

ANTH 4751
The Supernatural: Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion
Spring 2019

Table of Contents

Contact Information.....	1	Assignments.....	2
Course Description.....	1	Grading Scale.....	2
Required Texts.....	1	Policies.....	2
Learning Objectives.....	1	Schedule.....	4
Skills Development.....	2		

Contact Information

Professor: Dr. Adam Dunstan
Email: adam.dunstan@unt.edu
Phone: (940) 565-2170
Office: 330G Chilton Hall
Office Hours: T/Th 11AM-Noon, and by appt.

Instructional Assistant:
Email:
Office: 330 Chilton Hall
Office Hours:

Class Sessions: T/Th 9:30-10:50 AM, Th 121

Course Description

This course is devoted to the study of the supernatural as a social and cultural phenomenon: how the practices and beliefs that we categorize by the term “religion” are practiced among human groups, and how these affect other aspects of human life, from social identities to environmental sustainability. An estimated 5 in 6 humans are affiliated with a religion (with a significant number of the remaining holding supernatural beliefs) and supernatural worldviews profoundly shape both world events and daily realities for many humans. As such, an understanding of the diversity, forms, and impacts of religiosity is a valuable element in any education.

In this course, we take an anthropological approach toward understanding religion. Rather than a simple survey of the largest religions, we will survey both extremely large, and extremely small, religions; we will explore the public rituals of “organized religion” and also practices such as magic, shamanism, and witchcraft, which also constitute important elements in the tapestry of human approaches to the supernatural. We will cover supernatural practices from every inhabited continent. In doing so, we will take a topical approach, exploring such topics as ritual, worldview, and magic using examples from several cultures, uncovering both similarities and differences in what it means to be religious and what it means to be human.

Required Texts

1. Stein, Rebecca and Philip Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, 4rd edition.
2. All other readings will be made available through Canvas.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will develop religious literacy: the ability to understand religious phenomena in their sociocultural context.
2. Students will comprehend central elements across religions and variations in their forms cross-culturally.
3. Students will understand and apply major analytical approaches in the anthropology of religion.
4. Students will synthesize the significance of religion to human societies and cultures.

Skills Objectives

This course is intended to offer students opportunities to further develop the following competencies: (1) critical thinking (2) written communication and (3) research and analysis.

Grade Components

Points	Assignment	Due Date
200	Reflection Posts: Throughout the semester, students will write reflection posts, submitted through Canvas. The topic and length of each these posts will be specified on Canvas. <u>These will always be due by the start of class (i.e 9:30 AM on the due date listed).</u>	See course schedule
10	Paper Topic Selection: Students will submit their selected paper topic via Canvas.	02/07/19 (midnight CST)
300	Test 1: Students will take Test 1 in-class. It will cover the first half of this course.	03/07/19 (in-class)
240	Religious Literacy Paper: Students will submit through Canvas a research paper contextualizing a specific religious practice anthropologically. Additional details and a rubric will provided in-class.	04/02/19 (midnight, CST)
250	Test 2: Students will complete Test 2 online through Canvas. It will cover the second half of the course.	05/07/19 (midnight, CST)
1000		

Grading Scale

900-1000 A / 800-899 B / 700-799 C / 600-699 D / 0-599 F

Course Policies

1. Withdrawing: If you are unable to complete this course, you must officially withdraw by the University-designated date (for a “W”). Withdrawing from a course is a formal procedure that YOU must initiate. I cannot do it for you. If you simply stop attending and do not withdraw, you will receive a performance grade, usually an “F”.

2. Attendance: There is no attendance requirement; however, frequent absences will likely result in a lower grade due to missing class content and announcements.

3. Discussion Participation: Students are expected to complete the required readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss them.

4. Contacting the Professor: Email is the best way to reach me outside of class: adam.dunstan@unt.edu. You must use your official UNT email, not a private email. In the email, indicate your course and your full name to facilitate my response. Please understand that I may not respond immediately. However, if I have not responded within 24 hours (72 hours on the weekend), please feel free to email me again to confirm receipt.

5. Due Dates: If you have a conflict with any due date or exam date, it is your responsibility to make alternative arrangements ahead of time – not after the fact. **Students may NOT take exams late unless there is written permission from the instructor before the exam date or there has been a documented medical emergency. Allowing alternative arrangements in such instances is entirely at the discretion of the instructor.**

6. Late Work: Unexcused submission of late assignments will incur a 10% deduction per day (including the day the assignment was due, if turned in past a deadline). For the policy on exams, see Policy #5.

