

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROFESSOR INFORMATION



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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This course is concerned with analyzing how different cultures understand the supernatural world, the world of spirits and gods, magical powers, religions, and mystical dangers. Examples are drawn from Europe and North America, Africa, Asia, Australia, South America and the Caribbean. A fundamental premise of the course is that human beings understand our world and shape our lives in large part by assigning meanings to objects, beings, events, and persons; by connecting things together in symbolic patterns; and by creating elaborate forms of symbolic action and narrative.

The course is also aimed at countering the assumption that belief in witchcraft and spirits is solely associated with the non-western world. Furthermore, our goal will not be to promote or debunk belief and practice, but rather to understand culturally diverse ideas using approaches from anthropology, sociology, social psychology and history, seeing belief and practice in cultural, social and political context and considering their place in people's lives.

We will focus on a variety of subject matters including spirit possession and visitation, trance, divination, and altered states of consciousness in particular. This will bring us to explore, among other things: snake handling and trance in Appalachia; vampire sightings; and how Haitian vodou practitioners serve the spirits.

In this course, we will be concerned not so much with coming to absolute conclusions as with learning how to analyze belief and practice; appreciating the complexity and ambiguity of the historical and anthropological record; and with weighing alternative interpretations.

There is no cumulative final exam. Instead, there will be a quiz (multiple choice and short answer questions) at the end of each textbook chapter. You are also expected to write two essay exams, each of which consists of 3-4 short answer questions. The first will ask you to analyze an ethnography which will be read over the first few weeks of the class (Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn). The second will ask you to use concepts from the class to analyze the Islamic piety movement in the Middle East. The essay questions, rubrics, and readings needed to complete these essays will be provided at least two weeks before the due date. Finally, you are expected to make at least six substantive posts to the class Facebook page during the semester (one is due after each even-numbered quiz). You can post links to news stories or short videos that document religious practices in a respectful way, or write thoughtful responses to classmates' posts (not just "like," but actually writing at least 50 words engaging with the material in the post.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand the culturally informed and quite diverse human imaginations of 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 linkages 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 with which 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 ASSESSMENTS

Every student must post at least six substantive posts to the class Facebook page on religious practices in South Florida and beyond. These posts must be respectful (not insulting to people of different religious faiths. (GLOBAL AWARENESS)

Every enrolled student is expected to complete two essay exams during the semester, one during each half of the semester. Each exam will consist of 3-4 short answer questions (250-300 words each, for a total of 900-1000 words per exam.) These essays will ask students to demonstrate mastery of the material covered as well as an ability to apply the acquired knowledge to an improved understanding of the global world. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

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>

GLOBAL LEARNING GRADUATION HONORS

FIU's Excellence in Global Learning Graduation Medallion is awarded to students who complete at least four global learning courses, participate in a variety of global co-curricular activities, and complete a capstone consisting of one

of the following: a substantial original research project and presentation on a global topic; extensive foreign language study; long-term study abroad; or, a globally-focused internship. The Peace Corps Prep certification is conferred upon students who complete at least three global learning courses, language study, and a global problem-solving project. For more information, visit goglobal.fiu.edu.

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.

As a member of the FIU community you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Code of Conduct](#).

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.

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.

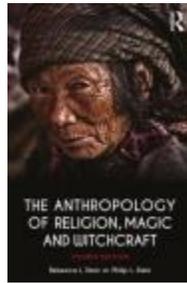
For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

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.



The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft

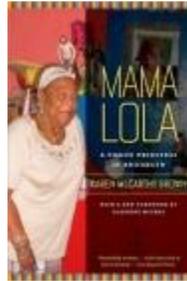
Rebecca L. Stein, Phillip L. Stein

Pearson, 3rd Edition, 2011 or 4th edition, 2017

ISBN: 9781138692527

E-text is available.

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



Mama Lola

Karen McCarthy Brown

Published by PERSEUS D or University of California Press

ISBN- 9780520268104

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

NOTE: This book is available in three different editions. ANY EDITION IS FINE. You can usually save a lot of money by buying older editions.

Readings from this course consist of one text book, one ethnography, and a series of articles. There are also several required films. All readings (at the exception of the text book and ethnography indicated above) and films will be available on the course's Canvas website. Required readings for the course are located below in the weekly section for which they are assigned.

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 and written assignments
- Provide original answers to the essay questions. If it appears that a student has copied from another person's work without citing it (plagiarism), FIU's policies for Academic Misconduct will be followed.

