

**ANTHROPOLOGY 4751**  
***Supernatural: Magic, Witchcraft and Religion***  
T/Th 12.30 to 1.50pm at Chem 352

Dr. Pankaj Jain

Office: 308K Chilton Hall, Dept of Anthropology

Email: [pankaj.jain@unt.edu](mailto:pankaj.jain@unt.edu)

Course Guide: <http://guides.library.unt.edu/ANTH4751>

*(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](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)

**Short Myth Paper** (due September 17, 2015):

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

Thursday 9/24/2015 **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](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/](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/culture-places/beliefs-and-traditions/mexico_peyote/)

Video: Kusum <http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b5031612~S12>

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

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

Video: Journey of Ayurveda: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vB17dE\\_EyI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vB17dE_EyI)

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>

Tuesday 10/13/2015 **MIDTERM EXAM**

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

Guest Speaker: BrahmaPrana [www.VedantaDFW.org](http://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](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8q9HyONL_10)

Video: Baseball Ritual: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EFd8jyM\\_RQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EFd8jyM_RQ)

Week 10: Death, Ancestors, Ghosts, and Souls

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

Video: Taiwan [http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/culture-places/beliefs-and-traditions/taiwan\\_secondburial/](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/places/culture-places/beliefs-and-traditions/taiwan_secondburial/)

Thursday 11/5/2015 **RESEARCH PAPER 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](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uN1_oc80sHE)

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

Tuesday 12/1/2015 **SHORT ECO PAPER DUE**

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, attendance, 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 by 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 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](http://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 9/24 topic approval; final paper 11/5):

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 20<sup>th</sup>/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 17, 2015):

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, 2015):

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!)

## Bios of the Guest Speakers

Nityananda Chandra Granger.

Born in Hawaii, learned about Krishna Consciousness from my 12-year-old friend Kalae when I was 14. Moved to Portland at 16 and moved into the temple as a brahmachari (monk) at 20. Married at 24 and now I am 29. As a brahmachari I have done some traveling. We toured the US several times in our Sankirtan Bus, which was replete with wood floors and cabinets, temple room, kitchen, and shower. It was tons of fun. I have been to India twice so far and England once. I met my wonderful wife 6 years ago while distributing Srila Prabhupada's books in the subway of Times Square. Krishna Consciousness is really wonderful for not only do we have a complete philosophy but we have such wonderful people to meet all over world, the best food, best music, the best festivals, it is all around wonderful.

Dr. Jon Bjarnason, D.C.

Dr. Bjarnason grew up in northern California in a town called Turlock (two hours south of Sacramento). He is the 5th out of 6 children. Dr. Bjarnason studied Exercise Science at Brigham Young University, which is affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, culminating in his graduation in December of 2005. He served a two-year church service Mission in Puerto Rico and is fluent in Spanish.

Dr. Bjarnason studied Chiropractic at Parker College of Chiropractic in Dallas Texas, and graduated in January of 2009. He worked in California for 2 years before returning to open Achieve Chiropractic in Denton, Texas in May of 2011. He currently resides in Lewisville, Texas. Dr. Bjarnason attends the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Lewisville, Texas. He is married to Jennifer Bjarnason; they have one child, just 4 months old named Lincoln. Hobbies: Ping Pong, Ultimate Frisbee, and all things sports found on ESPN.

His website: <http://www.dentonchiropractors.org/>

Pravrajika Brahma-prana

She has been a nun of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, at the Sarada Convent, since 1973. She has been a Vedanta representative on several interfaith councils, including the Hindu-Catholic Dialog sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles; a frequent guest lecturer at schools, colleges, and universities in America; and has participated in interfaith and scholastic seminars in America and abroad. Brahma-prana has compiled and edited several books on Vedanta, including *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Volume 9; *Vivekacudamani of Sri Sankaracarya*, translated by Swami Turiyananda; and *With the Swamis in America and India*. She has also written numerous articles on the philosophy and practice of Vedanta for journals and anthologies in America and abroad. Brahma-prana resides in southern California and is currently the resident minister of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of North Texas.

Dr. Jenny Streit-Horn

She is a Dharma teacher, who has been a self-identified Buddhist for 20 years and has practiced in the New Kadampa tradition for 7 years, becoming a teacher through the Kadampa Meditation Center. <http://www.meditationintexas.org/>