

ANTHROPOLOGY 11/EL CAMINO COLLEGE  
Sec# 2072/ TTH 11:15-12:40; ARTB 338  
Office Hours: MW 12:00-2:00;  
F 11:30-12:30

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COURSE SYLLABUS/ SPRING 2010  
**THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MAGIC, RELIGION, AND WITCHCRAFT**

WELCOME TO ANTHROPOLOGY 11! This is an introductory course to the Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft. Utilizing the anthropological perspective, most of the material in this course will examine religious beliefs and practices of non-Western, so called “traditional” societies. Some articles pertaining to the religious expressions of the Western, “modern” world, will also be included. This course will provide the student with an understanding of the basic concepts and functions of religion, magic and witchcraft. The workings of supernatural entities, such as souls, ghosts, and spirits, and supernatural practitioners, such as shamans, priests, prophets, and sorcerers, will be discussed. We will also look at the consequences of rapid cultural change on religious beliefs and practices.

The format of the course is geared towards student participation. There will be a set of readings assigned each week, and videos relevant to the topics under discussion will be shown on most occasions. I will provide focus questions that will guide you through the readings, and which will serve as a springboard for class discussions. The material from the readings and the videos is extremely interesting. The purpose of class discussions is to enable us to make sense of what might seem, at times, strange and irrational beliefs and practices. My request is for you to keep an open mind, **DO THE READINGS!!!**, and participate in class discussions.

The following is an outline of the course objectives. It constitutes a list of the major concepts you should thoroughly understand by the completion of the semester.

1. Provide examples of ethnographic case studies to illustrate how the theoretical frameworks of the evolutionary, functional and psychoanalytic perspectives would approach the study of religion.
2. Compare and contrast the various levels of religious participation found in individualistic, shamanistic, communal and ecclesiastical organizations.
3. Define and describe the terms animism and animatism and include cultural examples of each concept.
4. Contrast the ways in which the roles of shamans and priests reflect egalitarianism and stratification respectively.
5. Explain and evaluate the importance of altered states in religious practices and provide an ethnographic example to illustrate your understanding.
6. Define the term symbol and provide a description of a religious symbol.

7. Describe the difference between witchcraft and sorcery and provide an explanation of how these beliefs function in society.
8. Contrast the concept of witchcraft in traditional societies with that of Euro-American beliefs.
9. Explain the importance of myth and ritual, making reference to the function of each in society.
10. Identify and describe the various types of revitalization movements and explain the circumstances surrounding the origins of these movements.

The following Student Learning Outcome has been developed for the course. By the tenth week of class, the students should be able to understand the requirements outlined below.

In a class-written assignment, students will demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the supernatural by (1) defining the terms animism and animatism; (2) outlining and explaining each of the characteristics of animistic beings; and (3) providing one culturally relevant example for animism and another for animatism.

The following Student learning Outcome has been developed for the program. By the sixth week of class, the students should be able to understand the requirements outlined below.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the four-field approach in anthropology by outlining each field, identifying which aspects of the study of human beings each field addresses and providing two examples of specializations within each field.

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

Moro, P.; Myers, J.; Lehmann, A. 2008. Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.  
New York: McGraw Hill

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. Any publisher, any edition

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- (1) There will be three in-class exams, each of which will consist of multiple choice questions, short answers, and essays. Each exam will be worth 100 points.

- (2) In addition, students will be graded for the completion of written assignments totaling 80 points. You will need to submit typed answers to Focus Questions that I will provide for particular readings, on the day in which discussions are to take place (absolutely no exceptions).
- (3) Students who have missed more than two meetings will not be eligible for possible extra credit assignments (no exceptions). Keep in mind that a tardy is equivalent to ½ absence.
- (4) In most cases, my lectures follow the material as presented in the book; however, occasionally, the content of a lecture is drawn from other sources. If you miss one of these particular meetings, you will need to visit me during office hours to have access to this material.

