

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROFESSOR INFORMATION



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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of religion and will focus upon phenomena that may be categorized broadly as “religion” and the closely related concept “supernatural”. It is not a theology course but examines and analyzes the way religion is practiced and performed in diverse societies through reviewing central aspects of religion, such as mythology, symbolism, ritual, religious specialists, gods and spirits, witchcraft, and magic.

This course will approach these topics from the perspective of anthropology. In addition to looking at the different theoretical approaches and concepts that have informed anthropological conversations about religion, we will critically analyze religious practices and beliefs. Our aim in this course is not to reach to absolute truth claims. More specifically, we will not discuss whether a religion or a religious practice is true or false. Instead, we will try to understand a religion and a religious practice in its social, cultural, and historical context. This will give us a better understanding of human relationship with the sacred supernatural both in large and small-scale societies throughout the world and history. Our motto in this course will be “Making the strange familiar, and the familiar strange.”

The course begins with an overview of anthropological approaches and theoretical contributions to the study of religion. We will look at the role religion plays in everyday life through reviewing topics such as sickness, death, and uncertainty. The course ends with an examination of religious change and movements.

UNIVERSITY CORE CURRICULUM COURSE

This course satisfies the following University Core Curriculum requirement for Social Science Group Two (university-required):

Students will demonstrate the ability to examine behavioral, social, and cultural issues from a variety of points of view. Students will demonstrate an understanding of basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavioral, social, and cultural issues, past and present, local and global.

It is supported by the following learning outcomes for the course:

- Explain how terms such as “culture” and “religion” are defined in anthropology.
- Explain and differentiate between different theoretical approaches to the study of religion.
- Understand the culturally informed and quite diverse imaginations about the supernatural world and supernatural forces in different societal contexts, from the post-industrial global north (Western Europe and North America), to the BRIC countries, and so-called traditional societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia.
- Be a better world citizen by understanding the existence of different ways of being human, of being spiritual and religious or atheist.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Understand the culturally informed and quite diverse imaginations about the supernatural world and supernatural forces in different societal contexts, from the post-industrial global north (Western Europe and North America), to the BRIC countries, and so-called traditional societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia.
- Better understand the linkages and non-hierarchically determining differences among distinct human beliefs, from more or less complex religious systems, about magic and witchcraft, superstition, sorcery and mysticism.
- Understand the links that exist, differently in different societies, between spirituality, religious beliefs, and conviction of the existence of supernatural forces on one side and other aspects of societies including health care.
- Be able to contextualize their own religious beliefs, spirituality, and/or lack thereof thanks to a better understanding of beliefs they are unfamiliar with.
- Be a better world citizen by understanding the existence of different ways of being human, of being spiritual and religious or atheist.
- Describe the nature of anthropological fieldwork and contrast its methodology with that of other disciplines.
- Explain how terms such as “culture” and “religion” are defined in anthropology.
- Explain and differentiate between different theoretical approaches to the study of religion.
- Explain the concept of ritual and categorize different types of ritual.
- Compare and contrast different types of religious specialists.
- Explain altered states of consciousness and describe the role they play in religious experiences.
- Differentiate between various types of supernatural entities including gods, spirits, souls, ghosts, and ancestors.

GLOBAL LEARNING STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical and contemporary inter-relatedness of key local, regional and global religious and spiritual issues and events, including beliefs in magic, witchcraft, sorcery and various kinds of superstitions. (GLOBAL AWARENESS)
- Demonstrate the ability to compose an analysis of various perspectives associated with different culturally-based conceptualizations of the supernatural world and their attendant practices and rituals, which can also be linked to different geographic locations on the global stage. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE)
- Willingly better engage in a number of problem-solving activities in a variety of sociocultural contexts around the globe. (GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

For more information about the Global Learning Student Learning Outcomes, please consult the FIU Global Learning for Global Citizenship. You should also watch the videos at:

- <http://goglobal.fiu.edu/About/Pages/default.aspx>
- <http://goglobal.fiu.edu/About/Pages/Learning-Outcomes.aspx>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

POLICIES

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & SKILLS

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "[What's Required](#)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

This course utilizes the following tools:

1. Canvas Learning Management System
2. Canvas Discussion Boards
3. Zoom (Optional tool)

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit The [Canvas Accessibility webpage](#) for more information.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STATEMENT