GROUND RULES

1. Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a '0' for the assignment and you will be reported to Academic Affairs. To avoid plagiarism, the essay exams will have to be uploaded on a turnitin.com site associated with this course.
2. Forming a What's App (or similar) group to work together on the quizzes is cheating, and those who share quiz questions or answers will be reported to Academic Affairs.
3. In this course, we will be discussing topics some might consider sensitive, provocative, or taboo such as race, sexuality, and religious beliefs. It is imperative that you express your opinions in a respectful manner.

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. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

FACEBOOK POSTS

Please join the class Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ANT3241onlineSpring2018FIU/>

If your Facebook posts will not be made from an account that is easily recognizable as your own (i.e. you use a nickname as your Facebook identity,) please send a message to the professor with that information so that this grade can be assigned appropriately. Keep in mind that your Facebook postings will be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

12% (120 points) of the final grade will be reflective of your level of participation on the class Facebook page. The professor will review postings on the page periodically and participate in Facebook discussions, but students need to keep track of their own participation. During the last week of class, each student needs to send a single document that includes screen shots of his/her 6 best posts to the professor through CANVAS email.. Dates will be checked to ensure that at least one post was made before the due date for each even-numbered quiz (Quiz 2, Quiz 4, Quiz 6, etc.) . The objective of these discussions is to provide the students with the opportunity to add their own interests to class materials and to discuss material that might be novel and surprising. Discussions also help with the comprehension of new concepts. It is expected that students will participate at least six times during the course with substantive posts (at least 50 words). Feel free to respond directly to another student's posting.

The Facebook page should NOT be used for the transmission of personal message from a student to another, or from a student to the professor. For the latter, Canvas's email should be used.

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 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 twelve quizzes based on assigned readings and films. These quizzes consist of multiple choice questions and will cover both the contents of the required readings, lectures, and the films.

- **12 Quizzes (check schedule below for due dates)**

If you experience difficulties opening or completing the quizzes or need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

ESSAY EXAMS

Two Essay Exams (check schedule below for due dates) Every enrolled student will have to write two relatively short essay exams during the semester, one during each half of the semester. These essays will consist of 3-4 questions, each of which should be answered with one double-spaced page (300 words per question) and the questions will be revealed to students at least two weeks prior to the due date. These short essays will ask students to demonstrate mastery of the material covered as well as an ability to apply the acquired knowledge to an improved understanding of the global world.

EXTRA CREDIT

Extra credit points will be given through extra questions on the quizzes and through a Discussion Board question on a current event. Check the course announcements later in the semester for more information.

GRADING

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available
12 Quizzes	12	40	480
2 Essay exams (with multiple short answer essay questions)	2	200	400
Class E-Participation	6	20	120
Total	14		1000

Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)
A	930 or above	B	830 - 869	C	700 - 769
A-	900 - 929	B-	800 - 829	D	620 - 699
B+	870 - 899	C+	770 - 799	F	620 or less

COURSE CALENDAR

MODULE WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Module 1: THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGION

Presentation and explanation of the course's objectives, student learning outcomes, assignments, and other details; Introduction to the discipline of anthropology and the study of religions

Required Readings:

- Pages 1-29 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft: (Chapter 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion)
- Introduction of Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn- (pp. 1-20. Note – we will read other chapters of the book over the next several weeks).

Watch Module 1 lecture, parts 1 & 2.

Optional: Watch the short Films “Anthropology at Work” AND “Doing Anthropology.” (Note: there will be no quiz questions on course content that is labeled "optional").

- Quiz 1 open 8pm Tuesday, Jan 16 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Jan 17

Module 2: MYTHOLOGY

Required Readings:

- Pages 32-56 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft.(Chapter 2: Mythology)

- Chapter 1 of *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (pp. 21 – 33) (By now, you should have obtained your own copy. There is also an electronic version available (first come, first served) through the FIU library website)

Watch Module 2 lecture on Mythology

Quiz 2 open 8pm Tuesday, Jan 23 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Jan 24

- E-participation. Facebook post # 1 due 11:59pm Thurs Jan 25. If you have not done so already, please join the class Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ANT3241onlineSpring2018FIU/>

Module 3: RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

Required Readings:

- Pages 58-79 of *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. (Chapter 3: Religious Symbols)
- First portion of Chapter 2 of *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (pp. 36 – 49).

Watch Module 3 lecture on Religious Symbols

Quiz 3 open 8pm Tuesday, Jan 30 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Jan 31

Module 4: RITUAL

Required Readings:

- Pages 82-108 of *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. (Chapter 4: Ritual)
- Second portion of Chapter 2 of *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn* (pp. 49 – 70).

