Course Syllabus



ANT3241: Myth, Ritual, and Mysticism; Section RVC

Professor Dr. Jean Rahier



(305) 348 - 2246

Office Hours: Through Zoom by appointment

or through Zoom on Fridays from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm (see the Zoom link)

E-mail: Via the Canvas Inbox system only



This University Core Curriculum (UCC) and Global Learning (GL) course is concerned with the boundaries between everyday life and another order of reality: the supernatural world, the world of spirits and gods, magical powers, religions, and mystical dangers, and with what happens when those barriers ease or break apart. 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 are symbol-making as well as tool- making animals. We 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 considers how symbols related to the

supernatural world are created and structured; how they draw on and give meaning to different domains of the human world; how they are woven into politics, family life, and the life cycle; and how we can interpret them.

The course is particularly aimed at countering the assumption that belief in witchcraft and spirits is particularly associated with the non-western world. Throughout, our goal will be not to promote or debunk belief and practice, but rather to understand them using approaches from anthropology, 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; spiritualism and mediumship in 19th century America; visitations by the Virgin Mary; claims of abduction by space aliens in late 20th century America, etc.

We will also pay careful attention to the fears that other people are causing harm through hidden or mystical means, and the consequences of such fears, especially moral panics. The primary examples will be the great European witch hunt of the 15th-17th centuries; the Salem Village witchcraft trials of 1692; the fears of satanic abuse; the practice of magic and witchcraft in sub-Saharan Africa; the links between anger and illness in South America; the religious use of drugs, etc.

Historical and anthropological research on these topics has grown rapidly in recent decades, changing understandings of witchcraft and spirit possession, and of Western or global north's relationship to the supernatural world in general.

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.

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 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.

Student Learning Objectives

University Core Curriculum

This course satisfies the following University Core Curriculum requirement for Social Science Group Two (FIU-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.

This requirement is supported by the following learning outcomes for the course. 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 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

In this course, the Final Essay fulfills the GL requirement. It asks students to demonstrate comprehension of the existence of various perspectives associated with different religious/spiritual subjectivities and diverse cultural backgrounds. It also asks students to demonstrate their willingness to engage—thanks to what they have learned ihere—in problem-solving activities related to religions and religiously informed worldviews. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE and GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

Global Learning Student Learning Objectives

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.

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 _(http://goglobal.fiu.edu).

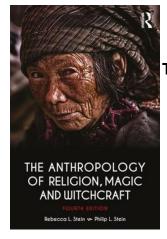
Important Information

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- Policies
- <u>Technical Requirements and Skills</u>
- <u>Accessibility and Accommodation</u>
- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- <u>Academic Misconduct Statement</u>



table



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

You may purchase your textbook online at the **FIU Bookstore** <u>(http://fiu.bncollege.com/webapp</u>/wcs/stores/servlet/BNCBHomePage?storeId=21551&catalogId=10001).

Readings from this course consist of one textbook. There are also several required films, which will be available on the course's Canvas website. Required readings must be done PRIOR to participating in the required e-discussions. This will allow for informed e-participation.

Unfortunately, there is an error in the textbook, in the table 7.1 on page 155 (chapter 7). You should pay careful attention to this error as it might lead you to select the wrong answer to two questions included in quiz # 7. The table 7.1 on page 155 <u>erroneously</u> includes "prophecy" as a deliberate inspirational method of divination. It should instead have presented "prophecy" as a fortuitous inspirational method. The text surrounding that table is correct, however. **PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF IT.**

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, all assignments will have to be uploaded on a turnitin.com site associated with this course.
- 2. Papers must include a title, your name, the course name and number, and page numbers.
- 3. All email correspondence must begin with a salutation ("Professor Rahier," "Dear Dr. Rahier," "Hi Professor," etc.) and end with your name. I will not read your email if you fail to include this.
- 4. 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.
- 5. In your essays and term papers, you must avoid quoting at all cost. You must, instead, paraphrase (use your own words). Paraphrasing should be limited as well. Again, beware of plagiarism.
- 6. You may not quote or make reference to Wikipedia. If you do so, points will be taken away from your assignment. You may use only and only scholarly sources, that is to say, texts published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals or presses. Not everything you find on the internet has the same quality.
- 7. When writing your papers, you must make use of the Chicago Manual of Style available on the Course Content page of this course's website. Failure to do so will result in points being taken away from your assignment.
- 8. All students must regularly read the contents of all announcements. Announcement contents are considered known by all enrolled students.