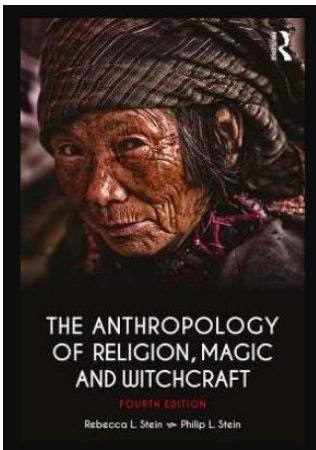
Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational

mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the academic integrity policies and procedures as well as student resources that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

TEXTBOOK



The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft
Rebecca L. Stein, Phillip L. Stein
Pearson, 3rd Edition, 2011 or 4th edition, 2017
ISBN: 9781138692527
E-text is available.

You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).

EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- Review the **how to get started information** located in the course content

- **Introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- **Take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas
- **Interact** online with instructor/s and peers
- **Review** and follow the course calendar, including all quizzes, individual assignments, and the final project
- **Submit** quizzes and assignments by the corresponding deadline

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course **5 times** per week
- Respond to messages within **2 days**
- Grade assignments within **a week** of the assignment deadline

COURSE DETAIL

COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via Canvas messages.

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Canvas to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages tool is located on the left menu, on the left side of the course webpage. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Visit our [Writing Resources webpage](#) for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements		Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
1. Module Quizzes & Summaries		8	100	800	40%
2. Module Assignments		5	100	500	30%
3. GL Final Project		1	100	100	30%
Total					100%

Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)
A	94 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 74
A-	90 - 93	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	75 - 79	F	59 or less

ASSESSMENTS

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer or device you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

There are 11 quizzes based on assigned readings, slides, and videos for each module. These quizzes will have two parts. First part will be multiple choice questions (10-15 questions) based on assigned readings and videos. Part-II will require you to write a one-page summary of the main arguments from all assigned work for each module. Further guidelines on how to write your module summaries can be found on Canvas. You are required to write your summaries in advance and then just copy and paste it on the essay question listed at the end of each module quiz.

1. MODULE QUIZZES AND SUMMARIES EXPECTATIONS: (8/11 need to be completed)

- Each module will have a quiz and a reflection essay on the assigned chapter, slides, readings, and videos.
- 60 points will come from multiple choice questions and 40 points will come from the essay question.
- There will be 11 quiz + summaries in this course. You are expected to complete 8 of them by the deadline.
- If you complete 11 of them, your three lowest scores would be eliminated. You can take 1 or 2 additional one as an Extra Credit opportunity in the course.
- Each quiz will become available by 12:00am by the module start time and will be due by 11:59pm on the assigned date (by the end of the module). Check Course Schedule below and/or Canvas for specific due dates and times for Quizzes.
- The quiz duration will vary from 15-20 minutes. You will see the number of questions and given time in Quiz Description in advance in Canvas.
- Quiz results:
- The students will be able to see the results after the availability period has ended. The students will be able to see all of the questions and answers.
- The summary portion will be graded within 4-5 days of submission.

MODULE ASSIGNMENTS

2. MODULE ASSIGNMENT EXPECTATIONS: (5 individual assignment submission required)

- In addition to module quiz+summaries, you will be asked to complete 5 module assignment.
- Each assignment will be due by 11:59pm on the assigned date (by the end of the module). Check Canvas and Course Schedule below for the specific due dates and times.
- You are allowed to submit 2 assignment late for credit. Points will be deducted for lateness.
- You can find further detailed guidelines for each module assignment in Canvas modules.
- You are expected to complete them in a word document and then submit your document via Canvas link.
- You can find the general assignment guidelines and grading rubric in Canvas. Check the first "Welcome to the Course" Module to locate the rubric.
- The expected turn-around time for feedback or grades is no longer than 5 days.

3. GLOBAL LEARNING (GL) FINAL PROJECT Expectations: (1 Project submission required)

- Instead of taking a final exam, you are expected to work on a final project in this course.
- There are two options to choose from. Option-1: Observation-based, Option-2: Library-based research.

