

ASB 214 – Magic, Witchcraft & Healing: An Introduction to Comparative Religion

Glendale Community College
Spring 2010
Tue 7:10 – 9:55 PM
Room: HU 101
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Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the basic principles of Cultural Anthropology, and applies these principles to the study of Religion. Two major questions that are asked in Cultural Anthropology are: What are the commonalities or universals of human behavior and human society? And what is the variation among the world's societies? We will study the basics of religious behavior including myths, religious symbolism, religious rituals, religious specialists, magic, divination, and witchcraft. Each subject will be illustrated with examples from various cultures, focusing on traditional or tribal societies although examples will be drawn from more familiar religions.

Course Goals

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Reason about and interpret religious behavior, both past and present, in comparative terms.
2. Be aware of and sensitive to cross-cultural differences with the aim of developing a perspective of cultural relativism and an ability to recognize and avoid ethnocentrism.
3. Apply anthropological principles in everyday life, including as related to self, family, community, and professional careers.

Required Text

The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft, 2nd Edition, by Rebecca L. Stein and Philip L. Stein, 2008

- Bring the text to every class meeting.
- Be advised that some material in lectures is not covered in the text, and conversely, some of the assigned reading from the text is not covered in lectures.
- *PowerPoint* slides and other course materials will be made available for download and printing on *Blackboard*. You should bring these materials with you to each class meeting.
- There may also be required reading materials distributed in class and/or posted on *Blackboard*.

Recommended Text

1. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th Edition by Joseph Gibaldi, 2003
2. *Field Projects in Anthropology*, 3rd Edition, by Julia G. Crane
3. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, by Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw

Course Requirements

- 1) You will have a choice of a (A.) Exams or (B.) Presentations or a combination of the two:

Example:

Exam 1: Unit 1 (Ch. 1,2,3) = 20%

Presentation 2: Unit 2 (Ch. 4,5,6,7) = 20 %

Exam 3: Unit 3 (Ch. 8,9,10,11) = 20 %

A. Exams (20% each): There will be three exams. Each exam is worth 20% of your grade and will mainly cover only material presented since the previous exam, although students are expected to remember basic concepts and important information from all the preceding parts of the course. Exams will consist of objective questions (e.g. multiple-choice, matching, true or false) and subjective questions (define or discuss issues or concepts in short sentences or paragraphs). Exams will only be administered during the designated exam periods. If you miss an exam without a good, documented reason (illness, death in the family, etc.) you will receive a 0 grade for that exam, with no opportunity to make it up. If you miss an exam for an acceptable, documented reason you may be required to take an alternative essay exam at Testing Services (TDS 118). Most students find the essay exam more time consuming and difficult, so it is a good idea not to miss a regular exam. Requests to take an exam at a different time because the scheduled exam date is inconvenient will not be granted. Such requests are particularly common for final exams at the end of the term or for exams immediately before or after Thanksgiving; please don't ask to make up these. Failure to take an exam will result in a grade of 0 for the exam.

OR-

B. In class presentations (20% each): You have the option to substitute any examination by making a 15-30min in class presentation on a topic. You must clear the topic with me at least 1 week before you will present it. Please look at the syllabus for general topic areas. I will pass out a sign up sheet for days for presentations. If you need or would like me to help guide you on picking a topic, let me know.

You must provide in an e-mail to me:

- Name or Names of Individuals making presentation
- Written topic (e.g. common dress practices in Islamic religions)
- Day of presentation
- Exam to be replaced (Units 1,2, or 3)

- If you will need to use media & what type

On the day of presentation please bring:

- Outline (please bring at least one for me to follow along, if you want everyone to have one you can make copies or give them to me at least a week prior to your presentation and I will make them).
- 2-5 pg informal essay on topic (try to use MLA or equivalent format)

You may do this with another student. But, **both** of you must turn in a different and separate essay (*If you would like to turn in a combined essay the length must be at least 4 pages*). Both must also present aspects of the topic. If you work with another person, the presentation time will need to be 20-35min.

NOTE: Once you have picked a time and cleared the topic with me, you cannot change and decide to take the exam.

- 2) Field Study of Religion (30%): This project has three purposes: (1) to expose you to a religion other than your own, (2) to have you apply anthropological principles learned in class to a specific situation, and (3) to have you experience anthropological fieldwork. You will choose a religion to study, attend a ritual in the religion you have selected, and write a 4-5 page paper with an introduction, a description of the ritual, and a discussion of specific topics about the ritual. The specific requirements for the project and paper will be explained in greater detail in class. Failure to submit a completed Field Study of Religion paper will result in a grade of 0 for the project.
- 3) Attendance and participation (10%): The remaining 10% of your grade will come from attendance and active participation in class discussions and activities (as judged by the instructor – therefore it’s a good idea to come to class prepared and participate often). Classes will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, reading assignments, videos, activities and group work. For every absence after the third, the attendance and participation grade will be reduced by 5 points. You will have a weekly quiz to account for attendance.

