

Anthropology 216-001 Magic, Witchcraft & Religion
1:40pm – 2:55pm T/Th
ILC 403

Tommi L. White, M.A.
tommiwhite@u.boisestate.edu

Office Hours: TR 12:15p.m. – 1:15p.m. HWSC Rm 54 and as arranged.

Required Reading:

- 1) Anthropology and Religion: What we know, think and question. Winzeler, Robert L. 2008. ISBN: 978-0-7591-1046-5
- 2) Purity and Danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo. Douglas, Mary. 2002. ISBN: 0-415-28995-5 (Note: Other editions okay)
- 3) Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: an anthropological study of the supernatural 7th ed. Moro, et al. 2008. ISBN: 978-0-07-340521-6 (Other editions okay, inform me if some required articles are not in your edition, and I will place copies on Reserve.)

I urge students to search online for used copies of the above to help alleviate the cost of your books. If you are awaiting delivery of a book, let me know and I will not deduct points for late homework.

Course Objectives and Prospectus:

Cultural anthropology is the study of human social behavior. Religious anthropology is a subfield of that branch. In many cultures no distinction is made between natural and supernatural realms of existence. There are still cultures that believe there are no natural illnesses or accidents, and all sickness and death is blamed on the action of witches. There are also cultures in which demonic possession is used to garner sick days for factory employees. In this class, we will study the nature of religion, the forms in which it is found, the rituals which serve to cement belief for individuals and societies, the ways religious belief is used by members of a culture, and the beliefs which tie into religion, such as the acceptance or denial of medical care or transfusions according to the 'will' of God.

We will examine mainstream religions, and will take a hard and possibly uncomfortable look at Christianity, including Protestantism, Catholicism, the LDS Church (Mormonism), and the Jehovah's Witnesses along with an examination of Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism. We will look at fundamental beliefs in reference to revitalization and views on the supernatural and how those views affect the lives of believers vis-à-vis their perceptions of reality.

According to several recent polls, some 85%-92% of Americans believe in God, 51%-56% believe in the Devil, and 44%-56% believe in ghosts. These figures change annually and belief in God and the Devil fluctuate with political and economic factors. We will examine these beliefs too, particularly with respect to how such beliefs influence American society itself, in terms of the effects on legislation, human rights, science curricula in our schools, and even the outlawing of selling hard liquor in Idaho liquor stores and mandatory closing of Idaho bars on Sundays.

Religious beliefs are an integral part of culture, whether our own or others, and these beliefs are often ingrained into an individual's worldview, directly affecting their behavior and interactions with others. As our socio-economic base increasingly becomes more globally-oriented the impact of various religions will be more widely felt, not just in terms of Jihads, but also in boardrooms of major corporations and main offices of small-scale businesses. An understanding of the types of beliefs to be found and the behaviors those beliefs generate are of great importance for successful interaction on a global level.

Course Schedule / Reading Assignments:

I have listed topics for each week of the semester, along with exam dates and the term paper due date. I will assume, with the exception of the first week, that you will have read the scheduled readings ahead of class and will be prepared to participate in any class discussion on the readings assigned. **Any changes to the schedule will be announced both in class and on Blackboard. Homework assignments will also be found on Blackboard.**

The following schedule is tentative & may change.

Wk 1	8/25	Introduction; Anthropology & Religion; Meanings & Types of Religion	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 1; Reader: Clifford Geertz: Religion; Dorothy Lee: Religious Perspectives in Anthropology.
	8/27	Types of religion continued	
Wk 2	9/1	Religion Here & There	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 2; Reader: Horace Miner: Body Ritual Among the Nacirema.
	9/3	Film: Holy Ghost People	
Wk 3	9/8	Religion, Evolution & Prehistory	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 3; Reader: Marvin Harris: Why we became religious & the evolution of the spirit world.
	9/10	Film: We are the Mehinaku	
Wk 4	9/15	Religion, Adaptation & the Environment	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 4; Douglas: Intro, Ch. 1.
	9/17	Religion, Adaptation & the Environment continued.	
Wk 5	9/22	Natural Symbols	Read for this week: Winzeler: Ch. 5; Douglas: Ch. 2; Reader: Raymond Firth: An Anthropologist's Reflections on Symbolic Usage.
	9/24	Symbols continued	
Wk 6	9/29	Myth & Ritual: Old & New	Read for this week: Winzeler, Ch. 6; Douglas: Ch. 3; Reader: Claude Levi-Strauss: Harelips & Twins: The splitting of a myth; Daniel Gordon: Female Circumcision in Egypt and Sudan: A controversial rite of passage.
	10/1	Myth & Ritual continued.	Read for this class: Homa Hoodfar: The veil in the minds and on our heads: Veiling practices and Muslim women.
Wk 7	10/6	Film: Hidden Faces	
	10/8	Ritual & Belief	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 7; Reader: Victor W. Turner: Betwixt & Between: the liminal period in rites de passage.
Wk 8	10/13	Ritual & Belief continued. Review	
	10/15	EXAM 1: Covering all lectures, readings, h/w assignments & films.	
Wk 9	10/20	Witchcraft & Sorcery (Healing & Harming, Normal &	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 8; Douglas Ch. 4; Reader: Edward C. Halperin: Should

