

Course Information for ANT 3241 – Anthropology of Religion
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Photo taken by Crystal Andrea Felima in Leogane, Haiti (2014)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This introductory course is an anthropological exploration of religions, spirituality, and supernatural in diverse cultural contexts. We will investigate the performance of rites and rituals, and the cultural expressions of religious beliefs and practices. We will look how religion interactions and expression through comparative cross-cultural analysis. Students will learn basic anthropological theories and concepts of culture and religion from the classical canon, in addition to contemporary approaches, and apply them to a variety of topics. The primary objectives of this course are:

- To understand anthropological theories, approaches and perspectives of religion;
- To develop an appreciation of the diversity of world religions, practices and belief systems;
- To understand the interplay of religion, society, and politics, and the theories that describe these interplays;
- To understand the functional aspects of religions, myths and symbols; and
- To develop critical thinking skills and improve critical reading and writing skills;

Mutual Respect: This is not a course in world religions, theology, religious studies, or divinity. This course does not seek to promote or disrepute any particular religious belief, practice, or person. All religious practices will be regarded as forms of social and cultural expression. While this is an open discussion that encourages everyone's opinion, we will not be debating the truth of any particular orthodoxy or orthopraxy. We strive to understand the topic in a spirit of free inquiry and critical thinking. We Students should leave any preconceived notions and prejudices behind when they enter the classroom and at all times remember to be respectful of other's opinions.

REQUIRED TEXTS: *Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft* (3rd Edition). Philip L. Stein and Rebecca Stein. – *On 2-hour reserve at Library West*. Other readings will be assigned and made available through *e-learning* (Sakai): (<https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>).

COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice

	Lecture Topic	Readings	*On Sakai	Assignment
Week 1	Course Introduction What is Anthropology? What is Religion? What is the Anthropology of Religion?	Chapter 1 *Atkinson and Hammersley, <i>Ethnography and Participant Observation</i>		
Week 2	Opening Frameworks	*Tylor, "Religion in Primitive Culture" *Durkheim, "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life" *Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System"		Test 1, due Sunday January 20 th
Week 3	Mythology	Chapter 2 *Mary Douglas, "Taboo" *Mary Lee Daugherty, "Serpent-Handling as Sacrament"		
Week 4	Symbols	Chapter 3 *Ortner, "On Key Symbols" *Eric R. Wolf, "The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol"		Writing Assignment #1, due Feb. 3rd
Week 5	Ritual, Part A	Chapter 4 *Arthur C. Lehmann, "Eyes of the <i>Ngangas</i> : Ethnomedicine and Power in Central African Republic" *Michael Atwood Mason, " 'I bow my head to the ground' :Creating Bodily Experience Through Initiation"		
Week 6	Ritual, Part B	*Roy A. Rappaport, "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations Among a New Guinea People" *Thomas J. Csordas, "A Handmaid's Tale: The Rhetoric of Personhood in American and Japanese Healing of Abortions" *Horace Miner, "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema"		Writing Assignment #2, due Feb. 10th
Week 7	Possession	Chapter 5 Film: "Holy Ghost People" *Scott Hutson, "The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures"		Test 2, due Sunday Feb. 17 th
Week 8	Religious Specialists	Chapter 6 Film: An Initiation <u>Kut</u> for a Korean Shaman *Michael Fobes Brown, "Dark Side of the Shaman" *Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, "Training for the Priesthood Among the Kogi of Colombia" *Michael Barkun, "Reflections After Waco: Millennialists and the State"		Writing Assignment #3, due March 17th

Week 9	Magic	Chapter 7 *Malinowski, "The Role of Magic and Religion" *Naomi M. McPherson, "Sorcery and Concepts of Deviance Among the Kabana, West New Britain" *T.M. Luhrmann, "The Goat and the Gazelle: Witchcraft" *E.E. Evans-Pritchard, "Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande"	
Week 10	Witchcraft	Chapter 10 *Evans-Pritchard, "Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events" *Badstuebner, "Drinking the Hot Blood of Humans": Witchcraft Confessions in a South African Pentecostal Church"	Test 3, due Sunday March 31 st
Week 11	Spirits, Ghosts, and Souls	Chapter 8 *Brown, "Vodou" *Peter A. Metcalf, "Death Be Not Strange" *Stanley Brandes, "The Cremated Catholic: The Ends of a Deceased Guatemalan"	Writing Assignment #4, due April 7 th
Week 12	Gods and Spirits	Chapter 9	
Week 13	New Meaning	Chapter 11 *Boellstorff, "Between Religion and Desire: Being Muslim and Gay in Indonesia" Film: "Of Men and Gods"	Test 4, due Sunday April 21 st
Week 14	Multi-culturalism, Gender, and Fundamentalism	*Stam, "Multiculturalism and the Neoconservatives" *Bernal, "Islam, Transnational Culture and Modernity in Rural Sudan" *Homa Hoodfar, "The Veil in their Minds and On Our Heads: Veiling Practices and Muslim Women:"	