- Option-I requires you to choose a spiritual and/or a religious community and attend one of their rituals. Then, you will analyze your ritual by following the guidelines posted on Canvas.
- Option-II requires you to choose a religious and/or a spiritual ritual and analyze it based on library research guidelines posted on Canvas.
- Check Module named “FINAL PROJECT” to locate the guidelines, and submission link.
- Check Course Schedule below and/or Canvas for the assigned due date and time.

EXTRA CREDIT:

- In this course, there will be no extra credit assignments to complete. Instead, you will be given the option to submit 2 module assignment late. You will still be penalized for lateness, but you will earn a lot by completing an assignment you have missed.
- Additionally, you can complete more than 8 quizzes for extra credit. If you complete more than 8, 1 or 2 of your lowest quiz and/or assignment scores would be dropped.

COURSE CALENDAR

MODULE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

MODULE 1

May 9 - May 12

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning what anthropology is
- Defining ethnocentrism vs. cultural relativism
- Understanding the significance of the employment of cultural relativistic perspective
- Learning anthropological approaches to religion
- Understanding the complexity of defining religion

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-1 (Textbook)
- Read Article: Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (Canvas)
- Read Article: Horace Miner, Nacirema (Canvas, See the assignment before reading it)
- Review and Watch Slides on “Module 1” (Canvas)
- Watch “Doing Anthropology”
- Submit Module-1 Quiz & Summary by Thursday, May12 by 11:59pm
- Submit Module-1 Module Assignment: Nacirema by Thursday, May 12 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-1 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 2

May 12 - May 16

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning how anthropologists and folklorists define “myth”
- Learning anthropological approaches to the analyses of myth
- Learning how the myths have been transmitted from generation to generation
- Understanding how myths are cultural forces and act as a social charter
- Review the common themes in world mythology
- Understand the significance of worldview and myths in everyday life

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-2: Mythology (Textbook)
- Read Article: Bronislaw Malinowski, The Role of Myth in Life (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-2: Myth
- Complete Module-2 Quiz and Summary by Monday, May 16 by 11:59pm
- Complete and submit Module Assignment: DAPL by Thursday, May 19 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-1 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 3

May 16 – May 19

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning what a symbol is
- Learning the characteristics of symbols
- Learning the significance of symbols in human’s lives and their interaction with sacred supernatural
- Learning anthropological approaches to the study of symbols
- Understanding their use in mythology and rituals

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-3: Religious Symbols (Textbook)
- Read Article: Eric Wolf, “The Virgin of Guadalupe: A Mexican National Symbol” (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-3: Symbols
- Submit Module-3 Quiz & Summary by Thursday, May 19 by 11:59pm
- Complete and submit Module Assignment: DAPL by Thursday, May 19 by 11:59pm if you have not yet.
- Check Module-3 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 4

May 19 - May 23

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning how anthropologists define “ritual”
- Understanding how rituals make life orderly
- Understanding the religious significance of rituals
- Learning anthropological approaches to the analyses of myths
- Learning how to categorize myths
- Understanding the importance of ideological rituals

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-4: Ritual (Textbook)
- Read Article: V. W. Turner, Ritual Symbolism, Morality, and Social Structure among the Ndembu (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-4: Ritual
- **Submit Module-4 Quiz & Summary by Monday, May 23 by 11:59pm**
- Check Module-4 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 5

May 23 – May 26

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning how to define an altered state
- Understanding the function and significance of Altered States of Consciousness (ASC)
- Learning the way people induce and ASC
- Learning the ritual setting in ASC
- Understanding the religious significance of ASC through ethnographic examples

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-5: Altered States of Consciousness (Textbook)
- Read Article: Napoleon A. Chagnon, My Adventure with Ebene: A “Religious Experience” (C) (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-5: ASC
- Watch Film: “The Peyote Road” Find the link in Canvas.
- **Submit Module-5 Quiz & Summary by Thursday, May 26 by 11:59pm**
- Check Module-5 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 6

May 26 – May 30

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning about different types of religious specialists
- Learning how anthropologists categorize religious specialists
- Learning how the division between a shaman and a priest is somewhat arbitrary
- Learning how one becomes a shaman
- Learning how one becomes a priest
- Learning more about other forms of religious specialists
- Understanding the influence of culture and social factors in one's acceptance as a religious specialist

