



ANT 3241

Myth, Ritual, and Mysticism

Section: U06

Hybrid/Certified

Fall Term 2026

Course Meeting Information

Tuesdays from 3:30 - 4:45 pm in PC212

Course Time Zone | Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates are according to this time zone.

Professor Information

Alfonso Matas

Roles: Primary Instructor

Email: [Canvas Inbox](#)

Response Time: 1 day

Phone: N/A

Office Hours: By Appointment

Office Location: SIPA I 504

Department or Academic Unit: Religious Studies Department

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the anthropological study of religion, exploring phenomena broadly categorized as "religion" and the closely related concept of the "supernatural." Unlike theology, which systematically examines the nature of religious belief, this course focuses on how religion is practiced and performed across diverse societies. Key topics include mythology, symbolism, rituals, religious specialists, gods and spirits, witchcraft, and magic, all analyzed through an anthropological lens. The course begins with an overview of anthropological approaches and theories related to religion, and then examines its role in everyday life, addressing themes such as sickness, death, and uncertainty. It concludes by exploring the intersection of religion and violence.

Textbook and Course Materials

The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Rebecca L Stein and Philip Stein

Publisher: Routledge 4th edition

Publication Date: 2017

Copyright Date: 2017

ISBN 10: 0205718116

ISBN 13: 978-0205718115

Chapters/Pages: N/A

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for \$22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the [Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop](#).

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- **Analyze the culturally informed and diverse imaginations about the supernatural world and supernatural forces in different societal contexts, including the post-industrial global north (Western Europe and North America), BRIC countries, and so-called traditional societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia.**
- **Compare the linkages and differences among distinct human beliefs, including religious systems, magic, witchcraft, superstition, sorcery, and mysticism.**
- **Evaluate the connections between spirituality, religious beliefs, supernatural forces, and healing practices, including their influence on health care, across different societies.**
- **Reflect on and contextualize their own religious beliefs, spirituality, and/or lack thereof by exploring beliefs unfamiliar to them.**
- **Demonstrate an awareness of diverse ways of being human—spiritual, religious, or atheist—fostering a more inclusive global perspective.**

Global Learning Course Objectives

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

1. 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).
2. Demonstrate the ability to discuss 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).
3. Develop the intellectual skills for analyzing and solving a variety of sociocultural issues around the globe (GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

Expectations of this Course

This is an hybrid course, which means that much of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in a hybrid course are the same as a traditional course. In fact, 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 getting started page located in the course modules;**

- **introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;**
- **take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;**
- **interact online with instructor and peers;**
- **review and follow the course calendar and weekly outlines;**
- **log in to the course 2 times per week;**
- **respond to discussions by the due date specified. No late work will be accepted;**
- **respond to emails within 2 days;**
- **submit assignments by the corresponding deadline.**

The instructor will:

- **log in to the course 3 times week;**
- **respond to emails within 24 hours;**
- **grade assignments and/or provide feedback within 7 days of the assignment deadline.**

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within 24 hours.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas which includes comprehensive information on various University

and Course Level Policies such as:

- **University Policies**
- **Accessibility and Accommodations**
- **Online Etiquette**
- **Technical Requirements and Skills**
- **Computer & Digital Literacy Skills**
- **Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies**
- **Academic Integrity**
- **Copyright Statement**
- **Core Principles of This Course**
- **Nondiscrimination Statement**
- **Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**
- **Fair Use Policy**

Assignments & Assessments

Group Assignments

- **Each group assignment submission page provides clear expectations and assignment requirements**
- **Group assignment due dates are every Friday at 11:59 pm. Late submissions will receive a 5% penalty per date past the due date and no submission will be received after the third day.**
- **Groups will be formed in the second week of class. Students should be notified after the groups are formed.**
- **To submit assignments you should go to the respective submission**

page and follow the instructions. All assignments will be turned through canvas.

Be reminded that the use of AI technology and plagiarism in any form is strictly forbidden.

Under the group assignment rules, every individual within the group will receive the group grade. This means that the integrity of the assignment is a shared responsibility, and it is up to each group to ensure that their work is original and compliant with the guidelines.

To ensure group cooperation and consent, the assignment instructions explicitly state:

"Before turning in the assignment, the person making the submission should send a copy to all group members and obtain the OK from everyone in the group"

This step is not optional—it is a requirement designed to protect everyone in the group and ensure that all members are fully aware of and agree with the final submission.

All submissions are made in the form of a group submission by one designated "group leader."

The instructor will not—under any circumstances— micromanage the groups. It is your responsibility as a team to communicate effectively, collaborate with integrity, and uphold the academic standards set forth in this course. I trust that you will take this responsibility seriously and work together to produce work that reflects your collective effort and originality. Each group assignment instructions clearly outline the procedure to be followed when (1) a students does not meet with the group and (2) when a student meets with the groups but does not significantly contribute to the group assignment is to identify these students at the top of the assignment submission page.

- There is a 5% penalty per day past the due date
- The previous policy extends only for 3 days, after which time no more assignment submissions will be accepted and will receive a final

assignment grade of "0".

- Exceptions will only be granted to students that provide proper and timely official FIU required documentation concerning their own hospitalizations and other major health issues.

For more information, please review the [important information about the assignments](#) page.