Watch Module 4 lecture on Rituals

Watch video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5B3Abpv0ysM> "Girl's Rite of Passage" on an Apache initiation ritual

Quiz 4 open 8pm Tuesday, Feb 6 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Feb 7.

E-participation. Facebook post # 2 due 11:59pm Thurs Feb 8

Module 4B: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF RELIGION

Required Readings:

- *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*. (pp. 70-184)

Watch video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqSrTRu53Jc> "Meet the Vodou Priestess Summoning Healing Spirits in Post-Earthquake Haiti"

FIRST ESSAY EXAM (3-4 DOUBLE-SPACED PAGES TOTAL) due 11:59pm Wednesday, Feb 14. The instructions for the assignment and the Dropbox to submit it are both available through the "Assignments" link on Canvas

Module 5: ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Required Readings:

- Pages 110-125 of *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. (Chapter 5: Altered States of Consciousness)
- Kiyaaani, Mike and Thomas Csordas 1997 "On the Peyote Road." *Natural History*. March: 207-209.

'Watch Film: "The Peyote Road" available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9K7oNclG04> (note – the first five minutes of the recording are previews for other Native American films.) I highly recommend filling out the study guide as you watch the film so that you can succeed on the quiz.

Quiz 5 open 8pm Tuesday, Feb 20 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Feb 21

Module 6: RELIGIOUS SPECIALISTS

Required Readings:

- Pages 127-143 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. (Chapter 6: Religious Specialists)
- Brown, Michael F. 1989 "Dark Side of the Shaman." Natural History. November: 158-161.
- Davidov, Veronica. 2013, "Chapter 6: Shamans and Shams." In Ecotourism and Cultural Production: An Anthropology of Indigenous Spaces in Ecuador. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan). (see the study guide to help you prepare for the quiz).

Quiz 6 open 8pm Tuesday, Feb 27 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Feb 28

E-participation. Facebook post # 3 due 11:59pm Thurs Mar 1

Module 7: MAGIC AND DIVINATION

Required Readings:

- Pages 145-169 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. (Chapter 7: Magic and Divination)
- Gmelch, George 1971 "Baseball Magic." Transaction. 8:8. 320-327.

Quiz 7 open 8pm Tuesday, Mar 6 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Mar 7

MARCH 12-16 Spring Break

Module 8: SOULS, GHOSTS AND DEATH

Required Readings:

- Pages 172-202 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. (Chapter 8: Souls, Ghosts, and Death)
- Barber, Paul 1988 "The Real Vampire." From Vampires, Burial, and Death by Paul Barber. Pages 332-337.
- Brandes, Stanley 2001 "The Cremated Catholic: The End of a Deceased Guatemalan." Body and Society. 7:2-3. Pages 349-355.

Quiz 8 open 8pm Tuesday Mar 20 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Mar 21

E-participation. Facebook post # 4 due 11:59pm Thurs Mar 22

Module 9: GODS & SPIRITS

Required Readings:

- Pages 205-230 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. (Chapter 9: Gods and Spirits).

Quiz 9 open 8pm Tuesday, Mar 27 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Mar 28

Module 10: WITCHCRAFT

Required Readings:

- Pages 233-249 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. (Chapter 10: Witchcraft)

Watch Film: "Strange Beliefs" (available for streaming through the FIU Library)

Quiz 10 open 8pm Tuesday, Apr 3 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Apr 4

E-participation. Facebook post # 5 due 11:59pm Thurs Apr 5

Module 11: THE SEARCH FOR NEW MEANING

Required Readings:

- Pages 230-258 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft.(Chapter 11: The Search for New Meaning)

Quiz 11 open 8pm Tuesday, Apr 10 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Apr 11

Module 12: RELIGION, CONFLICT, AND PEACE; CASE STUDY: THE ISLAMIC PIETY MOVEMENT

Required Readings:

- Chapter 12: Religion, Conflict, and Peace, in The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft (Chapter 12.
- POV The Light In Her Eyes Discussion Guide
- Interview with Saba Mahmood: <http://thelightinhereyesmovie.com/resources/interview-saba-mahmood/>
- Watch film: "Orientalism" (<http://fiu.kanopystreaming.com/video/edward-said-orientalism>)

Quiz 12 open 8pm Tuesday, Apr 17 – 11:59pm Wednesday, Apr 18

E-Participation: Final Facebook post due 11:59pm Thurs Apr 19. Facebook self report (single email to Canvas Messages with screen shots of all 6 posts in a single document): due 11:59pm Friday, Apr 20

ESSAY EXAM 2): due 11:59pm Wednesday, April 25. The instructions for the assignment and the Dropbox to submit it are both available through the "Assignments" link on Canvas.