7. Academic Misconduct: The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Students suspected of any of these can be provided the opportunity for a hearing; a guilty finding will merit an automatic “F” in the course. I also reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT system, which may result in dismissal from the university. Additionally, I reserve the right to assign zero points on specific assignments for instances of apparent cheating or plagiarism, at my discretion. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see <http://anthropology.unt.edu/resources/writing-guide>. For information on the University’s policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/>.

8. ADA: The Anthropology Department does not discriminate based on an individual’s disability, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Our program provides academic adjustments or help to individuals with disabilities, and attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements. The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://disability.unt.edu/>. You may also contact them by phone at (940) 565-4323.

9. Extra Credit: I will notify you of any extra credit opportunities that may arise.

10. 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 classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.deanofstudents.unt.edu. In this classroom, “acceptable student behavior” includes (but is not limited to):

- Being respectful towards other students and their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives.
- Not dominating discussions.
- Refraining from side-conversations.
- Arriving to, and leaving, class on time.
- No usage of electronics unless directed by the instructor.

11. Schedule Changes: The Course Schedule (including assigned readings and due dates) may be changed at the discretion of the instructor. Please check Canvas and email regularly to be made aware of any changes.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Stein & Stein Reading	Canvas Reading	Assignment Due
Unit 1	Core Concepts			
01/15, 01/17	Anthropology and Religion	Ch. 1 (Pp. 1-18)		
01/22, 01/24	Foundational Theories	Ch. 1 (Pp. 18-29)	Kalberg, "Introduction to the <i>Protestant Ethic</i> " (Excerpt) Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the Right" (Excerpt) Durkheim "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" (Excerpt)	01/22: Reflection #1
01/29, 01/31	Foundational Theories (Continued)		Sanders, "Buses in Bongoland" Scheper-Hughes, "Death Without Weeping" Turner, "The Reality of Spirits"	01/29: Reflection #2
Unit 2	Systems of Meaning, Systems of Power			
02/05, 02/07	Worldview and Mythology	Ch. 9	Douglas, "The Abominations of Leviticus"	02/07: Paper Topic Selection
02/12, 02/14	Worldview and Mythology (Continued)	Ch. 2	Murphy & Murphy, "Women of the Forest"	02/12: Reflection #3
02/19, 02/21	Ritual and Symbolism	Ch. 3, Ch. 4	Eck, "Darsan" (Excerpt)	
02/26, 02/28	Ritual and Symbolism (Continued)		Turner, "Betwixt and Between" Robbins, "Rituals of Redemption and Technologies of the Self"	
03/05, 03/07	Religion and Ecology		Sponsel, "Religion and Environment"	03/07: Test 1

			White, "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis" Darlington, "The Ordination of a Tree"	
03/12, 03/14	Spring Break			
Unit 3	Accessing the Supernatural			
03/19, 03/21	Magic	Ch. 7 (Pp. 145-154)	Morgain, "The Alchemy of Life"	03/21: Reflection #4
03/26, 03/28	Magic (Continued)		Luhrmann, "The Magic of Secrecy"	
04/02, 04/04	Evil Magic, "Witchcraft," and "Sorcery"	Ch. 10	Evans-Pritchard, "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" Crampton, "No Peace in the House"	04/02: Religious Literacy Paper
04/09, 04/11	Shamanism and Other Forms of Supernatural Communication	Ch. 6; Ch. 7 (Pp. 154-163)	Kendall, "Wives, Lesser Wives, and Ghosts"	
Unit 4	The Modern Supernatural			
04/16, 04/18	Religious Change	Ch. 11 (Pp. 252-267)	MacKenzie, "Judas Off the Noose," Nasr, "Islamic Patterns"	
04/23, 04/25	Religious Diversity and Human Rights	Ch. 11 (Pp. 267-275); Ch. 12	Dunstan, "Legislative Ambiguity and Ontological Hierarchy in US Sacred Land Law"	
04/30, 05/02	Conclusions and Review			
05/07	Test 2 (Canvas)			05/07: Test 2 Due 11:59PM (CST)

Please Note: The schedule may be changed at the discretion of the instructor; please attend class and check Canvas and email regularly to be made aware of any changes.