EVOLUTION OF RELIGION: Anthropology 295
School of Business 204
TTh 2:00 – 3:15

Faculty: Prof. Richard Sosis
Office Hrs: 3:30-5:30 Th, by appt.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will provide an introduction to evolutionary studies of religion. The principal purpose of the class is to provide students with a broad, but deep, overview of the major theoretical issues in this emerging field and of the empirical data that have been brought to bear on those issues.

CLASS FORMAT
Classes will primarily consist of lectures. Questions during class on lectures and readings are encouraged, as are general discussions on class topics. The general tone of all discussions should be supportive of a free exchange of ideas. Lectures will often elaborate upon material covered in your readings, however lectures will not be a restatement of your readings.

GRADES
Final grades will be based on a midterm exam (30%; Tues. March 4), final exam (35%; check registrar), research project (20%), and attendance (15%). Exams will cover lecture and reading materials and consist of short answer questions.

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.

READING MATERIALS
All reading assignments will be announced in class. The required readings of the class will be drawn from the following books:
Slone, D.J. 2004. *Theological Incorrectness*

COURSE TOPICS:
**Introduction to the Evolutionary Study of Religion**

What is Religion?
TI Introduction, Ch 1, Ch 2

What People Believe
TI Ch 3, Ch 4, Ch 5

Modes of Religiosity
ER Ch 2 Whitehouse
ER Ch 6 Sanderson

Religious Concepts
ER Ch 32 Alcorta
ER Ch 29 Guthrie
ER Ch 30 Cohen

Adaptationist and By-product Accounts of Religion
ER Ch 1 Wilson
ER Ch 5 Kirkpatrick
ER Ch 7 Richerson and Newson
ER Ch 8 Harris and McNamara

**Afterlife Beliefs**
Cognitive Psychology of Belief in the Supernatural, Bering
ER Ch 28 Nahri

**Magic and Superstition**
TI Ch 6, Conclusion

**Supernatural Punishment and Human Sociality**
ER Ch 13 Shariff
ER Ch 17 Boehm

**Religious Communication**
ER Ch 4 Irons
ER Ch 18 Bulbulia
ER Ch 20 Soler
ER Ch 24 Schloss

**Religion, War, and Intolerance**
ER Ch 12 Johnson

**Do Evolutionary Theories of Religion Threaten Religion?**
ER Ch 45 Murray
ER Ch 46 Koch
ER Ch 49 Barrett