we will develop a better understanding of the relationships among human beings and religion. From the main textbook, we will study 6 communities from Christianity, 1 from Judaism, 3 from Buddhism, 4 from Islam, and many others from African and Native American religious traditions. This will be supplemented by the second book, which provides non-Western religious theories and methods based on the three ethnographies. Several guest speakers will also be invited into the class from the local DFW communities as an in-class participation-observation experience.

COURSE GOAL

To enrich the awareness and understanding of human behavior from an anthropological perspective by studying what human beings consider religious and to familiarize with the rich variety of beliefs and rituals that anthropologists study as religion. There is no prerequisite for this course.

TEXTBOOKS

Required:

Moro, Pamela. *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion*. 9th edition, 2013. McGraw Hill. Buy it online or from UNT's Barnes & Noble bookstore. ISBN: 978-0-07-803494-7. (Older editions cannot be used).

Recommended:

Jain, Pankaj. *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities*, 2011, Ashgate. Buy it from UNT's B&N bookstore or online from <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409405917> (use this discount code to get 35% discount: PJDEUS35). Alternatively, place your order by calling Ms. Suzanne Sprague at: 802-276-3162 ext. 302. The book is also available as an e-book (and as a hardcopy) at the UNT library: <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b4022378~S12>

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Page nos. refer to the textbook by Moro)

Week 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion pp.1-45

Week 2: The Myth, Symbolism, and Worldview 46-85

Video: Pentecostal Congregation in West Virginia

<http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b3919682~S6>

Video: Myths of East and West: http://www.ted.com/talks/devdutt_pattanaik.html

Week 3: Ritual pp.86-139

Video: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/countries-places/united-states/us-apachegirl-pp> (Apache Girl's Rite of Passage)

Week 4: Shamans, Priests and Prophets pp.140-185

Video: The Sora Community <http://vimeo.com/4111949>

Guest Speaker: Dr. Jon Bjarnason, a Mormon leader

Friday 9/26/2014 **PAPER TOPIC DUE**

Week 5: Altered States of Consciousness pp. 186-230

Video: The Fire-walking Rituals http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM4ECmeB_4w

Video: A Balinese trance séance & Jero on Jero

<http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b3840138~S6>

Video: Peyote in Mexico: http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/culture-places/beliefs-and-traditions/mexico_peyote/

Week 6: Illness, Religion, and Healing pp. 231-283

Video: Zar Cult in Sudan <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNMDc3H2LbM>

Week 7: Religion in a Changing World pp. 373-446 (part 1)

Video: Christian Theme Park in Kentucky:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2011/06/24/june-24-2011-christian-theme-parks/9038/>

Video: Discrimination against Muslims: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvIDqgyK8fw>

Wednesday 10/15/2014 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8: Religion in a Changing World pp. 373-446 (part 2)

Guest Speaker: BrahmaPrana www.VedantaDFW.org

Video: Targeting Terror <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gaprxU0v5aE>

Video: Urban Rastas in Jamaica <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/music/genre-wm/reggae/mr-heartless-wm/>

Week 9: Witchcraft, Sorcery, Divination, and Magic

Video: Witch cleanser: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YR0ShX4HpWU&feature=relmfu>

Video: Ghana: <http://journeyman.tv/62315/documentaries/the-witches-of-gambage.html>

Video: Wicca: <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/culture-places/beliefs-and->

[traditions/uk_wicca/](#)

Video: Poison oracle by Azande: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q9HyONL_10

Video: Baseball Ritual: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EFd8jyM_RQ

Week 10: Death, Ancestors, Ghosts, and Souls

Video: Vodou <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpeLdXelbwA>

Video: Taiwan http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/culture-places/beliefs-and-traditions/taiwan_secondburial/

Friday 11/7/2014 **PAPERS DUE**

Week 11. Anthropology of Religion of Asian Communities (The Jains and the Bishnois, Swadhyayis, and Bhils from *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities*)

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OX8bnlXyXro> and Eco Dharma <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b3830692~S12> OR

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53K3b3zQEfw> and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvSyaGXSnWM>)

Video: Swadhyaya <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b3830693~S12>

Video: The Spirits of Forest: <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b3868624~S6>

Video: Sacred Groves of Kerala: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SxLOFUXH4s>

Video: Green Struggles of Bhils: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uN1_oc80sHE

Video: Ahimsa (of Jains) <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b4018694~S12>

Week 12: Review

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cGZfUmbuOg>

GRADING PROCEDURE

Grades in this course will be based on two major exams, one research paper, blackboard discussion postings on readings and class participation. Students will be notified in class of any changes in the course schedule.