Quizzes

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. Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet.

- You will find the dates and times on your assignment or quiz modules.
The dates and times when assessments will become available (Quizzes are due on Friday at 11:59 pm.
- Assessment duration is 30 minutes.
- Students be able to see the results on the Saturday, immediately after the quiz due date.
- There is a 5% penalty per day past the due date
- The previous policy extends only for 3 days, after which time no more assignment submissions will be accepted and will receive a final assignment grade of "0".
- Exceptions will only be granted to students that provide proper and timely official FIU required documentation concerning their own hospitalizations and other major health issues.

Preliminary Religious Site Visit Report

This is a short one-page assignment which requires that the complete contact information concerning the religious site of to the religious site the students have chosen for the Final Religious Site Visit Report. For more important details on this assignment students should open the submission page for both assignments. Late submissions will be penalized by 5% points daily. The previous policy extends only for 3 days, after which time no more assignment submissions will be accepted and will receive a final assignment grade of "0". **Exceptions will only be granted to students that provide proper and timely official FIU required documentation concerning their own hospitalizations and other major health issues.**

Final Religious Site Visit Report

- This is a 5-6 pages, double space, length paper written in **essay format concerning the participation of a ritual of interest in a chosen religion.**
- Students will answer independently each of the 7 questions in the order presented in the assignment description.
- Grading: each of the 4 *Q will carry a maximum of 16 points; the 3 remaining Qs will carry a maximum 12 points.

It is imperative that student visit this assignment submission submission page for further details. Late submissions will be penalized by 5% points daily. The previous policy extends only for 3 days, after which time no more assignment submissions will be accepted and will receive a final assignment grade of "0". **Exceptions will only be granted to students that provide proper and timely official FIU required documentation concerning their own hospitalizations and other major health issues.**

Proctored Exams

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student's responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our [Student Proctored Exam Instructions](#) webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Zoom meetings can be accessed via the Zoom link in the course navigation menu. Once you click on the Zoom link, it will route you to join the meeting for the respective class session. You will also be able to view upcoming meetings, previous meetings that you have already joined, and meeting recordings. Before joining an actual class session:

Reference the [Zoom Student Tutorials](#) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

Access the [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#) to test out the software before joining an actual session.

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#). Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points of Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Quizzes	13	100	1300	25%
Team Assignments	11	100	1100	25%
Preliminary Site Visit Report	1	100	100	5%
Final Religious Site Visit Report	1	100	100	20%
Final Exam	1	100	100	25%
Total	27	N/A	2700	100%

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	From	To
A	100%	95%
A-	< 95%	90%
B+	< 90%	87%
B	< 87%	83%
B-	< 83%	80%

Letter Grade	From	To
C+	< 80%	77%
C	< 77%	70%
D	< 70%	60%
F	< 60%	0%

Canvas Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	Academic Honesty Policy	Quiz	0
	Introduce Yourself	Discussion	0
	Mid-Semester Grade (UCC Requirement)	Assignment	100
	Open Forum	Discussion	0
	Practice Quiz	Quiz	0
9/5/26	Canvas Quiz 1: Anthropology-Religion	Quiz	100
9/11/26	Team Assignment 1: Anthropology-Religion-Nacirema	Assignment	100

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
9/12/26	Canvas Quiz 3: Symbols	Quiz	100
9/18/26	Team Assignment 2: DAPL	Assignment	100
9/19/26	Canvas Quiz 2: Myth	Quiz	100
9/25/26	Team Activity 3: Symbols	Assignment	100
9/26/26	Canvas Quiz 4: Rituals and Myths	Quiz	100
10/2/26	Team Assignment 4: Ritual	Assignment	100
10/3/26	Canvas Quiz 5: Altered States of Consciousness	Quiz	100
10/9/26	Team Assignment 5: ASC	Assignment	100
10/10/26	Canvas Quiz 6: Religious Specialists	Quiz	100
10/11/26	SUBMISSION ONE-PAGE PRELIMINARY ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL	Assignment	100
10/16/26	Team Assignment 6: Religious Specialists	Assignment	100
10/17/26	Canvas Quiz 7: Magic and Divination	Quiz	93
10/23/26	Team Assignment 7: Magic	Assignment	100

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
10/24/26	Canvas Quiz 8: Souls and Ancestors, Ghost, and Death	Quiz	100
10/30/26	Team Assignment 8: Souls, Ancestors and Funeral Rituals: Compare and contrast	Assignment	100
10/31/26	Canvas Quiz 9: Gods and Spirits	Quiz	100
11/6/26	Team Assignment 9: Gods and Spirits	Assignment	100
11/7/26	Canvas Quiz 10: Witchcraft	Quiz	100
11/13/26	Team Assignment 10: Witchcraft Azande Ted Talk	Assignment	100
11/15/26	SUBMISSION PAGE FINAL REL SITE VISIT REPORT	Assignment	100
11/20/26	Team Assignment 11: Search for New Meaning	Assignment	100
11/21/26	Canvas Quiz 11: Adaptation and Change; New Religious Movements	Quiz	100
12/5/26	FINAL EXAM	Quiz	100

Schedule of Topics

This is a tentative outline of the course. It is subject to change with written notice.

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility** (CRCA) is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.