



REL3938 (6872), ANT3930 (0587): M3-4; W3. AND-034

"SHAMANS, SORCERERS, PRIESTS, AND SAVANTS"

Prof. Robin M. Wright (Off. Hrs: T 10:00 - 2:00;
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<http://www.newstudiesonshamanism.com>

Objectives of Course: This course examines the varieties of religious experience that come under the rubric of 'shamanism' and 'shaman'. Originally a Tungus (Siberian tribal people) word, 'shaman' has been extended to include the most diverse group of specialists, from midwives to

prophets.

Part I of this course presents the student with the parameters of shamanic spiritualities, the processes of becoming a shaman, altered states of consciousness and shamanic transformations, and the relations of shamans to the cosmos and its spiritual powers. Part I also considers various scientific paradigms and their potential for understanding the long-range historical development of shamanic consciousness.

The next three units (Parts II-IV) focus on shamanic functions: II. Healing, especially through the so-called "plant spirit shamanism" among urban mestizos of South America; III. Assault sorcery; IV. Priestly knowledge and Prophetic Counselling. While there is overlap amongst all of these functions, there are features which nevertheless distinguish each from the other, referring to indigenous forms of knowledge and power, sociality, a variety of relations among human and other-than-human beings (spirits, especially).

Each will be amply illustrated and discussed through readings, audio-visual material, and the Professor's own research experiences of over 35 years. Slides, films, tape recordings, CDs from that work will be used during class.

In UNIT V, "New Age shamans", the course considers several of the contemporary developments of indigenous shamanism by urbanized, non-indigenous movements: the neo-shamanic movement, its roots in Western nature mysticism, the effects of globalization on shamanic revitalization and Other Recent Developments.

Course Readings: The most important books from which the readings for the course will be drawn, are:

1. Piers Vitebsky, *The Shaman: Voyages of the Soul*. 2001
Duncan Baird. (available for \$2.83 on Amazon.com);
required reading.
2. N. Whitehead & R. Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*.
2004, Duke. (paperback, used \$8.24 on Amazon.com);
3. Stephan Beyer, *Singing to the Plants: A Guide to
Mestizo Shamanism in the Upper Amazon*. (hardcover,
2009, Kindle edition for 18.79; paperback edition for
19.74);
4. Michael Winkelmen, *Shamanism: a Psychosocial paradigm
of Consciousness and Healing*. (expensive to buy;
scanned chapters will be put up on course website);
5. Michael Harner. *The Way of the Shaman*. Harper, 1980.
(available for \$3.41 on Amazon.com);
6. Andei Znamemski, *Beauty of the Primitive*. (hardbook).
Oxford 2007 (selected chapters will be scanned and
placed on website).

The majority of the books will be put on Reserve at the Library. Copies of many of the articles will also be kept in a folder in course reserves in the Department of Religion (Anderson Hall, 107) Besides these, a series of articles can be found on the course website, www.newresearchonshamans.com

Course website: Established in 2011, this is a growing resource for recent research on shamans in the world. Its site name, "Maliri, X'men and World-Making", refers to one of the main powers of the shaman, and to two names for "shaman" in two different cultures (Mayan and Arawakan). To enter the site, create a Username and Password and browse; there's much interesting stuff on shamanism/

Schedule of Classes, Readings, Films and Exams:

01/09: course presentation and introduction to the readings;

UNIT I: PARAMETERS OF SHAMANISM;

01/11: **DEFINITIONAL QUESTIONS.** York, "Shamanism - Traditional" & "Urban Shamanism", in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (hereafter ERN), v.2, pp. 1532-37 (**on website**); Vitebsky, pp. 6-25;

01/16: **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY. NO CLASS;**

01/18: **"THE WORLD'S OLDEST SPIRITUAL TRADITION"**. Michael Winkleman, Chs.1 & 2;

01/23: **STORIES OF SHAMANIC LIVES.**

"You Are Going to Save Many Lives. Life-Story Of Manuel Da Silva, Hohodene Jaguar-Shaman" *Shamanism Annual*, Issue 24, December 2011, pp. 30-36; "Discovering the Way", M. Harner, (**on course website**); Vitebsky, *The Shaman*, pp. 52- 95;

01/25: **ALTERING STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS.** Winkleman, Chs. 3 & 4; film-clip on "In Search of Parika" with ppt.

presentation; Wright, "Mysteries...", pp. 98-102;

Supplementary Reading: Beyer, Part II, "Ayahuasca";

01/30: **SHAMANISM AND COSMOLOGY.** J. Overing, "Shaman as 'Maker of Worlds'"; "Mandu's Apprenticeship and a Jaguar-shaman's Powers of World-making", Wright (**on course website**) Ch. 2: pp. 82 - 154;

02/01: **SHAMANISM AND POWER.** J. Langdon, "Dau: Shamanic Power in Siona Religion and Medicine", in Langdon (ed.), *Portals of Power*, pp. 41-62; Gerhard Baer, "The One Intoxicated by Tobacco", in Langdon (ed.), *Portals of Power*, pp. 79-102; (**on website**)(**short film:** "Jaguar-Shamans of Yurupary");