		Abnormal, Mind-Body Connection)	academic medical centers conduct clinical trials of the efficacy of intercessory prayer? E.E. Evans Pritchard: Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande.
	10/22	Exam return; Witchcraft & Sorcery Continued.	
Wk 10	10/27	Witchcraft & Sorcery Continued; Begin: Spirits	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 9; Douglas Ch. 5; Reader: James L. Brain: An anthropological perspective on the witchcraze; Paul Barber: The real vampire.
	10/29	Types of Spirits, religious dichotomies (good/evil, god/devil) Mythological creatures, vampires, werewolves, etc.	
Wk 11	11/3	Spirits continued: Mediums & Shaman – is Ms. Cleo <i>really</i> a shaman?	Read for this week: Douglas, Ch. 6; Reader: Victor W. Turner: Religious Specialists; Michael Forbes-Brown: Dark Side of the Shaman.
	11/5	Conclusion Spirits/Shamanism	
Wk 12	11/10	Film: TBA	
	11/12	Religious Movements & the Origin of Religion	Read for this class: Winzeler Ch. 10; Douglas Ch. 7; Reader: Anthony Wallace: Revitalization Movements.
Wk 13	11/17	Early Mormonism, Magick & Fundamentalism, and the Fundamentalist Mormon Church.	Read for this class: Reader: Mary Lee Daugherty: Serpent Handling as Sacrament; William Jankowiak: Adoring the Father: Religion & Charisma in an American Polygamous Community.
	11/19	Film: TBA	
Week 14	11/24	Thanksgiving Holiday No classes 11/23-11/29	
Wk 15	12/1	Anthropology & Religion in a global context: The World Religions	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 11 pp. 251-261; Douglas Ch. 8; Reader: Mark Jurgensmeyer: The global rise of religious nationalism.
	12/3	The world religions continued.	
Wk 16	12/8	Term paper due at start of class. The Anthropological Study of the world religions; Indigenous Conversion.	Read for this week: Winzeler Ch. 11 pp. 261-279. Douglas Ch. 9 & 10; Reserve Reading: Steel Axes for Stone-Age Australians
	12/10	Last day of class. Anthropological Study/Conversions continued. Final Review	
Week 17	12/17	FINAL EXAM 1:00PM – 3:00PM. Covers: Lectures; all assigned readings, homework articles & films	

		since Exam 1. (Not comprehensive)	
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Grading:

I do **not** grade on a curve. You receive the grade you earn. There are 550 points possible in this class between the homework assignments, paper, exams and attendance. There will also be one bonus assignment worth 10 points. In this class there will be:

- Two (2) closed book exams at 100 points each (including the Final Exam).
- Twenty (20) homework assignments of one paragraph to one page in length each, worth 10 points for a total of 200 points.
- One Term Paper on any topic covered in class or a topic of your choice with instructor approval worth 100 points.
- Attendance will be tabulated each class for a semester total of 40 possible points.
- **Bonus points:** Up to 10 points possible as follows:
 1. You may complete a one paragraph to one page response on ghost beliefs or superstition as provided by your professor. **OR:**
 2. You may complete one additional article analysis from the Moro, et al., reader. The article must not be included in the articles covered in the homework assignments.

