



ANTH-125: MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT AND RELIGION

Also listed as: ANTH-125H

Effective Term

Fall 2025

BOT Approval Date

01/16/2025

Discipline

ANTH - Anthropology

Course Number

125

Course Title

Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

Short Title

Magic, Witchcraft & Rel

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units

Lecture Units

3.00

Total Units

3.00

Hours

Lecture Contact Hours

48-54

Out of Class Hours Lecture

96-108

Total Contact Hours

48 - 54

Total Out of Class Hours

96 - 108

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

Yes

Distance Education

Distance Education Type

Both Fully Online and Hybrid Online

Does the DE also apply to the Honors section?

Yes



Honors component will meet synchronously (face-to-face or moderated through online technology such as Zoom)

Fully Online Delivery Requirements:

- a. Students must be notified via the college schedule of classes and the syllabus for the class if proctored tests are required for this course
- b. Any planned face-to-face meetings, such as an orientation or study session, must be optional
- c. The MSJC curriculum committee requires the use of accessible, asynchronous discussion as a component of every fully online course

Are you using publisher content?

No

Regular Substantive Interaction

Instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure regular substantive interaction (RSI) is maintained not only weekly but also for the duration of the course. Instructor interactions should be equivalent in time, quality and consistency to the engagement students would receive in a face-to-face course—for example, through announcements, discussion participation, personalized feedback, video messages, or other instructional communications. Instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. RSI will be maintained through a variety of methods:

- Orientation - Students must be oriented to the online and face-to-face portions at the start of the course.
- Announcements - Announcements using the course management system must be posted at least weekly to keep students current on course events, due dates, materials, etc.
- Discussion Forums - Content-related discussion forums within the designated CMS will include appropriate instructor participation and will be initiated and maintained, with timely feedback provided. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction. Open-ended discussion boards may be used to further learning and interaction.
- MSJC Communication – Instructor will use MSJC-administered communication tools (such as email or the designated CMS communication tools) to regularly communicate with and provide ease of access to students.
- Timely Feedback - Timely feedback on student work will be provided by the instructor, which may include comments and/or rubrics, within the Grades area of the designated CMS.
- Scheduled Meetings – Hybrid and synchronous courses will meet at regularly scheduled times. ADA Compliance - All course interactions and content must be designed with accessibility in mind and meet ADA requirements.

Additional Regular Substantive Interaction

- Discussion Boards - Course and technical issues are addressed in a separate discussion board. It is recommended that faculty will respond within 48 hours, except for holidays and weekends.
- Email Communication - E-mail communication may be used to reinforce announcement and discussion board communication. It is recommended that faculty will respond within 48 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

Honors / Non-honors

ANTH-125H

C-ID (Admin Only)

CB 00

CCC000610096

Course Title

Honors Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

Approved Cal-GETC Area

AREA-4

Approved Second Cal-GETC Area

Approved Third Cal-GETC Area

Catalog Description

This course examines different supernatural beliefs and associated rituals from a cross-cultural perspective. Using an anthropological perspective, students will study magic, witchcraft and religion in various societies from around the world, both past and present. Emphasis is placed on examining beliefs from the social context of the society in which it is practiced. Topics shall include creation myths, healing, sorcery, totemism, ancestor worship, shamanism and cults.



Codes

TOP Code (CB 03)

2202.00 - Anthropology

CIP Code

45.0204 - Cultural Anthropology.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

GE Information

Check GE Types Requested

AA/AS B2 - Social & Behavioral Sciences

Cal-GETC Areas

Approved Cal-GETC Area

AREA-4

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective
1. Examine anthropologists' interest in the supernatural.
2. Evaluate the role of supernaturalism within a society.
3. Compare and contrast the roles of various religious specialists (priests, shamans, prophets, and others).
4. Consider the similarities and differences between the various forms of belief in the supernatural
5. Identify how anthropologists define religion.
6. Differentiate between various types of supernatural entities including gods, spirits, ghosts and ancestors.
7. Analyze the role of myth in carrying out functions of supernaturalism for any given society.
8. Analyze the emergence of various forms of revitalization movements and the effect of those movements on society.
9. Classify altered states of consciousness and assess the role it plays in supernatural belief systems.
10. Evaluate the concept of ritual and categorize different types of ritual.
11. Classify the development of a new religious movement.
12. Compare and contrast magic and religion and distinguish between the different forms of magic.
13. Evaluate the role of gender and matrilineality and their impact on religions and other belief systems

Honors Objectives

- Conduct advanced research on topics related to religion and belief in the supernatural through the use of primary and secondary sources.
- Develop an appreciation and awareness of the role that the belief in the supernatural can have within a community.
- Evaluate source material and engage in small group discussions about topics related to belief in the supernatural.