Expectations of this Course

Communication between students and the professor in this course will take place via **Canvas messages ONLY.** Do not use the professor's FIU e-mail address to communicate with him. When writing to the professor: do not copy the entire class; you should not assume that your issue is of interest to everyone.

The message feature is a private, internal Canvas only communication system. Users must log on to

the system to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in Canvas to inform users when a new message has been received; therefore, it is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Check out the <u>Canvas Conversations Tutorial</u> <u>(https://vimeo.com/canvaslms/212en)</u> to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Discussions and the Inbox.

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other students. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

100 points of the final grade (100/1,000) will be reflective of your level of participation in the chapter discussions that the professor will initiate. There will be more than one discussion open per chapter. The chapter discussions will be open for a limited time period, which will correspond to the chapter we are covering in each specific week (see Course Calendar). When the discussions of a specific chapter will close, the discussions of the following chapters will automatically be available. What is looked for here with this system is your enthusiastic participation IN DUE TIME. It is highly recommended that you keep up with the program set up in the syllabus and calendar. Previous participation in chapter discussions helps students to score better in quizzes. At the end of the semester, the professor will review the level of participation of each student in the course's e-archives and assign a participation grade accordingly. The objective of these discussions is to provide the students with the opportunity to discuss material that might be novel and surprising. Discussions help the comprehension of new concepts. However, in order to facilitate the actual discussions, and make sure that they stay on focus, students should enter relatively brief (3 paragraphs maximum) interventions at a time. It is expected that students will participate in at least 2 to 3 discussions per chapter. Feel free to respond—in a courteous manner-directly to another student's posting. The more you post, the better it is for your participation grade. Twice a week, the professor will take a look at the evolving discussions and intervene as he sees it necessary. The e-space of the discussions may NOT be used for the transmission of a personal message from a student to another, or from a student tor the professor. For the latter, the course's e-mail and message posting systems must be used.

• 12 Sets of Questions (check schedule below for due dates)

Zoom

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. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct course discussions.

Zoom Test Meeting Room (https://zoom.us/test)

Use this link to access the Zoom Test Meeting Room. This meeting room is available to test out the software before joining an actual session.

Reference the provided links to access Zoom student tutorials to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

- <u>Download Zoom (https://zoom.us/support/download)</u>
- Login to Zoom through Desktop Application (https://fiu.service-now.com/sp?id=kb_article& sys_id=4483f98adbdc37484968fbf9af9619a5)
- Enable and Test Audio & Webcam (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362283-How-Do-I-Join-or-Test-My-Computer-Audio-)
- <u>Schedule a meeting (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362413-How-Do-I-Schedule-Meetings-)</u> or Join a Zoom meeting (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-How-Do-I-Join-A-Meeting-)
- Invite others to join meeting (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362183)
- <u>Chat (Professors) Students look at attendees section for instructions</u> (<u>https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/205761999-Webinar-Chat</u>)
- <u>Share My Screen (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362153-How-Do-I-Share-My-Screen-)</u>
- <u>Record a Local Zoom meeting (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362473-How-do-</u> <u>I-record-a-meeting-</u>)
- <u>Host Control in Meetings (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-Who-Is-The-Host-Of-The-Meeting-</u>)
- <u>Getting Started with iOS (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362993-Getting-Started-with-iOS</u>)
- <u>Getting Started with Android (https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/200942759-Getting-</u> <u>Started-with-Android</u>)



In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the <u>Practice Quiz</u> from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. For quiz duration, grading criteria and feedback response time, please review the <u>important</u> <u>information about quizzes</u> page.

There are eleven quizzes based on assigned readings and films. These quizzes have multiple choice questions and cover both the contents of the required readings and films. There are 20 questions per quiz. The questions come from a question bank. No two quizzes for the same module will have the exact same questions.

• 11 Quizzes (check Course Calendar or the Assignments link for due dates)

Each quiz will cover the chapter covered during its corresponding module. The quizzes will remain open for the duration used to cover the corresponding module (see course calendar). Availability of quizzes will not be extended.