Grading System: Scoring system of 550 points:

550 – 534 = A+	494 – 479 = B+	439 – 424 = C+	384 – 369 = D+
533 – 512 = A	478 – 457 = B	423 – 402 = C	368 – 347 = D
511 – 495 = A-	456 – 440 = B-	401 – 385 = C-	346 – 330 = D-

329 & below = F

Assignments will be explained separately, and will also be posted on Blackboard. I am always available for questions before or after class. In addition to my office hours this semester, meeting times can be arranged in advance, and I am always available via e-mail at tommiwhite@u.boisestate.edu

Core Learning Outcomes:

Critical Thinking / Problem Solving:

- ✓ Apply and evaluate a variety of strategies for solving a problem; how to explain diversity and continuity (origin and causes of religion, superstition, warfare, similarities of demons world-wide)
- ✓ Understand that a variety of strategies for solving a problem may exist (Why do bad things happen? How do you cure illness if all illness is caused by witchcraft?)
- ✓ Analyze quantitative information (e.g., numerical data, charts, graphs, or tables) to understand diversity and similarities in behavior
- ✓ Analyze qualitative data (e.g., symbols, texts, artifacts or behaviors) to understand diversity and similarities in behavior
- ✓ Identify assumptions or hypotheses embedded in arguments.

Communication Skills:

- ✓ Interpret written materials
- ✓ Write clearly for specific purposes through class papers, both synoptic and experiential

- ✓ Employ speaking and listening skills effectively in interactions with others via participation in class discussions and Q&A
- ✓ Use information sources appropriately in oral and written communication (MLA, APA, and American Anthropologist)

Cultural Perspective:

- ✓ Compare the distinguishing characteristics of your own culture/religion to those of others (i.e., allopathic psychology vs. traditional shamanism)
- ✓ Use an understanding of another religion as a lens to understand your own religious perspectives
- ✓ Compare the creative accomplishments valued by another culture to those of your own culture (i.e., totem poles and religious statuary)
- ✓ Recognize the rights and responsibilities of active citizenship and that those rights may differ in various cultures based upon religious beliefs (What happens to those who are seen as “Holy” or “Evil?”)

Breadth of Knowledge and Intellectual Perspective:

- ✓ Demonstrate an understanding of the essential concepts underlying theories in the field
- ✓ Apply theories to typical problems in the field
- ✓ Demonstrate an understanding of the basic methods of inquiry used in this field
- ✓ Identify important issues for which a diversity of interpretation between experts in the field exists

General Decorum:

Attendance: You are responsible for attending lectures and exams. Attendance will be scored, and may affect your grade, however and of greater importance, exams focus not only on reading materials, but also on films and lectures presented in class. It is to your benefit to attend. Attendance will also enable you to take full advantage of Blackboard, on which I will post announcements, study guides and other pertinent information to help you succeed.

Exams: Exams will be multiple choice, true/false, and short essay format. **(Blue books will be required.)** Exams must be taken as scheduled except in cases of extreme emergency. If you have an emergency and miss an exam, please notify me as soon as possible so that I may prepare a make-up exam. Due to time constraints, I cannot provide make-up exams for the Final. If you know you will miss the Final Exam, please notify me beforehand so that other arrangements may be made.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty defrauds all those who depend upon the integrity of the University, its courses, its degrees, and its certificates. Students are expected to behave ethically as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. **Violations of this policy include cheating and plagiarism. Cheating:** will result in an “F” for that exam. **Plagiarism:** will result in an “F” for flagrant violations, possible “F” in the course, and potential further action by the university.

Standards of Student Conduct: The student has the right and responsibility to exercise the freedom to learn. The student is expected to conduct him/herself in accordance with the standards of Boise State University that are designed to perpetuate its educational purposes. What this means is: no disruptive behavior in the classroom. No talking over the instructor. No talking during films (laughing, when appropriate, is okay, but please remember that other students are trying to watch the film and may not appreciate additional commentary). Remember that you and your classmates are paying quite a bit for your education.

Students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the Disabled Student Services. I cannot do this on your behalf.

Finally...two personal pet peeves:

1. DO NOT, AT ANY TIME bring cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices into my classroom. EXCEPTIONS: a) when you are required by your employer to carry such a device; or b) when there are potential home emergencies. Please inform me if you meet these conditions. If you do not fit into either category, you will be expected to turn it off immediately **without answering**. If it happens a second time, you will be asked to leave the room and not be allowed to return for the remainder of the class period. Such devices, although very convenient, can be horribly distracting in a classroom setting, and therefore, cannot be tolerated.

2. Please do not ask to use the restroom during an exam. You will generally not need the entire exam period to complete an exam, and unless you are ill or pregnant, I expect you to take care of these needs prior to the start of the exam.

WARNING: Some films or film clips presented in this class contain violence against humans or animals, animal sacrifices, nudity and/or coarse language. Viewer discretion is advised.