02/06: **DISCUSSION ON READINGS FOR UNIT I**

02/08: **PAPERS ON UNIT I DUE.**

UNIT II: HEALING AND PROTECTION FROM SORCERERS OR SORCERER SPIRITS

02/13: Piers Vitebsky, "Shamans and Clients", pp. 96-127; Edith Turner, "The Reality of Spirits", (**on course website**); "Roberte Hamayon, "Game and Games, Fortune and Dualism in Siberian Shamanism", (**on course website**);

02/15: Stephan Beyer, *Singing to the Plants: A Guide to Mestizo Shamanism in the Upper Amazon*, Part I;

02/20: Chs. 5 & 6, Winkelman exact pages TBD);

02/22: **DISCUSSION OF UNIT II.**

02/27: **PAPERS ON UNIT II DUE**

UNIT III: ASSAULT SORCERY

02/29: "Introduction" to *In Darkness and Secrecy*, Whitehead and Wright; M. Brown, "Dark Side of the Shaman" (**on course website**); M. Harner, "Magic Darts, Bewitching Shamans, and Curing Shamans", in Narby & Huxley, pp. 195-199 (**on course website**);

MARCH 03 - 10: SPRING BREAK. NO CLASSES.

03/12: Johannes Wilbert, "The Order of Dark Shamans among the Warao", Fernando Santos-Granero, "The Enemy Within", and Carlos Fausto, "A Blend of Blood and Tobacco". ALL 3 In Whitehead & Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*.

03/14: (on website) Wright, Ch. 3, "You Will Suffer Along Our Way" (ms.); Buchillet, "Sorcery Beliefs, Transmission of Shamanic Knowledge,...", in Whitehead & Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*;

Film: "*Baniwa. A Story Of Plants And Cures*", (on an important Baniwa political leader, victim of assault sorcery and his struggles to heal);

03/19: **DISCUSSION OF CASES;**

03/21: **PAPERS ON UNIT III DUE.**

UNIT IV: PRIESTS

03/26: R. Wright, "Power and Change in Native American Religions" (unpublished ms., 2009); A. Oyuela-Caycedo, "The Rise of Religious Routinization", 2001, in Staller and Currie, pp. 1-18 (**on course website**);

03/28: **Kogi Priests, and Their Warnings.** G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, "Kogi Priests", (**on website**); A. Oyuela-Caycedo, 1998 "Ideology, Temples, and Priests: Change and Continuity in House Societies in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta". In *Recent Advances in the Archaeology of the Northern Andes*. Edited by A. Oyuela Caycedo and J. Scott Raymond, pp.39-53.

04/02: **Film:** "Message to the Younger Brother" (and Aluma), Kogi priests as caretakers of the universe system.

04/04: **DISCUSSION OF UNIT IV;**

04/09: PAPERS ON UNIT IV DUE.

UNIT V: NEO-SHAMANISM, Shamanic Revitalizations, And Other Recent Developments

04/09: Michael York, "Castaneda, Carlos" in ERN, v. 1, 272-3; Kocku von Stuckrad, "Harner, Michael - and the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, ERN, v. 1, 743-4;

04/11: *The Beauty Of The Primitive*, Andrei Znamenski
(**chapters to be designated**);

04/16: Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman*. (**chapters to
be designated**);

**04/18: Revitalization of Shamanic Traditions: Mongolia and
the Amazon.** "A Revival of Mongolian Shamanism", p. 3-11,
Shamanism Annual (**on course website, issue available for
xerox in department**); "The Revival of Shamanism in State-
Level Societies", F. Lipp, pp. 11-17, (**on website**); "In
Search of Traditional Shamans", Daur in Inner Mongolia...",
Grimaldo, pp. 17-24 (**on website**); "Soul Loss or
Diminishment", Sifers, pp. 24-30 (**on website**).

04/23: Films: "In Pursuit of the Siberian Shaman";
"Malikai Dapana: Baniwa House of Shamans' Knowledge and
Power." (with accompanying handout)

04/25: **DISCUSSION ON UNIT V; COURSE WRAP-UP.**

**(END OF READING PERIOD): PAPERS ON UNIT V DUE (in Religion
Department, Anderson 107).**

Course Requirements:

Four (4) short (3-5 pp.) reflection papers on each of the
major units of the course, and a written test on Unit 1.
The four papers count for 80% of the final grade. Class
participation and the written test: 20%. Students are

expected to attend all classes and complete assigned readings prior to each class meeting. Class participation does count in final grade evaluation. **Continued absence will not be tolerated;** following the third absence, 3 grade points will be taken off the final grade for each day of absence. **More than 6 absences will lead to administrative withdrawal from the course;**

Pop-quizzes will be administered whenever the Professor considers them necessary.

REGULATIONS OF THE COURSE:

1. **Plagiarism or cheating:** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive a grade of zero on the assignment in question and will fail the course. In addition, they will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action. See <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm><http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm> for more information on UF policies.

2. **Incompletes are strongly discouraged** and will be given only when students who have finished most of the assignments satisfactorily cannot complete the final

requirements due to unforeseen events. If this is the case, students must arrange for the incomplete **before** the end of the semester.

3. **Make-up exams and quizzes** will be given only under very special circumstances, such as a medical emergency. In that case, students must bring a doctor's note.

4. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom. Please turn phones and pagers off during class.

5. **Students with Disabilities.** Students requesting classroom accommodation or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation or special consideration.