Notes:

- (1) Scantrons (Form 882-E) and #2 pencils will be needed for all exams. You will also need blank sheets of paper on which you will write the answers to essay questions. Exams schedules will not be extended beyond the allotted time, so you should arrive on time.
- (2) Any changes to this syllabus will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to know of those changes.
- (3) Exams are based on text, lecture, and video material. Make-ups will be given on exceptional circumstances only (which will be assessed by me), and only when consultation with me, the instructor, is made no later than 24 hours after the exam, no exceptions.
- (4) Cheating is absolutely prohibited. If a student is caught cheating during an exam, an “F” will be assigned to the exam.
- (5) Please turn all cell phones off before entering the classroom.
- (6) Students are expected to remain in the class for the whole length of the meeting. Those who leave early without previous consultation with the instructor will be marked absent. (Please, do not leave the classroom in order to answer a phone call. If you do so, you will not be allowed back in for the remaining of the lecture).

**GRADING:**

Grading criteria is as follows:

Three Exams @ 100 points each-----300  
 Written Assignments (Answers to Focus Questions)----- 80

Total possible points-----380 points

**A**= 100-90% of total possible points  
**B**= 89-80%  
**C**= 79-70%  
**D**= 69-60%  
**F**= 59% and below

## LECTURES, READINGS, AND EXAM SCHEDULE

(Depending on availability and scheduling, some films may be substituted)

NOTE: The Focus Questions on the articles corresponding to the authors whose names are underlined constitute the written assignments. These are due on the date indicated in the schedule)

Feb. 16, 18	<b>Introduction to the course</b> <b>Basic Concepts and Perspectives in Anthropology</b>	
Feb. 23, 25	<b>The Anthropological Study of Religion (Sec. 1)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Harris</u> , Lee, <u>Sharp</u> (hand-out) <b>Video:</b> “Faces of Culture: Religion and Magic”	
March 2, 4, 9	<b>Myth, Symbolism, and Taboo (Sec. 2)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Beattie</u> and <u>Daugherty</u> <b>Video:</b> Joseph Campbell’s “Hero with a Thousand Faces”	
March 11, 15, 18	<b>Ritual (Sec. 3)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Gordon</u> , <u>Miner</u> <b>Video:</b> “Faces of Culture: The <i>Asmat</i> of New Guinea”	
March 23	<b>Discussion:</b> “Traditional” vs. “Modern” Societies <b>Read:</b> <u>TFA</u> , pp. 1-85	
March 25, 30	<b>Shamans, Priests, and Prophets (Sec. 4)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Howells</u> and <u>Brown</u> <b>Video:</b> selected segments of “Warriors of the Amazon”	
April 1	<b>EXAM #1</b>	
April 6, 8	<b>The Religious Use of Drugs (Sec. 5)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Harner</u> , <u>Slotkin</u> (hand-out) <b>Video:</b> “Chief Peyote”	
April 20, 22, 27	<b>Ethnomedicine/ Religion and Healing (Sec. 6)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Finkler</u> (hand-out) <b>Presentation:</b> “ <i>Espiritualista</i> Healings”	
April 29, May 4, 6	<b>Witchcraft, Sorcery, Divination, and Magic (Sec. 7)</b> <b>Read:</b> Intro and articles by <u>Brain</u> , <u>E. E. Evans Pritchard</u> , Malinowski <b>Videos:</b> “Burning Times” “Witchcraft among the Azande”	MMay
May 11	<b>EXAM #2</b>	

- May 13                    **Discussion:** Things Fall Apart, pp. 87-125
- May 18, 20, 25        **Ghosts, Souls, and Ancestors: Power of the Dead** (Sec. 8)  
**Read:** Intro and articles by McCarthy Brown, del Guercio  
**Video:** “Voodoo and the Church in Haiti”
- May 27,  
June 1                    **Old and New Religions: the Changing Spiritual Landscape**  
(Sec. 9)  
**Read:** Intro and articles by Kehoe, Whitmore (selected  
Sections)  
**Video:** “Ghost Dance”
- June 3                    **Discussion:** “The Confrontation of Tradition and Modernity”  
**Read:** “TFA, pp. 129-209
- June 8                    Review
- June 10                   **FINAL EXAM**

**HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!!**

NOTE: Section 10 in the Moro, Lehmann, Myers book, “Religion as Global Culture,” even though not discussed in a particular lecture, will be, nevertheless, addressed in various readings throughout the semester.