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

1. Students will describe the various forms of supernatural beliefs that exist cross-culturally.
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to suspend judgment and understand behavior within the context of the culture that generates the behavior.
3. Students will define the roles and circumstances of the various specialists in culturally sanctioned interactions with the supernatural.

Program Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

1. Analyze the interrelationship between humans and their physical environment.
2. Apply the principles of cultural relativism to observations of human behavior.
3. Recognize the validity of people's variable language histories and experiences.
4. Abstract meaning from the archaeological and fossil records.
5. Relate Natural Selection to hominin evolution.
6. Incorporate the scientific method in observations of human attributes (biology, behavior, language, artifacts).

Institutional Learning Outcomes

Communication: The student will effectively express and exchange ideas through listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual works, and other modes of interpersonal expression.

Critical Thinking: The student will analyze problems, gather and synthesize relevant information, evaluate ideas, information, and evaluate alternative points of view to create, innovate and implement effective solutions.

Cultural Awareness and Humility: The student will demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity toward individuals of diverse ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, and religious affiliations, as well as toward those individuals with diverse abilities and socio-economic classes to respectfully interact with individuals of diverse perspectives, beliefs and values while being mindful of the limitation of their own cultural frameworks.

Social Awareness: The student will recognize and analyze the interconnectedness of global, national, and local concerns, analyzing cultural, political, social, and environmental issues from multiple perspectives and appreciate similarities and differences among cultures.

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. Anthropology and the study of the supernatural
 - a. The four fields of Anthropology
 - b. Cultural Anthropology and ethnographic fieldwork
 - c. Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism
 - d. Early Anthropological perspectives of supernaturalism
 - e. Different perspectives on supernaturalism
2. Anthropological definitions of terms and concepts about the supernatural
 - a. Role of the supernatural within society
3. Human evolution and belief systems
 - a. Early archaeological evidence (e.g. Neandertals)
 - b. Anatomically modern Homo sapiens (e.g. Cave paintings, venus figurines, other artifacts).
 - c. The biology of belief (e.g. scientific perspectives on natural selection, evolution, brain chemistry)
4. Myth
 - a. Creation myths from different societies ex: Judeo-Christian, Tikopian, Navajo, Maya, Norse
 - b. Importance of myth and symbolism
5. Ritual
 - a. Reasons for ritual (Circumstances, Timing)
 - b. Types of ritual (Technological, Therapy, Ideological, Rites of Passage, etc.) ex: Ramadan, Diwali, Tewa Rain Dance, Wai Brama Celebration of Origins, Inuit Seal Hunting, Fore Sorcery rituals, Yanomamo coming of age ceremonies, American weddings
 - c. Connections of lineality and gender to ritual (e.g. Matrilineality among the Wai Brama and its connection to the structure of ritual in the Celebration of Origins).

6. Supernatural Beings
 - a. Gods and goddesses Yoruba, Ifugao
 - b. Ancestral spirits Hatian Vodou, Yu'pik, Hindu, Yoruba
 - c. Other spirits Hofriyat (Sudan)
 - d. Ghosts Dani (New Guinea)
7. Religious Specialists
 - a. Priests Aztecs, Okinawan Priestesses - allowing for discussion of the role of gender in the identification of religious specialists.
 - b. Shamans ex. Tungus (Siberia), ex. Tohono O'Odham (Arizona)
 - c. Prophets Ngungdeng (Nuer)
8. Ethnomedicine
 - a. The use of drugs in supernatural ritual Peyote (Huichol)
 - b. Religious healing
9. Witchcraft
 - a. Witchcraft in traditional society
 - b. Witchcraft in Western History - influence of gender in claims of witchcraft
 - c. Modern Wicca
10. Sorcery and Magic
 - a. Vodou Haiti
 - b. Systems of Magic ex. Aboriginal Increase Rites, Trobriand Islanders, Azande Medicines
 - c. Superstition
11. Culture Change and Revitalization Movements
 - a. Case studies (Ghost Dances, Rastafarianism, Mormonism)
 - b. Development of the movements
 - c. Development of new religions
 - d. Development of cults
 - e. The effect of supernatural beliefs on other aspects of culture

