

NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
The City University of New York
School of Arts & Sciences
Department of Social Science
Course Outline

Course code: ANTH 1102

Course title: Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion

Class hours/credits: 3 class hours, 3 credits

Prerequisite: CUNY Proficiency in Reading and Writing

Pathways: World Cultures and Global Issues

Catalog Description: Focuses on myth and ritual as component parts of religious systems. Also deals with religion and magic, healing and religious practitioners. Students must be prepared to look at both literate and pre-literate ritual systems. Non-Western systems are contrasted with religions of the Western world. Cross-cultural analysis of structures, forms and functions, and philosophies of religions in their cultural contexts are included.

RECOMMENDED/TYPICAL/REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (S) and/or MATERIALS¹

TITLE: Reader in the Anthropology of Religion.

EDITION: 2nd Ed., 2008 ISBN#1405136146

AUTHOR: Michael Lambek

PUBLISHER: Malden, MA: Blackwell Anthologies.

Materials: Selected articles related to the weekly topics to supplement the textbook and expose students to academic scholarly peer reviewed articles.

¹ *Instructor Choice.*

COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS*
1. Have an understanding of Anthropological fieldwork. To present an objective scientific framework for viewing an area of human behavior normally seen in subjective, emotional terms.	1. A research project
2. Have an understanding of the Anthropological theories used to analyze religious systems. To expose students to the analysis of religion as a social phenomenon. (Reading Comprehension, critical thinking, real world application).	2. Apply the theories and concepts from the course using assigned articles in an analysis of raw data using theories and scholarly research to construct research question, thesis, methodology, data analysis, etc.
3. Have an understanding of the key concepts presented in the course (Religion, Worldview, Taboo, Symbolism, Myth, Magic, Witchcraft, Religious Practitioners, etc.). To expose students to the basic concepts and theories anthropologists use when they undertake cross-cultural studies of religion.	3. Questions on exams and concepts/themes of course applied in final paper.

4. Have an understanding and sensitivity for a variety of cultures' belief systems and practices. To cultivate students' critical thinking by exposing them to the cultural relativist approach to religion and helping them overcome prejudice, stereotyping and ethnocentrism. (Critical thinking, real world application)	4. Essay questions on exams.
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GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT METHODS

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT METHODS*
1. KNOWLEDGE: Students develop a knowledge of the concepts and theories deployed by anthropologists in their analysis of cultural and social issues particularly as it relates to various cultural belief systems.	1. Research project and exams.
2 SKILLS: Students develop and use the tools needed for communication, inquiry, analysis and productive work.	2. Research project and exams.
3. INTEGRATION: Students work productively within and across disciplines.	3. Research project and exams.
4. VALUES, ETHICS, AND RELATIONSHIPS: Students understand and apply values, and ethics, particularly in terms of research methodology but also in terms of cultural relativism.	4. Research project and exams.

* may vary slightly per instructor to suit their own needs

SCOPE OF ASSIGNMENTS and other course requirements*

This is an interactive lecture therefore students are required to attend the lectures, to have read the assigned readings, and participate in class discussions. Students will write a short paper as a basis to collect raw data for analysis in a longer analytical paper. Students are expected to write an analytical paper that incorporates the main theories or concepts from the course. There is a midterm and final exam. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic "F" and a report to the Academic Integrity committee (see statement below).

**Suggested; instructors may modify these at their discretion.*

METHOD OF GRADING – elements and weight of factors determining the students' grade*

- Attendance and Participation – 10%
- Midterm 5 page observation paper– 20%
- Midterm exam– 10%
- 10 page analysis paper– 35%
- Final Exam— 25%

**Suggested allocation; instructors may modify these at their discretion.*

CITYTECH GRADE POINTS:

A	93-100	B	83-86.9	D	60-69.9
A-	90-92.9	B-	80-82.9	F	59.9 below
B+	87-89.9	C+	77-79.9	WU	Unofficial Withdrawal –More than 3 absents

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY STATEMENT

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

COLLEGE POLICY ON ABSENCE/LATENESS

A student may be absent without penalty for 10% of the number of scheduled class meetings during the semester as follows:

Class Meets	Allowable Absence
1 time/week	2 classes
2 times/week	3 classes
3 times/week	4 classes

It is the responsibility of the instructor to keep accurate records of every student's attendance and to inform each class orally and in writing of the applicable attendance policy during the first two weeks of class meetings each semester.

Excessive Absence

If a student's class absences exceed the limit established for a given course or component, the instructor will alert the student that a grade of "WU" may be assigned. If a student remains officially registered for a course and never attends that course, a final grade of "*WN" will be assigned. If the student withdraws officially from the course, he/she will be assigned a grade in accordance with the existing withdrawal policy of the College.

Appeals

A student wishing to appeal the excessive absence status and the impending grade should request a meeting with the chairperson of the department in which the course is offered. The chairperson will consult with the instructor to render a decision. A student wishing to appeal a "WU" grade may do so through the Committee on Course and Standards.

Lateness

It is the responsibility of the instructor to keep a record of lateness and to inform each class orally and in writing of the lateness policy during the first two weeks of class meetings of each semester.

