**ANT 3241: Myth, Ritual, and Mysticism, Section U01B**

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Course Description and Purpose**

Welcome to Myth, Ritual, and Mysticism. In this course, we'll be exploring human belief, tendencies towards myth creation and ritual observance, and mysticism both in and beyond religion. We'll examine the potential cultural, social, and biological reasons that human belief systems came to exist, and people's lived experiences of those belief systems.

Please read this entire syllabus. The syllabus is an agreement between students and instructor.\* It provides an overview of the expectations for you, the student, as well as what you can expect of your assignments.  It also includes my contact information, information concerning course materials and technology use for the course, and grading and course policies. I’m looking forward to a productive semester, so please read this syllabus carefully and make sure this is the right section of this course for you.

**Course Goals and Objectives**

This class is a part of the University Core Curriculum

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:

During, and after successfully completing this course, students will

* CO1. Identify major concepts in the anthropological study of ritual, mysticism and mythology
* CO2. Analyze the various roles of different historical, social, and cultural contexts in shaping how human beings experience life, death, and belief
* CO3. Investigate early human belief systems, and discuss how human belief changes through time
* CO4. Apply course materials in assignments via direct references, employing these materials as support for your arguments

**Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course, but some basic knowledge of Anthropology, Sociology, or a similar social science is helpful for exploring these topics, as this is not an introductory course.

**Required Readings and Technology Use**

The textbooks for this course are,

McCarthy Brown, Karen. 2011.*Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 3rd Ed. (The 1991 edition, with the doll on the cover, is also fine.)

Stein, Rebecca L. and Philip L. Stein. 2011. *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft.* Prentice Hall. 4th ed. (The 3rd edition is fine, too, if you can find it.)

Since this is a hybrid course, you’ll also need to use the Canvas Learning Management System. Your syllabus, video links, additional readings, online assignments, and any other materials beyond the textbook that you’ll need for the course will be found on the class Canvas site.

(Difficulties with, or lack of access to, the technologies needed for this class will not be accepted as a reason for not completing an assignment or accessing course materials. If you need assistance with required technologies, please speak with the instructor and/or technology specialists at FIU via the link to Technical Support provided. Access to computers with internet connections can be found on campus; access is free for registered students.)

**Course Policies and Expectations for Students**

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

* Accessibility and Accommodation
* [Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)](https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/165695/pages/panther-care-and-counseling-and-psychological-services-caps)
* [Academic Misconduct Statement](https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/165695/pages/academic-misconduct-statement)
* [Inclusivity Statement](https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/165695/pages/inclusivity-statement)

**Attendance**

You are expected to come to class every day that it meets.  A portion of your grade is determined by class participation, and attendance is required to accomplish this. Accordingly, all undocumented absences are considered unexcused. I do understand however that cars break down, life opportunities arise, and minor catastrophes must occasionally be attended to in-person.  You can have two unexcused absences in the course with no grade penalty. (You do not need to contact the instructor to report an unexcused absence.)

If you have a medical emergency or documented illness (such as Covid), if you must be excused for a religious holiday, or if you have a serious family emergency to which you must attend, please bring, or send me, documentation for your absence as soon as possible, so you may be excused as per University policy. Please provide documentation in your initial email if possible, and then view your Modules on Canvas to see what work you will need to make up. (Please do not ask the instructor if you will "miss anything" in class that day, as the answer is "yes"; the readings and assigned work are on Canvas. The instructor does not post lecture notes online, but students may upload their class notes.) Also, if you’re a student athlete, please bring, or send me, documentation of any events that you are required to attend, so you may be excused for these (and only these) event-related absences.

**Communication with the Instructor**

Outside of class meetings, you can contact your Instructor via Canvas mail or personal email (the address given at the link at the top of this syllabus.) When you send me an email it's important that you include your full name and which course you're in (I have several of them.)  State your issue clearly and attach documentation for things such as excused absences. Emails will be answered between 9 and 5 pm, Monday-Friday. Any emails received after 5pm, and emails received on the weekends, will be addressed on the next work day (usually Monday. If there is a true and actual dire emergency, I will address your email immediately, but things like late work, absences, or even missed exams are not actual emergencies.)

**Late Work and Make-Up Policy:**

Late work will not be accepted for this class - nor will make-up exams be given - without a documented, university-accepted, excused reason for the absence. See attendance policy for acceptable, excusable absences. If you need to make-up an exam due to an *excused* absence, please provide the instructor with the appropriate documentation for your absence, and ask the instructor, in-person or via email, when the exam can be rescheduled for you (this must be done within one week of the missed exam if you're well enough to contact the instructor, and before the last week of the semester.)

**Plagiarism**

Students should review the FIU web page on plagiarism and academic misconduct above, and be aware of the university's disciplinary sanctions resulting from academic misconduct. Please feel free to ask questions of the instructor at any time if you have any doubts regarding what constitutes plagiarism, and what qualifies as original work.

Additionally, any form of academic misconduct, including **any essay, assignment submission, or exam in this class considered, by the Instructor, to be plagiarized from any source (including class notes, readings, Artificial Intelligence - such as ChatGPT - or other students' comments without citing your source will be reported**to the university's [Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity](https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/) which will result in a formal investigation into the incident.

**Assignments and Grading**

All work for this course must be **original work** intended to address each individual assignment and not work that was previously done for other courses. Each week’s readings and films must be viewed or read before that week’s class meetings.

Grade Distribution:

| Grade Distribution | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Activity** | **Number of Items** | **Points for Each** | **Total Points Available** | **Weight** |
| Essay Exams  (in class) | 2 | 350 | 700 | 70% |
| Hybrid Assignments | 3 | 50 | 150 | 15% |
| Final Quiz                    (online) | 1 | 150 | 150 | 15% |
| **Total** | 9 | N/A | **1000** | **100%** |

Grading Scheme:

| Grading Scheme | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | **Range%** | **Letter** | **Range%** | **Letter** | **Range%** |
| A | 94 or above | B | 83 - 86 | C | 70 - 76 |
| A- | 90 - 93 | B- | 80 - 82 | D | 60 - 69 |
| B+ | 87 - 89 | C+ | 77 - 79 | F | 59 or less |

**Student Rights and Responsibilities:**

In our classroom we are cultivating an atmosphere of productive learning and mutual respect. Some of the concepts that you encounter in this course may be contrary to values or ideas that you hold, and you may find yourself in disagreement with classmates or texts on key points. That is a challenging and important part of the learning process, and opens up our discussion to respectful, academic debate. It is not however a reason to insult, threaten, or engage in similar disruptive expressions in discussion. Please feel free to discuss any comments made (by students or instructor) with your instructor privately via email if you feel you need to; your input is valued.

Please also review the university’s statement of student rights and responsibilities above for detailed information on expectations for student conduct and a discussion of student rights.

**Remote Communication and Instruction:**

If, for any reason, our course cannot continue meeting in person as regularly scheduled, this course will become a remote learning course which requires internet access and the use of digital technology such as a computer and the use of various websites. If we need to move to remote learning, I will contact you via your Canvas Inbox, and course content will be posted in weekly modules on our Canvas pages. Should you need to contact me, your instructor, you can do so via your Canvas inbox, or by sending me a direct email at [aclar006@fiu.edu](mailto:aclar006@fiu.edu).

\*The instructor reserves the right to change or modify the syllabus at any time during the semester. You will be notified of any changes that are made should that occur.