Honors Content

The topics to be covered in ANTH 125H are identical to those in ANTH 125, but students will investigate selected topics in much more depth than in the regular section. Students in the honors section of ANTH 125 may investigate topics such as:

- The relationship of a society's mythology to their culture.
- How belief in the supernatural is interwoven into all aspects of culture for that society, examined through the use of ethnography.
- How religion is incorporated into modern, western societies, through venues such as politics, social justice, race and ethnicity, etc.

Methods of Instruction

Method

Directed Study

Integration

Ethnographic studies (whole book or selected articles) of the supernatural will be read, discussed in class and/or critiqued, demonstrating anthropological interest in the supernatural. Examples of appropriate studies would be "Baseball Magic" and "Magic and Witchcraft Among the Azande".

DE Adaptations for MOI

All reading assignments can be delivered either through material provided in the CMS or through the assigned texts. Discussions of the material can be facilitated through the CMS.

Method

Discussion

Integration

Students will engage in small-group or large-group discussion of various topics and if small-group then present outcomes to the rest of the class. Discussion topics can focus on topics such as characteristics that should be found in a definition of religion or what type of magical beliefs are found in our culture.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Student discussion will be achieved using asynchronous threaded discussions with other students and the instructor within the CMS, or by participating in synchronous discussions using accessible video conferencing platforms.

Method

Film/video Viewing and Discussion

Integration

Ethnographic films will be shown and then discussed and/or critiqued. Because anthropologists observe human behaviors to understand cultures, films about this topic are critical to the course content. For example, the film Celebration of Origins can be viewed to highlight how matrilineality directly impacts the structure of the ritual and who is allowed to be a religious specialists in the Wai Brama culture

DE Adaptations for MOI

Accessible videos can be made available to online students through the CMS as well as through online video databases through the Library (such as Kanopy, Films on Demand or Alexander Street, all of which have accessibility built into their films).

Method

Lecture

Integration

Lecture presentation on various aspect of belief in the supernatural, such as describing the differences between shamans and priests, or describing different models for the development of religious belief.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Lecture can be communicated through the CMS in a variety of formats including accessible digital slide presentations and video lectures. Accessible websites and accessible online videos can be incorporated as part of these lectures. Lectures can be delivered synchronously through video conferencing platforms.

Method

Projects

Integration

Students will complete projects focused on understanding the role that the belief in the supernatural plays in society, such as creating a religion or observing a religious ritual.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Students will be expected to complete projects that involve applying the material presented in class to their own experiences (such as the create a religion project or the ritual observation project). Accessible project instructions will be provided through the CMS, and students can submit their completed projects into the Assignment Pages within the CMS.

Method

Reading

Integration

Readings will provide context for religious beliefs in a variety of different cultures.

DE Adaptations for MOI

All reading assignments can be delivered either through material provided in the CMS or through the assigned texts. These readings will meet accessibility requirements.

Method

Activity

Integration

In class activities will allow students to apply concepts from lectures and readings. In class activities can include assignments such as group work focused on researching and presenting to the class different myths or rituals that conform to the categories discussed in class.

DE Adaptations for MOI

In-class activities can be accomplished asynchronously using CMS resources such as the discussion boards. Other in-class activities can be accomplished online by using accessible docs or slides. Students can be into groups and work together on the activity, submitting their group work to an assignment page in the CMS. Synchronously, in-class activities can be completed using accessible video conferencing platforms.

Additional Methods of Instruction for Honors

1. Students will meet with the instructor a minimum of three times over the course of the semester. The majority of the meeting time(s) will focus on discussing honors course assignments, such as helping the student identify potential research topics or service organization to contact. Additionally, meeting time can incorporate discussions of assigned readings. Meetings can either be one on one with the instructor or if there are more than one honors student in a class as a small group discussion. Meetings can also be used as a forum for peer evaluation of student work.