Midterm Exam = 100 pts.

Research Paper = 100 pts.

Short “Myth” Paper = 25 pts.

Short “Eco” Paper = 25 pts.

Class Participation = 50 pts.

Final Grade Determination

100-90% of pt. total = A

89-80% of pt. total = B

79-70% of pt. total = C

69-60% of pt. total = D

59% and below = F

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND CLASS PARTICIPATION (50 points):

Attendance is mandatory. Students with five unexcused absences will have their final grade lowered one letter grade. Without a proper official document, all absences are treated as unexcused. Also, coming to the class later than ten minutes (or leaving early) will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Students are expected to come to class having completed all written, readings, and viewing assignments and should be prepared to actively participate in meaningful discussion about readings in question and/or complete a short fact-quiz (these will be occasional, but usually unannounced). Active participation may include sharing your questions and comments about the readings with the class, engaging your classmates in relevant and meaningful dialogue based on the topics/readings, and/or participating in other class activities.

Class preparation and participation is evaluated using the following criteria:

A+ (100%): Outstanding class preparation and class participation. Student meets and exceeds all criteria for "A" (described below).

A (95%): Student comes to class prepared, having read and thought about the assigned films and texts and having completed all written assignments. Student often comes with written notes, and participates actively in class. Student arrives on time, stays the full length of the class, is attentive, responds when called upon, and volunteers frequently with pertinent questions and comments.

B (85%): Student is usually prepared, sometimes with written notes, and responds when called upon. Student is attentive, participates in all activities, and volunteers with questions and comments on occasion.

C (75%): Student shows evidence of being unprepared from time to time. Due to lack of preparation, student may have some trouble responding to instructor's questions or participating in class discussion/activities. Student does not volunteer often and sometimes comes to class late/leaves early (will be marked absent).

D (65%): Student is unprepared and/or inattentive. Student never volunteers and regularly comes to class late/leaves early (will be marked absent).

F (0%): Student exhibits a lack of concern for the class, sleeps in class, or distracts his/her classmates. Student's behavior has a negative effect on the class.

Succeed at UNT:

As a UNT student, you've got a lot on your plate. But you've also got lots of resources and plenty of people at UNT who want you to succeed. Start your college career off strong and define your future by visiting <https://success.unt.edu>

Other Information:

Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program provides academic adjustments and aids to individuals with disabilities in its program and activities.

Acceptable Student Behavior:

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.deanofstudents.unt.edu

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAPERS

All individual papers will have the following general components: The paper will have a title page and be typed in 12-point font using Times Roman font style. It should be double-spaced. All pages, except the title page should be numbered in the upper right and margin. Margins will be one inch all around. A title page will list the title of paper, date, course name and number, instructor, and contributing group members' names. The page requirement does not include bibliography, notes, or reference pages). All assignments are to be uploaded on Blackboard (<http://learn.unt.edu>), not as a hardcopy (nothing to print!). Please upload only MS-Word or Adobe PDF formats, not notepad or wordpad or text or html formats please!

Final Paper (due 9/26 topic approval; final paper 11/7):

Requirements: Length should be 6 typed pages, double spaced, and 1" margins. At least 8 sources must be used and should be accurately referenced in the text of the paper. Include articles from at least two scholarly journals. Encyclopedias are not acceptable references.

TOPIC: Analyze a topic in the anthropological study of religion that is of interest to you. The instructor must approve the topic, but you may choose whatever in the field appeals to you. You may study the religion of a single culture in depth, or you may look at some aspect of religion cross-culturally. For example, you might want to explore "Religious Symbolism of the Nuer of Africa" or "Funeral Rituals in MesoAmerica" or "New Religious Movements in 20th/21st Century Americas" or "A Comparison of Magic or Witchcraft in Three Cultures" or "The Internet and the Spread of Islam." Write a paper in which you: a) introduce your topic and the thesis you wish to defend, b) present data from your research that defends that thesis and c) draw conclusions regarding your thesis that are based on the data you presented.

Short Myth Paper (due September 19, 2014):

Research one or more of the following creation myths of different religious communities, and create your own myth (minimum two pages, double spaced): Greek Creation Myth (Gaia), Japanese Creation Myth, Vedic Creation Myths of India, Native American Myths, or Norse Myth. Create your own myth...ideally should have all the "mythical" components we discussed in the class.

Short Eco Paper (due Dec 1, 2014):

Summarize and compare the three religious communities that we studied in the course in terms of their ecological practices (minimum two pages, double spaced).

SETE Submission

20 points for PDF proof of your confidential SETE submission (not the actual feedback!)