

REL3022: MYTH AND RITUAL

0333 REL 3022 T 4/R 4-5 [10:40-11:30 / 10:40-12:35]

26076 ANT 3930 T 4/R 4-5

ONLINE (100%)

I. Instructor

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Office hours: Zoom, T/R 5-7

II. Course Website

Students are held responsible for all materials and related information posted on the course website.

III. Objectives of the course:

This course examines the theories and methods in the anthropological and religious studies of myths and rituals. Examples will be primarily drawn from indigenous cultures of the Americas, and other areas of the world (Australia). Students can expect to learn how to interpret the symbolism and meanings of myths and rituals. We will discuss the place of myth and ritual in both traditional and non-traditional societies and the importance of both in mediating historical change. We will explore how mythic images pervade contemporary films and franchises. As this is an election year, sections of the major Modules will focus on political myths and rituals.

IV. Readings and Modules:

There are two books to purchase from the bookstore: *The Fire of the Jaguar*, by Terence S. Turner (HAU Books, Chicago, 2017); and *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions*, by Catherine Bell (Kindle e-book, Oxford University Press, 1997). Students should also purchase the Kindle copy of the Popol Vuh [A New English Version. Translated from the K'iche by Michael Bazzett. Milkweed Editions, 2018] **All other Readings are posted in the Modules section of the website.**

V. Lecture and Reading Schedule:

Class Schedule:

09/01: Introduction to the Course

MODULE 1: MYTHS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

09/03: Brief History of the Study of Myths

Readings: Leonard & McClure, “The Study of Mythology”; John Mohawk, “The Sacred in Nature. Mythology Can Change Our Minds”

09/08: The Primordial Times of Myth & the Narrator as Artist

Eliade, Mircea, “The Structure of Myths”, pp. 1-20, in *Myth and Reality*.

Kroeber, Karl, “Unaesthetic Imaginings: Native American Myth as Speech Genre”, pp. 86-93.

MODULE 1.1: CREATION NARRATIVES - HAUDENOSAUNEE, K'ICHE MAYA

09/10: Haudenosaunee Creation Story –First Woman and the Creator Hero Twins

Assignment: the *Iroquois creation Story*, John C. Mohawk [pdf on website], pp. 1-61 and Introduction.

And watch by class time:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSzDM7Jmg94&t=15s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D0elAQYLdfc>

09/15: Haudenosaunee Creation Story –First Woman and the Creator Hero Twins

[same as 09/10]

(if possible, we will screen the “Iroquois Creation Story” by the Seneca Arts and Culture Center)

09/17: Creation Story of the K'iche Maya – the Hero Twins defeat the Lords of Death - 1

Assignment: Read the *Popol Vuh*, Pts. I-II, & watch the video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOEQNo5m4rg>

09/22: Creation Story of the Maya – the Hero Twins defeat the Lords of Death - 2

Assignment: Read the *Popol Vuh*, Pts. III & IV, watch the video, and read Edwin Barnhart, *Maya to Aztec: Ancient Mesoamerica Revealed*. “The Mesoamerican Ball Game” pp.137-43

MODULE 1.2: MYTH/RITUAL - THE ORIGIN OF COOKING FIRE

09/24: The Origin of Cooking Fire and Society: The Amazon

Assignment: Turner, Chs. 1 & 2, pp. 1-19

Watch: “The Kayapo. Out of the Forest”, Beckham & Turner, Royal Anthropological Institute. Alexander Street,
<https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/the-kayapo-out-of-the-forest>. [to access this video, you must have VPN (Cisco). After logging on, search on the ufl.edu website for Library EZ Proxy. Go to the Library Catalog and type in the title of the film]

09/29: The Origin of Cooking Fire and Society: The Amazon (cont.)

Assignment: Turner, Chs. 3 & 4, pp. 19-54

10/01: The Origin of Cooking Fire and Society: The Amazon (cont.)

Assignment: Turner, Chs. 5, pp. 55-93

10/06: The Origin of Cooking Fire and Society: The Amazon (cont.)