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-6: Religious Specialists (Textbook)
- Read Article: Margery Wolf, The Woman Who Didn't Become a Shaman (C) (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-6: Religious Specialists
- Submit Module-6 Quiz & Summary by Monday, May 30 by 11:59pm
- Submit Module-6 Individual Assignment: "How one becomes a Shaman" by Mon, May 30, by 11:59pm
- Check Module-6 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 7

May 30 – June 2

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning how anthropologists define magic
- Learning the debates on whether magic can be seen as religion
- Understanding the function of magic and divination through ethnographic examples
- Understanding the magical thinking in our everyday lives
- Learning why people turn to magic and why magic seems to not fail

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-7: Magic and Divination (Textbook)
- Read Article: George Gmelch, Baseball Magic (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-7: Magic and Sorcery
- Submit Module-7 Quiz & Summary by Thursday, June 2 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-7 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 8

June 2 - June 6

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning the variations in the concept of soul through ethnographic examples
- Learning how people develop belief in the existence of souls
- Learning what makes people alive and what makes them seen as death
- Learning what happens to individuals and their bodies after death
- Learning more on transformed human beings, like ghosts, ancestors, vampires, and zombies
- Learning more on death and funeral rituals
- Learning the history of Halloween

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-8: Souls, Ghosts, and Death (Textbook)
- Read Article: Lyle B. Steadman et. al., The Universality of Ancestor Worship (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-8: Souls, Ghosts, and Death
- Watch “The History of Halloween” documentary (See Assignment for the link and questions)
- Submit Module-8 Quiz & Summary by Monday, June 6 by 11:59pm
- Submit Module-8 Module Assignment: “Halloween” by Monday, June 6 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-8 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 9

June 6 – June 9

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning about the supernatural entities that do not have human origins
- Learning the difference between Gods and Spirits
- Learning about polytheism and monotheism
- Learning about different types of Gods
- Learning how polytheism and monotheism are mutually exclusive

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-9: Gods and Spirits (Textbook)
- Read Article: Classical Mythology, p. 128-136 only (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-9: Gods and Spirits
- Submit Module-9 Quiz & Summary by Thursday, June 9 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-9 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 10

June 9 - June 13

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning the witchcraft beliefs in small-scale societies and in Europe and Colonial America
- Understanding the function of witchcraft in small-scale societies through ethnographic examples
- Understanding if we do have similar belief systems and/or mechanisms that act like witchcraft
- Understanding the social, political, and socio-historical factors behind the Salem Witch Trials
- Review witch-hunts throughout history and see if we do witch-hunting in our current times

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-10: Witchcraft and Sorcery (Textbook)
- Read Article: E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-10: Witchcraft
- Watch “The Salem Witch Hunts” documentary (See the assignment for the link and questions)
- Submit Module-10 Quiz & Summary by Monday, June 13 by 11:59pm
- Submit Module-10 Individual Assignment: “Salem Witch Trials” by Monday, June 13 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-10 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE 11

June 13 – June 16

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning how religions adopt and change
- Learning the reasons behind the emergence of revitalization movements
- Learning about different types of different revitalization movements through examples
- Understanding how syncretic religions have been formed
- Understanding the reasons that lead to the emergence of new religious movements
- Understanding the domains and boundaries of religion
- Learning more on fundamentalism and secularism

Tasks:

- Read Chapter-11: The Search for New Meaning (Textbook)
- Read Article: Alice Beck Kehoe, “The Ghost Dance Religion” (Canvas)
- Review and Watch Slides on Module-11: New Religious Movements
- Watch the Documentary “UFO Cults” (See assignment for the link and questions)
- Submit Module-11 Quiz & Summary by Thursday, June 16 by 11:59pm
- Check Module-11 in Canvas for additional assigned readings, videos, and work.

MODULE: FINAL GLOBAL LEARNING PROJECT

May 9-June 17

Supports Learning Objectives:

- Learning how anthropologists analyze rituals
- Further your understanding on the relationship between myths, symbols, and rituals through Global Learning Project: Beyond My Cultural Comforts
- Combine your learning from the course with global learning points
- Learn how to leave your own cultural comfort zone and enter others as a way to become a better local and a global citizen

Tasks:

- Complete and submit your Global Learning Final Project: Beyond my Cultural Comforts by Friday, June 17 by 11:59pm.
- See Further Detailed Guidelines in Canvas Module named Final GL Project.