

Spring 2011
The Ecology of Religion: Shamanism
ANG 6241 (8683)

Lecturer: Dr. Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo

Lecture sessions: F	9:35 AM-12:35 PM	Place: CBD 234
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Shamanism is called the religion of nature. In this course we will study that relationship from the perspective of anthropology by looking at the theoretical structure of shamanism and its variability in terms of its practice and meaning in relation to the environment. We will examine the patterns that shamanistic belief systems generate during their practice and how shamanism is articulated to the daily life and social and political structure of diverse societies. We will trace through time the dynamics of the shaman and how these are expressed archaeologically. The origins of shamanism is a main concern of this course and we will attempt to understand what this means in relation to the environment in terms of the ecology of religion.

We will study the shaman as a religious practitioner by looking at shamanism's diversity of expressions ethnographically as well as in the archaeological record. This will demand that we understand why shamans exist and in what context they are found in the past and the present. We will explore the significance of the shaman in relation to the development of religious movements.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To understand the main theoretical and conceptual approaches to the study of ecology of religion by looking at shamanism from an archaeological and anthropological perspective.
- 2) To understand the significance of shamanism in explaining the evolution of religion and the patterns occurring in the development of religious diversity, and how that diversity came about.
- 3) To obtain a general comparative understanding of the variation of shamanistic practices and what they mean in relation to human societies and the environment.
- 4) To understand the relationship between material culture and shamanism and what this means in terms of the societies themselves.
- 5) To understand the relationship between shamanism and ecology in the context of human social evolution.
- 6) To understand the relationship between shamanism and political power in the past, through archaeology, as well as in the present.
- 7) To give an anthropological perspective on how archaeology can methodologically approach the study of shamanism.

Textbooks:

Znamenski, Andrei A. 2007. *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and Western Imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Atran, Scott. 2002. *In Gods we Trust*. Oxford University Press

EVALUATION: A final paper (40%), class presentation of the paper (20%) and class participation (40%).

GRADE SYSTEM:

A= 90-100 %

B= 80-89

C= 70-79

D= 60-69

F= Below 59

Assignments: You are expected to do the following:

- 1) Read the assigned material **BEFORE** coming to class. Many students have difficulty understanding the lectures because they do not familiarize themselves with the material prior to class. Do **NOT** be one of these students.
- 2) Participate actively in the discussion of the articles.
- 3) Produce a very original paper, with clear objectives and ideas.

Disclaimer: Some adjustments may be made in the schedule and class requirements during the course of the semester. All changes will be announced.

ATTENDANCE is required. Final grades will be reduced one grade level for two unjustified absences. Students who are unable to come to class on a regular basis due to special circumstances should see the instructor at the beginning of the term to discuss such circumstances. Finally, please avoid at all costs coming in or walking out of the classroom in the middle of lectures. This is most rude and disruptive.

Readings

Week 1. Introduction to the course.

Week 2. Introduction: The Ecology of Religion: Early Definitions of Shamanism.

Readings:

V. M. Mikhailovskii; Oliver Wardrop. 1895. Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia, Being the Second Part of "Shamanstvo." *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 24. (1895), pp. 62-100.

Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia-(Continued). *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 24. (1895), pp. 126-158.

Narby, Jeremy. 2004. Shamans Through Time. Tarche. Part 1

Week 3. The Ecology of Shamanism.

Readings: Znamenski, Andrei A. (2007). *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and Western Imagination*. Oxford University Press

Week 4. Critique on shamanism.

Readings: Znamenski, Andrei A. (2007). *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and Western Imagination*. Oxford University Press.

Week 5. Shamanism

Readings: Roberta N. Hamayon lectures 1995

Week 6: The Ecology of Shamanism and cognition.

Readings:

Atran, Scott. 2002. In Gods we Trust. Oxford University Press

Week 7: The Ecology of Shamanism and cognition

Readings:

Atran, Scott. 2002. In Gods we Trust. Oxford University Press

Week 8: Shamanism and Cognition

Winkelman, Michael 2002. Shamanism and Cognitive Evolution. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 12(1):71-101

Helvenston, Patricia A and P. G. Bahn. 2003. Testing the “Three Stages of Trance” Model. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 13(2):213-224

Reaction. Clottes, Jean. 2004. Hallucinations in caves, and other articles of discussion. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14(1):81-100

Whitehouse, Harvey. 2000. Indigenous Religions of Papua New Guinea. Chapter 1. In *Arguments and Icons*. Oxford University Press

Week 9: Shamanism and Cognition.

