

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROFESSOR INFORMATION



Instructor: Dr. Juliet Erazo
Phone: (305) 348-2246
Office: SIPA 332
Office Hours: Thursdays, 2-3 pm and by Appointment
E-mail: Canvas messages only

Website : <http://gss.fiu.edu/people/faculty/juliet-erazo/>

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 weekly answers to the Discussion Board questions, which will ask them to reflect on the readings for the week. . 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, and sorcery.(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.

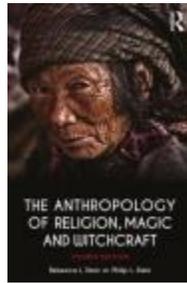
For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

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

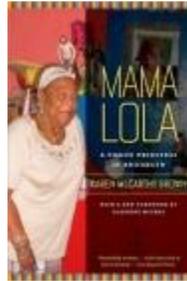
Rebecca L. Stein, Phillip L. Stein

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 hybrid online/face-to-face course, which means about half of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in hybrid course are the same for a traditional course, even though we spend only about half of the time together in a classroom when compared to a normal, face-to-face course. Hybrid 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.

DISCUSSION FORUMS

Discussion Forums are used to get you to start thinking about what you have read in a way that will help prepare you for class discussions and team assignments. The forums are based on effort, not coming up with a specific answer. In other words, if you invest some time and thought into your answer, you will get full credit. Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

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.

- **11 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 less than one double-spaced page. 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 1 extra question per quiz, and through in-class extra credit activities (students must be present in class to have access to these extra credit points). Check the course announcements later in the semester for more information.

GRADING

Course Requirements		Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available
11 Quizzes		11	40	440
First Essay exam (with multiple short answer essay questions)		1	150	150
Second Essay Exam		1	100	100
Discussion Board Posts		11	10	110
Team assignments (completed in class)		10	20	200
Total		37		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

IN CLASS, Jan 11: 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 I: 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 –11:30am Thursday, Jan 18

Discussion Board Post 1 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Jan 18

IN CLASS Jan 18 – Team exercise 1 (worth 20 points)

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 –11:30am Thursday, Jan 25

Discussion Board Post 2 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Jan 25

IN CLASS Jan 25 – Team exercise 2 (worth 20 points)

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 – 11:30am Thursday, Feb 1

Discussion Board Post 3 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Feb 1

IN CLASS Feb 1 – Team exercise 3 (worth 20 points)

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 – 11:30am Thursday, Feb 8.

Discussion Board Post 4 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Feb 8

IN CLASS Feb. 8 – Team exercise 4 (worth 20 points)

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 Thursday, Feb 15. The instructions for the assignment and the Dropbox to submit it are both available through the “Assignments” link on Canvas

IN CLASS Feb. 15 – Extra credit team activity and final Q&A for Essay Exam 1.

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 -- 11:30am Thursday, Feb 22

Discussion Board Post 5 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Feb 22

IN CLASS Feb. 22 – Team exercise 5 (worth 20 points)

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 –11:30am Thursday, Mar 1

Discussion Board Post 6 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, 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 - 11:30am Thursday, Mar 8

Discussion Board Post 7 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Mar 8

IN CLASS Mar 8 – Team exercise 6 (worth 20 points)

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 - 11:30am Thursday, Mar 22

Discussion Board Post 8 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Mar 22

IN CLASS Mar 22 – Team exercise 7 (worth 20 points)

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 - 11:30am Thursday, Mar 29

Discussion Board Post 9 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Mar 29

IN CLASS Mar 29 – Team exercise 8 (worth 20 points)

Module 10/11: WITCHCRAFT and THE SEARCH FOR NEW MEANING

Required Readings:

- Pages 233-258 of The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. (Chapter 10: Witchcraft and Chapter 11: The Search for New Meaning)

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

Quiz 10/11 open 8pm Tuesday, Apr 3 - 11:30am Thursday, Apr 5

Discussion Board Post 10 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Apr 5

IN CLASS Apr 5 – Team exercise 9 (worth 20 points)

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/>](http://thelightinhereyesmovie.com/resources/interview-saba-mahmood/)
- Watch film: “Orientalism” (<http://fiu.kanopystreaming.com/video/edward-said-orientalism>)

Quiz 12 open 8pm Tuesday, Apr 10 - 11:30am Thursday, Apr 12

Discussion Board Post 11 – see Canvas site for the question. Due at noon on Thursday, Apr 12

IN CLASS Apr 12 – Team exercise 10 (worth 20 points)

IN CLASS Apr 19 – Class wrap-up and final Q&A for Essay Exam 2.

ESSAY EXAM 2: due 11:59pm Thursday, April 19. The instructions for the assignment and the Dropbox to submit it are both available through the “Assignments” link on Canvas.