

# **Anthropology of Religion**

**ANT 3241 Spring 2012**

**Section 1119**

**M 3:00–3:50, W 3:00-4:55**

Instructor: Karen McIlvoy

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Teaching Assistant: Deborah Andrews

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## **Course Description and Objectives:**

This introductory course is designed for students who have little or no previous experience with anthropology. It will introduce students to basic concepts of anthropology and the anthropological perspective on religion. Students will learn various theories of religion as it relates to culture and society and will examine religious expression from a cross-cultural perspective. Upon successful completion of this course, each student will:

- Have a basic understanding of anthropology and how the anthropological perspective is useful for the study of religion
- Have knowledge of different theories of religion as it relates to culture and society
- Understand the functions of rituals, myths and symbols.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the diverse ways and reasons that people around the world universally practice religion
- Develop an appreciation for the wide range of religious practices and understand how these practices compare cross-culturally.
- Understand the relationship between religion, politics, and economics.

## **Required Textbooks:**

1. *Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Philip L. Stein and Rebecca Stein
2. *Mules and Men* by Zora Neale Hurston
3. Additional readings will be announced in class and made available on the class e-learning site.

The textbooks are available through the UF Bookstore and OBT. They are also both available for purchase on Amazon.com.

## CLASS REQUIREMENTS

The grade will be based on two exams, five in-class pop quizzes, and four short essays. There will be one midterm exam and one final exam; the format of each will be a mixture of objective questions (e.g., true false, multiple choice, etc), and short answer or essay questions. There will also be five unannounced in-class quizzes that will be used as a proxy for attendance.

Students will be required to attend three organized religious services (i.e. Catholic Mass, Jewish prayer service, etc.) or spiritual ceremonies (i.e. Native American sweat lodge or pipe ceremony) that are outside the usual religious orientation or experience of the student. The three services/ceremonies will be chosen by the students, but each must be in accordance with different religious systems or denominations. For each visit, the student will be required to write a 1 ½ - 2 page **essay** about their visit (including where they went, what they observed, and how the experience relates to class). Each visitation essay counts for 20 points. After all three visitation essays, the students will then have to write a 5 page **discussion essay** outlining their experience, comparing it to their previous experiences with religion, and discussing how that experience has furthered their understanding of religion from an anthropological point of view. This essay counts for 30 points. Due dates for all essays are listed on the class schedule below.

Attendance is not taken in this class, but is highly encouraged. Students not in attendance cannot make up quizzes. The only exception to this rule is if you clear an absence with the instructor prior to the absence or produce proper documentation afterwards (e.g. doctor's note). Other than this stated exception, this policy is non-negotiable. Late work will automatically be reduced a full letter grade for each day it is late.

Extra credit opportunities may arise during the semester and will be offered to the entire class. These opportunities will be announced in lecture as well as posted on the e-learning site.

### **Grading:**

Midterm Exam	20%	40 points
Quizzes	5%	10 points
Visit Essays (3)	30%	60 points (20 points each)
Discussion Essay	15%	30 points
Final Exam	30%	60 points

A final letter grade will be assigned at the end of the semester, according to this scale:

A	(90-100%)
B+	(86-89%)
B	(80-85%)
C+	(76-79%)
C	(70-75%)
D+	(66-69%)

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- D (60-65%)
- E (59% or below)

**Make-up Exams:**

If an exam is missed, and the absence was pre-arranged, or in the event of illness accompanied by a physician's note, a make-up exam will be given. No make-up exams will be given for students who miss the testing period due to unexcused absences.

**Student Conduct:**

All students must comply with the Student Conduct Code which can found at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php>. Any behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instructional program will not be tolerated. Please turn off cell phones and all other electronic devices before class.

**Texting during class is not allowed.** Laptops may only be used to take notes. Disruptive students will be asked to leave.

**Accommodating Students with Disabilities:**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who in turn must provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

**Counseling Services:**

**Academic Honesty:**

The University reminds every student of the implied pledge of Academic Honesty: "on any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid."

**CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN THIS CLASS**

Consult the Student Guide at [www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/) for further information. To avoid plagiarism, you must give credit whenever you use another person's idea, opinion, or theory; any facts, statistics, graphs, drawings (any pieces of information) that are not common knowledge; quotations of another person's actual spoken or written words; or paraphrase of another person's spoken or written words. Students caught cheating will be referred to the University administration for disciplinary action, the consequences of which can include failure of this course, and possible expulsion from the University.

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## Course Outline

**Note:** Though the basic three-exam structure will not change, the order of specific topics may change with advance notice. The timing of assigned films is subject to availability. Updates will be available on the class E-Learning page.

Week	Lecture Topic	Reading
1	Introduction	
	What is Anthropology	
	Culture	
	The Anthropological Perspective	
2	Defining Religion	Ch. 1
	Theoretical Approaches	
3	Mythology	Ch. 2
	Religious Symbols	Ch. 3
	Sacred Space, Sacred Time	
	<b><i>Essay 1 Due – January 25</i></b>	
4	Ritual	Ch. 4
	Religious Obligations	Gmelch
	Altered States of Consciousness	Ch. 5
	Mysticism	
5	Religious Practitioners	Ch. 6
	Religious Healing	Chireau
	Zora Neale Hurston	Mules and Men
6	Magic	Ch. 7
	Divination	
	Magic and Science, Astrology	Burton and Grandy 1
	<b><i>Essay 2 Due – February 15</i></b>	
7	Souls	Ch. 8
	Death and the Afterlife	
	Death Rituals and Funerary Rites	
	Changes in Western Attitudes toward Death	Aries
8	<b>Midterm Exam – Feb 27</b>	
	Gods and Spirits	Ch. 9
	Hinduism, Shinto	Fisher 1
9	<b><i>No Class - SPRING BREAK</i></b>	
10	Monotheism	Fisher 2
	Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Jainism	
	<b><i>Essay 3 Due – March 14</i></b>	
11	Atheism and Philosophy	
	Confucianism, Buddhism	Carmody and Brink
12	Witchcraft 1	Ch. 10

	Witchcraft 2	Burton and Grandy 2
13	Adaptation and Change	Ch. 11
	Santeria and Vodou	Lefever
14	Revitalization Movements	Ch. 11 cont.
	Cults	Malefijt
	Neo-Paganism and Revival Movements	
	<i>Essay 4 Due – April 11</i>	
15	Fundamentalism	Mamdani
	Religion in politics and economics	
16	Religious Violence	Novak
	<b>Final Exam April 25</b>	