Assignment: Turner, Chs. 6-7, pp. 93-120

10/08: The Origin of Cooking Fire and Society: The Amazon (cont.)

Assignment: Turner, Ch. 8, pp. 121-46

MODULE 1.3: MYTH, FICTION AND FILM

10/13: Myth, Film and Politics: “Avatar” and Indigenous Peoples

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY – watch - “God, Glory, Gold” by Faithkeeper Oren Lyons <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GpIkrqOlHA>

Watch the film “Avatar” by classtime (it can be found on Amazon Prime)

Readings: Taylor, *Avatar and Nature Spirituality*, “Epilogue: Truth and Fiction in Avatar’s Cosmogony and Nature Religion”, pp. 301-36.

10/15: Myth, Film and Politics: archetypes in “The Hunger Games”

Watch: an episode of “The Hunger Games” (including Mockingjay) by classtime (it can be found on Amazon Prime)

Readings: Frazer Merritt, Dennis Merritt, and Kevin Lu, “A Jungian Interpretation of The Hunger Games. A Myth that Defines Our Times”, pp. 1-26

MODULE II: RITUALS AND THEIR SYMBOLS

10/20: Kinds of Rituals and Symbolic Action

Catherine Bell, Part II, Chapter 4, “Basic Genres of Ritual Action”, pp. 91-137.

10/22: Betwixt and Between – the paradoxes and performances of liminality

Read: Victor Turner, Excerpts from *The Ritual Process*, on “Liminality and Communitas”; Richard Schechner, Chapter 2, “What is Performance?”; Edward Schieffelin, “Performance and the Cultural Construction of Reality”

10/27: Rites of Passage – Apache Ceremonialism – myth/ritual nexus

Reading: Ines Talamantez, “In the Space between Earth and Sky: Contemporary Mescalero Apache Ceremonialism”, pp. 142-59.

Watch: “The Sunrise Dance” (Apache)
<https://ufl.kanopy.com/s?query=The%20Sunrise%20Dance>

10/29: Rites of Renewal – Australian Aborigines and “The Dreaming”

Readings: Mircea Eliade, “Sacred Time and Myths”, pp. 68-113, in *The Sacred and the Profane*.

Watch: “Kurtal” <https://ufl.kanopy.com/video/kurtal-snake-spirit-0>

11/03: Ritual and Politics

Read: David Kertzer, “The Ritual Construction of Political Reality”, Chapter 5 in *Ritual, Politics and Power*, pp. 77-102.

[ELECTION DAY – DO NOT FORGET TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL RITUAL OF DEMOCRACY]

11/05: The Efficacy of Ritual Prayers

Read: S. J. Tambiah, The Magical Power of Words: *Man, New Series*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Jun., 1968), pp. 175-208;

Buchillet, Dominique 1992. Nobody is there to Hear. Desana Therapeutic Incantations. In E. Jean Matteson Langdon and Gerhard Baer, (eds). *Portals of Power: Shamanism in South America*. New Mexico, University of New Mexico Press. pp. 211-230.

11/10: How Rituals Incorporate and Produce Change

Read: Bell, Chapter 7, “Ritual Change”; Geertz, “Ritual and Social Change” (in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Ch. 6), pp. 142-69.

11/12: Indigenous Prophet Movements in the Americas 1

Reading: Handsome Lake

11/17: Indigenous Prophet Movements in the Americas 2

Reading: The “Ghost Dance”

Watch: “Into the West - Part 6 (Ghost Dance)”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgkLtkoy2PU>

11/24: “New” Rituals 1: the Global Ayahuasca Movement

Reading: Evgenia Fotiou, “‘One Heart’: Personal Insights into Spiritual Dimensions of Participation in Contemporary Ayahuasca Rituals” in *Seeking the Sacred with Psychoactive Substances. Chemical Paths to Spirituality and to God*. Praeger, 2014.

