

AN/RS272 – Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion Section 50 – Fall 2011 Trailer C2 – 3 Credits Wednesday 4:30pm-7:15pm	
Instructor: Dr. Edward González-Tennant Email: egonzale@monmouth.edu Office Phone: 732-571-4458	Office: Howard Hall 326 Office Hours: Mon & Tues 2:00-4:00pm or by appointment

Required Textbooks:

Moro, P. A. and J. E. Myers. *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*. McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Neihard, J. G. and Black Elk. *Black Elk Speaks*. SUNY Press, 2008.

Additional readings as assigned by instructor (available on eCampus as PDF files).

Course Description:

This course is designed to offer a general overview of anthropological approaches to religion, spirituality, and the supernatural. It is cross-cultural in scope, and we will consider the past as well as the present. The focus is primarily through the lens of cultural anthropology. This course does not promote or denigrate any particular religious belief, practice, or person, though it will promote critical thinking toward each and all of these. All religious practices will be regarded as forms of social and cultural expression. Open discussion is encouraged and everyone’s opinion is valid as we strive to understand the topic in a spirit of free inquiry and critical thinking. Students should leave any preconceived notions and prejudices behind when they enter the classroom and at all times be respectful of others’ opinions. Each class will involve a mix of lecture, class discussion, and small-group conversations.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, each student will:

- Have a basic understanding of the value of anthropological approaches to religion
- Have knowledge of different theories of religion as it relates to culture and society
- Understand the significance and functions of rituals, myths, and symbols
- Develop a deeper understanding of human religious and cultural diversity
- Understand the relationships between religion, politics, economics, and history
- Explore the visual representation of religion in cross-cultural perspective
- Develop a personal connection to the anthropology of religion through a course project

Grading:

Grades for the course will come from attendance and participation, midterm and final exams, weekly activities, and a response project concerning the field trip to the Museum of Natural History in NYC. Make-up tests and assignments will only be granted if arranged prior to the date in this syllabus, or when accompanied by appropriate documentation (i.e. doctor's note). Specific handouts for the student ethnography assignment will be provided during the semester.

Attendance & Participation	10%	(20 possible points) – talking in class
Midterm Exam	25%	(50 possible points) – essay questions
Film Response	10%	(20 possible points) – critical response to a movie
Student Projects	40%	(80 possible points) – visual explorations of belief
Final Exam	25%	(50 possible points) – essay questions

Breakdown of Grading:

Attendance & Participation: Students are expected to arrive at class on time with readings completed beforehand. Portions of class each week will involve classroom discussion, small group conversations, or both. Students will be assessed on their apparent level of preparation as well as participation in these activities. **[Total Points: 20]**

Midterm Exam: Students will complete an essay exam on topic covered during the course prior to the midterm exam. Students will be graded on their ability to cogently present a thesis statement, argue a point of view using readings from class, and successfully conclude a paper. We will discuss successful essay writing prior to the midterm. **[Total Points: 50]**

Film Response: Students will write a 2-4 page paper exploring the relationship between anthropological research into religious practice and its representation by Hollywood. We will watch Wes Craven's *The Serpent and the Rainbow* and compare the film with Wade Davis' well-known book about Vodou in Haiti of the same name. **[Total Points: 20]**

Student Project: Students will explore their own creativity in relation to representing belief. Students are free to work in groups or alone on the project. These project will use visual methods to convey an aspect of magic, witchcraft, and religion. Potential forms of visual representation include, but are not limited to, the following: photo essays, painting, animation, digital storytelling, painting, and sculpture. We will discuss the assignment throughout the semester, including specific resources on campus for the completion of the project. **[Total Points: 80]**

Final Exam: Students will complete an essay exam on topic covered during the course prior to the midterm exam. Students will be graded on their ability to cogently present a thesis statement, argue a point of view using readings from class, and successfully conclude a paper. We will discuss successful essay writing prior to the midterm. **[Total Points: 50]**

Total Possible Points: 200

Course Grading Scale:

A 93-100 A- 90-92.9 B+ 88-89.9 B 83-87.9 B- 80-82.9
C+ 78-79.9 C 73-77.9 C- 70-72.9 D+ 68-69.9 D 63-67.9 D- 60-62.9
F 59.9 and below

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Total Points	186-200	180-185.8	176-179.8	166-175.8	160-165.8	156-159.8	146-155.8	140-145.8	136-135.8	126-133.8	120-125.8	119.8-0

Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. As a registered student in this course, you have agreed to the following statement:

“I understand that Monmouth University expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University.”

If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating on exams you will receive an automatic zero and may be referred to the university administration for disciplinary action.

Student Conduct:

All students must comply with the Student Code of Conduct found in the student handbook. 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. Laptops may only be used to take notes. Disruptive students will be asked to leave. **Texting during class is not allowed.**

Disability Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this class are encouraged to meet with me or the appropriate disability service provider on campus as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations, students must be registered with the appropriate disability service provider on campus as set forth in the student handbook and must follow Monmouth University’s procedure for self-disclosure, which is stated in the University *Guide to Services and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*.

MU Counseling Services:

Resources are available on campus for students having personal or goal oriented problems. If you find yourself in a physical or emotional situation you are having trouble dealing with, please contact Counseling and Psychological Services at 732-571-7517. If you are in physical danger or suspect that someone is trying to harm you, contact MU Police at 732-571-3472.