SAMPLE SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS*

Week One:

- I. INTRODUCTION
 - A. Definition of religion.
 - B. Scope of theories and ethnographic descriptions.
 - C. History of the scientific study of preliterate peoples and their religions.
 - D. Values derived from the study of diverse cultures.

- II. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS
 - A. Religious Universals (Goode)
 - B. World Ethnographic Mapping and Religious Typologies (Wallace)
 - C. Behavior and Theology, Ritual and Mythology
 - D. Codes, Calendric vs. Life Crisis Rites, Pantheons.

Week two

III. THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION

- A. Tylor -animism, soul, animatism
- B. Spender- honoring of ancestors
- C. Schmidt- High God
- D. Durkheim - Collective representations
- E. Hauer -Mystical Experience
- F. Wallace- Revitalization

IV.THEORETICAL APPROACHES: Should be introduced throughout semester as well.

- A. Expressive and Communicative Techniques (Wallace)
- B. Thematic Analysis (Opler)
- C. Structural Functionalism (Malinowski, R.-Brown)
- D. Historical Frames (Boas)
- E. Configurationalism (Benedict)
- F. Psychoanalytic Interpretations (Hsu, Wallace)
- G. Neo-structuralism (Levi-Strauss and mythic Analysis)
- H. Quantification and Item Analysis of Oral Traditions, Rituals and Modes of Expression

Week three:

V. SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS & WORLDVIEW

- A. Clifford Geertz – system of symbols, ethos, model of/model for culture
- B. Victor Turner – symbolic action, metaphors, forest of symbols
- C. Mary Douglas – classification systems
- D. Sherry Ortner – key symbols
- E. Max Weber – American worldview

EFFECTS OF ECONOMICS OF SUBSISTENCE ON RELIGION (introduce societies and refer to throughout semester)

- A. Hunting & Gathering (Foraging) Techniques (Dobe Ju'hoansi/ Kung San of Kalahara Africa, Inuit or Netslik "Eskimo")

- B. Pastoral Societies (Nuer Monotheism (Evans-Pritchard) Sudan Africa, Masai)
- C. Horticultural Societies (Machigenga or Yanomami of Brazil/ Venezuela, Asmat of New Guinea)
- D. Agricultural Societies (Aztec Pantheism (Vaillant) Meso-America, Amish)
- E. Post Industrial Societies (Japan, NYC, EU – issues of globalization & religion)

Week four:

VI. CULTURAL TABOOS

- A. Mary Douglas
- B. Claude Levi-Strauss
- C. Social taboos, food taboos, ritual taboos, sexual taboos, etc.

VII. TOTEMISM

- A. Claude Levi-Strauss
- B. Franz Boas
- C. Emile Durkheim

Week five: (Theological systems in simple societies)

VIII. MYTH

- A. Mythological influence (origin myths, rituals associated with myths, application to everyday experiences, etc.)
- B. Claude Levi-Strauss – Structuralist approach to myth
- C. Bronislaw Malinowski – Functionalist approach to myth
- D. Symbolic analysis of myth
- E. Association of myth to modern day society (As expressed in media, popular culture, etc.)

MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORE

2.0 hours

- A. Myths as Preliterate Theology
- B. Creation Myths
- C. Oral Traditions as Rationalization for Ritual
- D. Sacred Lore as Moral Prescription
- E. Legends as Projective Devices for Reducing Hostility, Expressing Fear, Anxiety, Awe, Etc.

Week six:

IX. RITUAL

- A. Calendric, Hunting, Gathering, Agricultural, Commemorative Redemptive, Sacrificial
- B. Clifford Geertz (Notes on a Balinese Cockfight)

LOOK AT RITUAL TO ILLUSTRATE ART AS AN EXPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS VALUES

- A. The Shaman as Artist
 - B. Personal Adornment, Hair, Tattooing, Clothing, etc.
 - C. Ancestral Figurines, Fetish Figurines
 - D. Masks and Masking Behavior
 - E. Charms and Tokens
 - F. Religious Symbols and the Communication of Meaning
- Special Techniques: Terra-cotta, Beadwork, Sand Painting, Shell Work, Wood Sculpture, Musical Instruments

Week seven:

X. RITES OF PASSAGE

- A. Life-crisis, Birth, Naming, Adolescence (Coming- Of-age) Marriage, Death and Tile Funerary Complex.
- B. Rites of Passage Theory (Van Gennap); Initiation Theory (Eliade), Liminality & Communitas (Victor Turner)

REVIEW FORMS OF RITUAL /RITES OF PASSAGE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF SOCIETIES

Week eight:

XI. WITCHCRAFT

- A. Witchcraft accusations as form of discipline & control (political dimension)
- B. History of witchcraft (Western concept misapplied to other cultures), associated with Catholic colonialism to wipe out indigenous beliefs, to modern day wicca movement.
- C. Evans-Pritchard – witchcraft explains unfortunate events
- D. Witchcraft associated with magic and forms of healing.