Note that if you are absent more than twice during the first two weeks of class you will be DROPPED from the class. Also, if you are absent more than three times prior to the 45th DAY ROSTERS you will be DROPPED from the class. If you are dropped, you are responsible for your class standing. If you wish to withdraw from the course, you must have me sign a withdrawal slip. If you simply stop attending and appear on my final roster you will receive either an “F”. **I am NOT responsible for dropping you from the class. If you can no longer attend drop the class, if you do not you may receive an “F”.*

Drop Dates:

March 5 – “w” without instructor signature

April 26 – “w” With instructor signature

Grading

Grades will be assigned according to the percentage of total points scored on the combined exams, activities, and attendance and participation.

90% and above = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

below 60% = F

Note that a grade of "C" or higher is required for transfer credit to a University. Once graded, you should promptly go over your exam to catch errors in addition of points or evaluation of answers. It is your responsibility to detect such errors and bring them to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible. DO NOT wait until the end of the term to address potential errors in grading as it may be too late to adjust the grade. Grades will be updated periodically on *Blackboard*.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to act with civility, personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community.

Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons' work as one's own, using Internet sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, "ghosting" (taking or having another student take an exam), stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.

If cheating is detected at any time, ALL cheaters will receive a zero on the exam or assignment. In most cases, this will result in a failing grade for the course. Please refer to the Catalog & Student Handbook (<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/catalog/>) regarding campus-wide policies relating to academic misconduct and disciplinary standards.

Special Accommodations

I am committed to providing access to a quality education for all students, including those with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and wish to have an accommodation for the course, it is your responsibility to notify the Disability Services and Resources office located in TDS 100 (623-845-3080). They will have you complete the appropriate paperwork to submit to me. You are encouraged to request

accommodation early in the semester so that, once identified, reasonable accommodation can be implemented in a timely manner.

In-Class Behavior

This classroom is acoustically “live” and even whispering in the back row carries to the front of the room which bothers me and the other students. Please **DO NOT** make comments or carry on private conversations during class time (including videos). If you have a question or comment, please direct it to me.

Please be considerate of your classmates and of me; it is a rude disruption to have a beeper, PDA, ipod, cell phone, or any other electronic device activate during class. Please **TURN-OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES** and store them out of sight during class time. This includes laptop and notebook computers. Repeated violations may result in you being required to leave class and receive an unexcused absence for the day. During class please refrain from engaging in any of the following, or similarly distracting, activities: sleeping, eating, reading, text messaging, homework/assignments for another class, putting on make-up, combing hair, any personal grooming, disposing of trash, sharpening pencils, leaving to go to the bathroom, or any other activities unrelated to the matter at hand in our classroom.

Syllabus Subject to Change Statement

I anticipate that we will follow the schedule I've outlined here, but I may make adjustments based on what actually happens in class. Be sure to check with a classmate after an absence to see if assignments have changed. I may also change the basis for the course grade; if I do so, I will so inform you in writing. Remaining in the course after reading this syllabus will signal that you accept the possibility of changes and responsibility for being aware of them.

Course Schedule

(Note that this schedule may be changed as the semester progresses. All changes will be announced by the instructor in class)

Unit #1

Chapters 1, 2, 3

Noteworthy dates:

- **Jan. 26: No Class / Library, Writing, & Internet Assignment**
- **Feb. 16: Exam 1 Review**
- **Feb 23: Exam 1**
- **Feb 23: Brainstorm on Final Topics Due**

Unit #2

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7

Noteworthy dates:

- **March 15-21: Spring Break**
- **March 23: Final Topic, Background Material, and Ritual Information due.**
- **March 30: Final Date for Ritual Due**
- **April 6: Exam 2 Review**
- **April 13: No Class – Drafts of Final Paper Due on Blackboard**
- **April 20: Exam 2**
- **April 20: Hard Copies of Paper Due**

Unit #3

Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11

Noteworthy dates:

- **May 4: Chapter 11 Assignment Due**
- **May 4: Exam 3**
- **May 4: Final Field Study of Religion in-class workshop (bring in final drafts)**
- **May 11: No Final Test/ Conferences with Professor**
 - Field Study of Religion **final paper due** at the beginning of class
 - You must turn in a paper copy! Emailed papers will not be accepted!
 - Grades for the Field Study of Religion paper will be posted on *Blackboard*. If you want to see your graded paper, set up an appointment. If you would just like to have your paper back with comments please provide me with a stamped envelope (legal sized—large enough to hold your paper without folding).

