

CULTURE AND RELIGION: Anthropology 3400

BUSN 122

T, TH 5:30-6:45

Faculty: Prof. Richard Sosis

Office Hrs: T 6:45-7:30, Th 1:30-2:30

**Office: Beach Hall 432
(6-4264; richard.sosis@uconn.edu)**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an introduction to the anthropological study of religion. We will explore the variety of issues such as ritual, magic, superstition, and taboo that anthropologists have addressed in the study of religion.

CLASS FORMAT

Classes will consist of lectures, discussions, and sometimes both. Even during classes entirely devoted to lectures, questions and discussion are encouraged. The general tone of all discussions should be supportive of a free exchange of ideas.

GRADES

Final grades will be based on a midterm exam (30%; Thur. Oct. 23), final exam (30%; check registrar), research project (20%), and quizzes (20%). Exams will cover lecture and reading materials and consist of short answer questions.

Preparation for class implies both note-taking and time allocated to synthesizing the reading material. It is assumed that students will attend class. Unannounced quizzes on the assigned readings may occur during any class. Exams will consist of short answer questions. The research project will be discussed in class.

Make-up exams: If you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must notify me **before** the exam. I can be contacted either by phone (I have an answering machine) or e-mail. If I am not contacted prior to the exam you will receive a failing grade for that exam. Make-ups will be permitted to students who contact me prior to the exam only if they have written documentation from a doctor, parent, advisor, dorm resident, or some other relevant authority. Otherwise, they will receive a failing grade on that exam.

Tips on how to do well in this class: Come to class regularly and do all of the readings. Regularly review your notes. If you miss class make sure you get the notes from someone who attended class. If you do not understand something make sure you ask me during class or office hours.

READINGS

All readings will be available via WebCT. In addition to journal articles and book chapters you will be assigned two books which are available at the UConn Co-op:

Peyote Hunt by Barbara Myerhoff

The Island of Menstruating Men by Ian Hogbin

COURSE TOPICS

Introduction to the Anthropology of Religion; What is Religion?

Reading: You are What You Eat: Religious Aspects of the Health Food Movement, Jill Dubisch
Is Elvis a God? Cult, Culture, Questions of Method, John Frow
The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures, Scott Hutson

Non-Human Ritual

Reading: Ritual and the Ethology of Communicating, W. John Smith
Virtuous Nature, Marc Bekoff

Function of Ritual

Reading: The Obvious Aspects of Ritual, Roy Rappaport

Initiation Rites

Reading: Liminality and Communitas, Victor Turner
Ritual Violence among the Ilahita Arapesh, Donald Tuzin
Female Circumcision in Egypt and Sudan: A Controversial Rite of Passage, Daniel Gordon

Religion and Ecology

Reading: Balinese Water Temples and the Management of Irrigation, J. Stephen Lansing
Sorcerers, Ghosts, and Polluting Women, Shirley Lindenbaum
Ritual Regulations of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People, Roy Rappaport

Magic

Reading: Rational Mastery by Man of his Surroundings, Bronislaw Malinowski
Occult Beliefs, Singer and Benassi

Myths and Spirits

Reading: The Island of Menstruating Men (first half), Ian Hogbin

Pollution and Taboo

Reading: The Island of Menstruating Men (second half), Ian Hogbin
Pollution, Mary Douglas
Taboo, Mary Douglas
The Abominations of Leviticus, Mary Douglas

Shamanism and Healing

Reading: A Healing Ritual, Marjorie Shostak
Shamanic Healing: Human Evolution and the Origin of Religion, James McClennon

Religious Symbolism

Reading: Peyote Hunt, Barbara Myerhoff

Cults

Reading: Apocalypse at Jonestown, John Hall
Reflections after Waco: Millennialists and the State, Michael Barkun

Revitalization Movements

Reading: Revitalization Movements, Anthony Wallace