Watch: “Santo Daime Church (USA),”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpz52ucfUxA> ;

“Wine of souls”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBXhbfmhUMk>

12/01: “New” Rituals 2: ‘Burning Man’ in the Desert

Readings: Sarah Pike, “No Novenas for the Dead. Ritual Action and Communal Memory at the Temple of Tears”, pp. 194-213; Sarah Pike, “Performing Grief in formal and Informal Rituals at the Burning Man Festival”, pp. 363-77.

Extra: <https://www.everfest.com/magazine/16-Years-of-Burning-Man-Temples-and-the-Story-of-David-Best> &

<https://journal.burningman.org/author/lgilmore/> &

François Gauthier, "The Enchantments of Consumer Capitalism: Beyond Belief at the Burning Man Festival" pp. 143-58.

12/03: Rituals on the Internet

Read: Cheryl Casey, "Virtual ritual, real faith. The revirtualization of religious ritual in cyberspace" *Online – Journal of Religions on the Internet* 2.1 (2006)

12/08: Concluding Reflections on Myth and Ritual

Holidays (no classes): November 25-28 – Thanksgiving break; November 11 – Veterans Day; October 2-3 – Homecoming; September 7 – Labor Day.

VI. Film Resources:

Throughout the course, films will be used to illustrate the variety of ways in which ritual and myth embody the central values of a society's religious traditions. How they do this is the focus of our exploration in this course. Ritual and myth are sensitive to their historical context in such a way that both internal and external change are meaningfully incorporated into a society's central symbols and symbolic practices. Moreover, ritual and myth are understood to be a traditional society's way of controlling such change.

A list of films to be screened or recommended for viewing can be found in the Modules section, "Film Resources" tab.

VI. Expectations:

Our Responsibilities: To present a solid review and discussion of the subject matter. The instructor is committed to helping you understand the material. If you have any questions regarding course materials, policies, grading, and technical problems, we highly encourage you to contact us ahead of time. You are encouraged to ask questions in class.

Your Responsibilities: To keep up with lectures, readings, films, and submit assignments on the due dates. The Course schedule can be found in the Modules under the Course Materials tab. You are expected to:

- Follow guidelines provided by the instructor.
- Do the assigned readings and watch assigned films.
- Come to class prepared to discuss the Readings.
- Submit written assignments on the due date.
- Submit assignments in the appropriate place under the Assignments tab on the website. It is preferable to submit papers on the website.
- Follow the UF honor code (see below). Remember: All written portions of assignments are checked for plagiarism.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

VII. Written Assignments

Your final grade will be based on three short (750 wds) Reflection Papers on any of the films we will watch (prompt questions will be posted under the Assignments tab), and 2 longer papers (8-10 pages) - the first on a myth/sacred narrative/cosmology that interests you and the second on a religious ritual/ceremony that interests you. Topics for the longer papers should be discussed with the Professor. In each case, you are expected to provide a description of the myth or ritual or cosmology, based on the sources or your experience, and a short reflection on the theoretical/methodological approaches for understanding them.

VIII. Grading and Evaluation:

The current UF grading policies for assigning grade points may be found at the web page: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/.

Grade Scale:

A: ≥ 94 of X; A-: ≥ 90 of X; B+: ≥ 87 of X; B: ≥ 83 of X; B-: ≥ 80 of X; C+: ≥ 77 of X; C: ≥ 73 of X; C-: ≥ 70 of X; D+: ≥ 67 of X; D: ≥ 63 of X; D-: ≥ 60 of X; E: below 60.

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

IX. Special Treatment

If you are having problems with the course material or health related problems, please contact the instructor as soon as possible. Do not attempt to contact us at the end of the semester and expect us to solve any of the above problems. 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.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

X. Academic Honesty and the Honor Code

Plagiarism or cheating: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of

behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

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. 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.

XI. Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit shcc.ufl.edu/.

University Police Department: Visit police.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services career.ufl.edu/.

Library Support: cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. teachingcenter.ufl.edu/

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/

Student Complaints On-Campus: sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/

On-Line Students Complaints: distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process/ /