Reading Assignments

Subject to Change

Unit 1

Week 1: Jan 19

- Course Introduction
- Syllabus review
- Field Study of Religion Assignment
- Presentation Assignment and general requirements
- Blackboard and Extra credit/make-up folder
- Assign Supplemental Reading and Ethnography Assignment

Week 2: **Jan. 26 NO CLASS**

- **Library/internet Assignment**

Week 3: Feb. 2

- Ch 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion
- Conclusions, Summary, and websites.
 - Group Work

- Ch 2: Mythology
- Nature of Myths
 - Understanding Myths
 - Group Work

Extra Reading / See BlackBoard

Week 4: Feb. 9

Review of Last two Chapters

Ch 2: Video "Inside Islam" (93m)

- In Class Discussion of Video. (Also Read and Discuss extra reading / TBA)
- Commentary / Questions About video assigned
- Go over Final Project and Class Assignments

Week 3: Feb 16

Ch 3: Religious Symbols

- What is a Symbol
- Sacred Art
- Sacred Space & Time
- The Symbolism of Music and Dance

Exam 1 Review

Brainstorm Assignment

Week 4: Feb 23

EXAM 1

- Ch. 1-3
- Video
- Supplemental Material
- Syllabus requirements
- General Principles

Unit 2

Week 5: March 2

- Ch 4: Ritual
 - The Basics of Ritual Performance
 - A Classification of Rituals
 - Religious Obligations
 - Video “Magical Curing”
- Conclusions, Summary, and websites
- Group Work on Ethnographic Methods
- Final Project Explanation & Workshop (Topics Due in a couple of weeks)

Week 6: March 9

Taboo

- Explain the Ethnographic Method
- Taboo Video Series
- Watch Each Video with Questions & Discussion
- Use Ethnographic Methods to write notes and explain
- Assignment of Video Series

Week 7: March 15-21

Spring Break

Week 8: March 23

Ch. 6: Religious Specialists

- Shamans
- Priests
- Other Specialists
- Conclusions, Summary, and websites

Ch. 5: Altered States of Consciousness

- The Nature of Altered States of Consciousness
- Ethnographic Examples of

- Conclusions, Summary, and websites
- Group Work and Discussion
- Conference with Professor about Topics
- **Final Project Topic Due**
- **Final Project Workshop**
- **Find background material on religion and ritual**
- **Find location, time, and date for ritual**

Week 9: March 30

- Video: "A History of God"
- Group Work and Discussion
- **Dates for Ritual Due**
- Group work on Final project

Week 10: April 6

- Ch. 7: Magic and Divination
 - The World of Magic
 - Magic in Society
 - Divination
 - Conclusions, Summary, and websites
 - Group Work
- **Exam 2 Review**

Week 11: April 13 **NO CLASS**

Society for American Archaeology
Drafts of Final Project Paper Due on Black Board

Unit 3

Week 12: April 20

Exam 2

- Ch. 4-7
- Video's
- Outside Assignments
- Ethnography
- Group Assignments
- Presentations

Bring in hard copies of Paper

- Ch. 9: Gods and Spirits
- Spirits
- Gods
- Conclusions, Summary, and websites

Week 13: April 27

Ch. 8: Souls, Ghosts, and Death

- Souls and Ancestors
- Bodies and Souls
- Death Rituals
- Days of Death
- Conclusions, Summary, and websites

Ch 10: Witchcraft

- The Concepts of Witchcraft in Small-Scale Societies
- Euro-American Witchcraft Beliefs
- Conclusions, Summary, and Websites
- Conclusions, Summary, and websites

Chapter 11 Assignment

Final Paper Drafts Handed Back

Week 4: May 4

Ch. 11: The Search for New Meaning

- Adaptation and Change
- Revitalization Movements
- Non-Paganism and Revival
- New Religious Movements
- Fundamentalism
- Conclusions

Exam 3

- Ch. 8-11
- Video's
- Group Work
- Ethnographic & Other Supplemental Reading
- Presentations

Final In-Class Workshop

*****Bring corrected drafts in**

Week 17: **May 11 Final**

- **Final Papers Due**
- **Bring in Self-addressed envelope with stamp if you want your paper back**