THERE IS ONE AND ONLY ONE TIMED ATTEMPT FOR EACH QUIZ. You must take a quiz in one sitting. You do not have the option to pause or stop a quiz. You should not expect to consult the textbook or any other note while taking the quiz. In fact, the time you have to take the quiz has been limited so that you do not have the time to do that. You should plan to take the quiz the exact same way you would take a quiz in a face-to-face environment.

Assignments

1/2 Term Essay

For this 4 to 5 pages essay (without including title page and list of cited references), you should approach a practitioner of another religion (a fellow student, a faculty, a friend, a person you know, a religious specialist, ...) and interview him/her about a very specific aspect of his/her religion: either 1) a religious myth, 2) a religious symbolic system, 3) a religious ritual, 4) an altered state of consciousness in an identified religious context, OR 5) the particularities of a religious specialist in such religion. See the 1/2 term essay prompt at the Assignments link for further details.

Final Essay

The prompt will become available two weeks before the due date. That essay will deal with the content of chapter 12 (and by extension with the contents of all chapters).

The professor will hold a Zoom session at the beginning of the semester (look out for an announcement at the beginning of the term) to answer any question you might have about the assignments and any other aspect of the course. The session will be recorded and remain available at the Zoom link for those students who cannot attend the Zoom session.

For assignment availability, detailed instructions, grading criteria and feedback response time, please review the **<u>important information about assignments</u>** page.



Your final grade will be calculated out of 1,000 points, even if you have completed the extra credit.

table			
Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available
11 Quizzes	11	50	550
1/2 Term Essay (3-5 pages)	1	150	150
Final Essay (5 pages)	1	200	200
Class E-Participation			100
Total		N/A	1000
Total with Extra Credit		N/A	1100

table					
Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	Above 920	В	830 - 869	С	700 - 769
A-	900 - 919	B-	800 - 829	D	620 - 699
B+	870 - 899	C+	770 - 799	F	Below 620



Course Calendar

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
	Module 1 Discussions (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses</u>) /148742/assignments/1837333)	due by 11:59pm
Sun Oct 2, 2022	Module 2 Discussions (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses</u> /148742/assignments/1837332)	due by 11:59pm
	Module 3 Discussions (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses</u>	due by 11:59pm

Date

Details	Due
<u>/148742/assignments/1837331)</u>	
Module 4 Discussions	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
<u>/148742/assignments/1837330)</u>	
厨 Module 5 Discussions	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
<u>/148742/assignments/1837329)</u>	
타 Module 6 Discussions	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
/ <u>148742/assignments/1837328</u>)	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
🔀 Quiz 1	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
/148742/assignments/1837316)	
2 Quiz 2	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
/148742/assignments/1837320)	
🗶 Quiz 3	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
<u>/148742/assignments/1837319</u>)	
🔀 Quiz 4	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
<u>/148742/assignments/1837315</u>)	
🔀 Quiz 5	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
<u>/148742/assignments/1837317)</u>	
<i>梁</i> Quiz 6	
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn
<u>/148742/assignments/1837313</u>)	
₽ <u>1/2 Term Essay</u>	
	due by 11.50mm
(https://fiu.instructure.com/courses	due by 11:59pn

Sun Oct 9, 2022

Date	Details	Du
	Module 10 Discussions (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses</u> /148742/assignments/1837324)	due by 11:59pr
	Module 11 Discussions (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837323)	due by 11:59pr
	Module 12 Discussions (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837334)	due by 11:59pr
	Module 7 Discussions (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837327)	due by 11:59pr
	Module 8 Discussions (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837326)	due by 11:59pr
Sun Nov 27, 2022	Module 9 Discussions (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses</u> /148742/assignments/1837325)	due by 11:59pr
	Quiz 10 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837314)	due by 11:59pr
	Quiz 11 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837322)	due by 11:59pr
	Quiz 7 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837321)	due by 11:59pr
	Quiz 8 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837318)	due by 11:59pr

Date	Details	Due	
	Quiz 9 (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837312)	due by 11:59pm	
Sun Dec 4, 2022	Final Essay (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837338)	due by 11:59pm	
	Class Participation (<u>https://fiu.instructure.com/courses</u> /148742/assignments/1837336)		
	Extra Credit (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1837337)		
	Mid-Semester Grade (UCC Requirement) (https://fiu.instructure.com/courses /148742/assignments/1800800)		