Week nine:

XII. MAGIC

- A. Frazer – Golden Bough – Logic to magic, unilinear progression from Magic to Religion to Science.
- B. Rules of magic: Contagious magic, Homeopathy or law of similarity, sympathetic
- C. Bronislaw Malinowski – magic used in time of uncertainty
- D. Tambiah – magic associated with metaphor and analogically related pairs
- E. Magic and ritual
- F. Magic and healing
- G. Magic and shamanism
- H. REVIEW FORMS OF MAGIC IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF SOCIETIES (Including Post Industrial /Contemporary societies)

Week ten:

XIII. ILLNESS AND DISEASE

- A. Curative Procedures and Their Mythic, Theological Significance.
- B. Soul Loss, Object Intrusion, Accident, Old-age, Witchcraft, Spirit Intrusion.
- C. Shamanism, Curative Modalities, Age-grade Societies, Ethnobotany, Psychosomatic Factors, Spiritualism
- D. Use of symbolism and magic in beliefs about illness and healing (ex. Navajo Sandpainting, Voodoo priestess, shamanism)

Week eleven:

IX. RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS – relate to different forms of societies

- A. Foragers – individualistic cults (no religious specialist, all have access – relate to form of society) (Animism – direct one on one connections)
- B. Pastoralist / Horticultural societies – shamanistic cults – part time religious practitioner (Shamans)
- C. Agricultural – ecclesiastic cults – full time practitioners, reflects social divisions (Priests, priestesses, etc.)
- D. Post Industrial society – influence of globalization & neo-colonialism on religious practices.

RELIGION AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

- A. Shaman as Secular Problem Solver
- B. Chiefs and Councils as Jural Authorities
- C. Priesthoods and Hierarchies
- D. Kings as God's representatives on Earth

OTHER FORMS OF PRACTITIONERS (Diviners, prophets, etc.)

Week twelve:

X. GHOSTS AND SPIRITS

THEOLOGICAL WORLDVIEWS AND THEIR COMPONENTS

- A. Different beliefs regarding life and death
- B. Ritual expressions of death and afterworld, funerals
- C. Spirits, Ancestors, Angels
- D. Heaven, Hell, Purgatory, Reincarnation
- E. Immanence and Transmigration of the Soul
- F. Rewards and Punishments of Moral Religious Codes

Week thirteen:

XI. IDENTITY

RELIGION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

- A. Family Shrines, Altars, Ancestors, Etc.
- B. Lineage and Clan
- C. Tribal or Village Deities
- D. Occupational or Specialized Deities and Beliefs
- E. National Religions

EMOTIONAL FACTORS IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

- A. Identification and Socialization
- B. Totemism and Taboos, Mana
- C. Religious Mysticism
- D. Religious Ecstasy, Coma, Sensory Deprivation, Mutilation.
- E. Feasts, Processions, Crowd Behavior
- F. Dreams, Visions, Coma, Mediums, Necromancy
- G. Crisis Responses

Week fourteen:

XII. SYNCRETISM, POWER, RESISTANCE, AND CHANGE

- A. Eric Wolf
- B. Anthony Wallace – revitalization movements

REVITALIZATION MOVEMENTS

- A. Revitalization Theory
- B. Messianic Movements (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)
- C. Cargo Cults (Melanesia)
- D. Millenarian Movements (Christianity)
- E. Peyote Cult (American Indian)
- F. Handsome Lake Religion (Iroquois)
- G. Ghost Dance (Plains)
- H. Mau-Mau (Kikuyu)
- I. Prophets
- J. Contemporary Examples - Black Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, Etc.

RELIGIOUS TECHNIQUES FOR SOLVING SECULAR PROBLEMS

- A. Prayer, Supplication, Propitiation, Sacrifice
- B. Confession
- C. Oaths, Curses
- D. Ordeals, (Bleeding, Burning, Water, Fire, Poison)
- E. Divination and Clairvoyancy
- F. Ritual Dramaturgy

Week fifteen

MEANING

- A. Is Religion an Intrinsic Part of Being Human?

- B. What Factors in Religion Are Universal?
- C. How Do Religions Reconcile the Differences Between What People Do, and What They Say Should Be Done?
- D. How does the definition of God vary across cultures?
- E. Why Has Religion Persisted at All Times and in All Places?

WORLD RELIGIONS AND IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION
(Christianity, Muslim, Buddhism, Judaism, Taoism, etc.)

**guidelines from which instructors may select or adapt*

Written by: Dr. Steven Gerardi, Spring 2010

Reviewed/Revised by: Dr. Lisa Pope Fischer, Fall 2015

9 The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category 110 Talal Asad. Part II Poiesis: The Composition of Religious Worlds
127. Signs and Symbols 129. "A reader that ambitiously attempts to represent the full breadth, depth, and complexity of anthropology's investigations into religion. The masterly general introduction situates this anthology within the long and often difficult anthropological engagement with this most mystified and powerful realm of social action. [A]n excellent text." (International Social Science Review). "A major guide to both the history of the anthropology of religion and new trends in research. Lambek has compiled an excellent anthology." (Journal of Empirical Theology).