Semester Calendar:

Sept 7: Intro to Course, Anthropological Study of Religion

- Readings: Geertz, *Religion* (MM, pp. 6-15)
Harris, *Why We Became Religious...* (MM, pp. 16-19)
Lee, *Religious Perspectives in Anthropology* (MM, pp. 20-27)
Stipe, *Anthropologists Versus Missionaries* (MM, pp. 28-33)
Asad, *Anthropological Conceptions of Religion* (eCampus)

Sept 14: Myth, Symbolism, and Taboo

- Readings: Leonard & McClure, *Study of Mythology* (MM, pp. 46-57)
Beattie, *Nyoro Myth* (MM, pp. 58-62)
Lévi-Strauss, *Harelips and Twins* (MM, pp. 63-66)
Wolf, *The Virgin of Guadalupe* (MM, pp. 67-71)
Douglas, *Taboo* (MM, pp. 72-76)
Daugherty, *Serpent-Handling as Sacrament* (MM, pp. 77-82)
Ortner, *On Key Symbols* (eCampus)

Sept 21: Ritual

- Readings: Turner, *Betwixt and Between* (MM, pp. 87-96)
Myerhoff, *Return to Wirikuta* (MM, pp. 108-115)
Rappaport, *Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations...* (MM, pp. 116-125)
Miner, *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* (MM, pp. 135-141)
Gell, *Closure and Multiplicity* (eCampus)
Turner, *Liminality and Communitas* (eCampus)

Sept 28: Shamanism and Other Religious Specialists

- Readings: Turner, *Religious Specialists* (MM, pp. 142-149)
Vitebsky, *Shamanism* (MM, pp. 150-157)
Brown, *Dark Side of the Shaman* (MM, pp. 158-161)
Reichel-Dolmatoff, *Training for the Priesthood* (MM, pp. 162-176)
Barkun, *Reflections After Waco* (MM, pp. 177-183)
Stoller, excerpts from *In Sorcery's Shadow*, (eCampus)

Oct 5: Altered States

- Readings: Lewis, *Trance, Possession, Shamanism, and Sex* (MM, pp. 188-195)
Greenfield, *Hypnosis and Trance* (MM, pp. 196-206)
Kiyaani and Csordas, *On the Peyote Road* (MM, pp. 207-209)
Furst and Coe, *Ritual Enemas* (MM, pp. 210-213)
Narby, excerpts from *The Cosmic Serpent* (eCampus)
- Assignments: Turn in one-page description of student projects.

Oct 12: Revitalization Movements

- Readings: Wallace, *Revitalization Movements* (MM, pp. 360-365)
Kehoe, *The Ghost Dance Religion* (MM, pp. 366-370)
Worsley, *Cargo Cults* (MM, pp. 371-375)
Lewis, *Urban Rastas* (MM, pp. 376-380)
Harding, *Speaking is Believing* (MM, pp. 381-396)

- Oct 19: Revitalization Movements – Black Elk Speaks
 Readings: *Black Elk Speaks* (all)
- Oct 26: Ethnomedicine and Witchcraft
 Readings: Lehman, *Eyes of the Ngangas* (MM, pp. 240-248)
 Rebhun, *Swallowing Frogs* (MM, pp. 249-260)
 Wedenoja, *Mothering and “Balm”* (MM, pp. 261-268)
 Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You...* (MM, pp. 269-275)
 Davis, excerpts from *Passage of Darkness* (eCampus)
 Assignments: Turn-in IRB form for student projects.
- Nov 2: Midterm Test **Nov 8: Last Day to Withdraw with “W” Grade**
- Nov 9: Vampires, Zombies, and Other Supernaturals
 Readings: Barber, *The Real Vampire* (MM, pp. 332-337)
 Brown, *Vodou* (MM, pp. 338-344)
 Metcalf, *Death Be Not Strange* (MM, pp. 345-348)
 Brandes, *The Cremated Catholic* (MM, pp. 349-355)
 Davis, excerpts from *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (eCampus)
 Seabrook, excerpts from *Dead Men Working in the Cane Fields* (eCampus)
- Nov 16: Representing the Anthropology of Religion
 Film: *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988)
 Readings: none
- Nov 23: No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday
- Nov 30: Transnational Religious Practices
 Readings: Fluehr-Lobban, *Islamic Law* (MM, pp. 397-407)
 Hoodfar, *The Veil in Their Minds...* (MM, pp. 412-427)
 Esterik, *Ritual and Performance of Buddhist Identity...* (MM, pp. 428-434)
 Juergensmeyer, *Religious Terror and Global War* (MM, pp. 435-443)
 Dalton et al, *Homer the Heretic...* (MM, pp. 444-454)
- Dec 7: Visual Anthropology & Religion
 Readings: Gocking, *Representing Christ and Christian Personae in Ghana* (eCampus)
 Berger & Ezzy, *Mass Media and Religious Identity* (eCampus)
 Harper, *Talking about Pictures...* (eCampus)
 Pink, *The Visual in Ethnography* (eCampus)
 Morphy & Banks, *Introduction: Rethinking Visual Anthropology* (eCampus)
- Dec 14: Non-Belief
 Readings: Darwin, excerpt from *Autobiography* (eCampus)
 Goldman, *The Philosophy of Atheism* (eCampus)
 Dawkins, *Why There Almost Certainly Is No God* (eCampus)
 Dennett, excerpt from *Breaking Which Spell* (eCampus)
 Hitchens, Introduction to *The Portable Atheist* (eCampus)
- Dec 21: Final Exam (5:30pm-7:30pm)