Readings:

Reichel-Dolmatoff, G. 1967 Rock Paintings of the Vaupés: An Essay of Interpretation. *Folklore Americas* 2:107-113.

Reichel-Dolmatoff, G. 1978. Drug-Induce Optical sensations and their relationship to applied art among some Colombian Indians. *Art in Society*, edited by Gerald Duckworth and Co. London. Pp.289-304.

Reichel-Dolmatoff, G. 1979, Desana Shamans' Rock Crystals and the hexagonal Universe. *Journal of Latin American Lore* 5(1): 117-128.

Klein, Cecelia F.; Guzmán, Eulogio; Mandell, Elisa C.; Stanfield-Mazzi, Maya. 2002. The Role of Shamanism in Mesoamerican Art. *Current Anthropology* 43(3):383-420

Week 10. Shamanism and animism

Readings: Reichel-Dolmatoff, G. 1976. Cosmology as ecological analysis: A view from the rain forest. *Man*, n.s., 11:307–18.

Descola, Philip. 1996. Constructing natures: symbolic ecology and social practice. In *Nature and society: anthropological perspectives* (eds) P. Descola & G. Pálsson, 82-102. London: Routledge

Viveiros de Castro 1998. Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 4, 469-88.

Oyuela-Caycedo, Augusto. 2006. The Ecology of a Masked Dance: Negotiating at the Frontier of Identity in the Northwest Amazonia. *Baessler Archiv* (2004) 52: 54-74.

Week 11. Shamanism and the dark side

Willberth Johannes. 2004. The Order of Dark Shamans among the Warao. . In *Darkness and Secrecy*, edited by Neil Whitehead an Robin Wright.pp.21-50. Duke University.

Vidal, Silvia and N. Whitehead. Dark Shamans and the Shamanic State: Sorcery and Witchcraft as Political process in Guyana and the Venezuela Amazon. In *Darkness and Secrecy*, edited by Neil Whitehead an Robin Wright.pp.82-108.. Duke University.

Wright, Robin. 2004. The Wicked and the Wise Men: Witches and Prophets in the History of Northwest Amazon. In *Darkness and Secrecy*, edited by Neil Whitehead an Robin Wright.pp.51-81. Duke University.

Heckenberger, Mike. 2004. The Wars Within: Xinguano Witchcraft and Balance of Power. In *Darkness and Secrecy*, edited by Neil Whitehead an Robin Wright. Pp.179-201. Duke University.

Santos-Graneros. Fernando. 2004.The enemy Within: Child Sorcery, Revolutions, and the Evils of Modernization in Eastern Peru. In *Darkness and Secrecy*, edited by Neil Whitehead an Robin Wright. pp.272-305. Duke University.

Larout, Elsje. 2004. Sorcery and Shamanism in Cashinahua Discourse and Praxis, Purus River, Brazil. In *Darkness and Secrecy*, edited by Neil Whitehead an Robin Wright. Pp.244-271. Duke University.

Week 12. Shamanism, spirit possession and gender

Behrend, Heike and Ute Luig. 2000. *Spirit possession, modernity & power in Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press

Week 13. Shamanism, spirit possession and gender

Behrend, Heike and Ute Luig. 2000. *Spirit possession, modernity & power in Africa*. University of Wisconsin Press

Week 14. Shamanism and archaeology

Readings:

Oyuela-Caycedo, Augusto. 2001 The Rise of Religious Routinization. The Study of Changes from Shaman to Priestly Elite. In *Mortuary Practices and Ritual Associations: Shamanic Elements in Prehistoric Funerary Context in South America*. Edited by John E. Staller and Elizabeth J. Currie, pp. 1-18, Archaeopress Publishers of British Archaeological Reports, Oxford, England.

Week 15. Paper presentations.

Week 16. Paper presentations.

Week 17. Final discussion