2. Service Learning: Honors students may engage in service learning projects where they identify a local religious organization and volunteer as part of the community outreach component of that organization. Ideally the religious organization would not be one that the student is already familiar with. The student is required to complete a proposal prior to the beginning of volunteering and is expected to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours over the course of the semester. The student will also be expected to complete a reflection paper that incorporates outside research.

Methods of Evaluation**Method**

Class Participation

Integration

Class participation will be evaluated on the frequency, relevance and appropriateness of student responses in in-class discussion regarding lecture topics or assigned readings or films, and on the completion of in class activities, such as reflections on the role of women as central to religious rituals such as among both the Wai Brama and in the New Religious Movement of Umbanda

DE Adaptations for MOE

Class participation will be evaluated on the frequency, relevance and appropriateness of student responses in in-class discussion regarding lecture material. Students will obtain instructor feedback through participation assignments in the CMS, along with putting feedback in the comments section of those assignments. Feedback will be provided to the students within a week.

Method

Exams/Tests

Integration

Students will be evaluated on their ability to provide the correct term or definition to the presented concept. In short answer questions on tests, student answers will be evaluated on the basis of identification of appropriate examples to explain or elaborate on the requested concept.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Exams and Tests are submitted through the CMS and will be evaluated on the basis of the presentation of correct factual material and the identification of appropriate connections between different concepts in a culturally significant manner. Feedback will be given through the quizzes and instructor feedback sections within the CMS. Most often instructor feedback will take place within 48 to 72 hours after the due date.

Method

Projects

Integration

Ethnographic observation projects will be evaluated on the students' ability to apply the perspectives and knowledge from class in their observation of rituals and behavior.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Projects will be submitted via the CMS and instructor feedback will be given within the CMS using rubric and written feedback options. Feedback will be provided to the students within one to two weeks of the assignment deadline.

Method

Research Projects

Integration

Research projects will be evaluated on the students' ability to synthesize disparate information into a coherent argument and to present it in an articulate manner, whether written or oral. It is also essential that the student demonstrate an awareness of the cultural context that generated the behavior(s).

DE Adaptations for MOE

Projects will be submitted via the CMS and instructor feedback will be given within the CMS using rubric and written feedback options. Feedback will be provided to the students within one to two weeks of the assignment deadline.

Method

Quizzes

Integration

Quizzes will be evaluated on the basis of the presentation of correct factual material and the identification of appropriate connections between different concepts in a cultural significant manner.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Quizzes are submitted through the CMS and will be evaluated on the basis of the presentation of correct factual material and the identification of appropriate connections between different concepts in a cultural significant manner. Feedback will be given through the quizzes and instructor feedback sections within the CMS. Feedback will be provided to the students within 48-72 hours of the assignment deadline.

Evaluation of Honors assignments

To receive honors credit, students must successfully complete regular course and additional honors assignments.

Research and ethnography papers will be evaluated on clarity of argument, effective use of supporting evidence, effective integration of material from disparate sources, the number and type of references consulted, depth of analysis, overall accuracy and proper use of spelling, syntax, and grammar.

Service learning reflection papers will be evaluated on the thoughtful reflection on the service learning experience, the effective incorporation of academic source material into the reflection and integration of course themes into the paper. Papers will also be assessed on proper use of spelling, grammar, and syntax.

Response papers will be based on the quality of the analysis of the text, incorporation of class themes, and effective use of proper spelling, syntax, and grammar.

Oral presentations will be evaluated on clarity of argument, effective use of supporting evidence, effective integration of material from disparate sources, the number and type of references consulted, depth of analysis, overall accuracy and effective use of image accompanying the presentation.

Assignments

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Read a collection of myths (Corn Mother, Son of Light Kills the Monster, The Flood, Earth Dragon, and Coyote's Rabbit Chase) from American Indian Myths and Legends (compiled and edited by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz, Pantheon Press, 1984) and come to class prepared to discuss the various themes and components of mythology that are present in the various stories. Using Stein and Stein (2017) ("Understanding Myths"), you will also be expected to identify which category of myth (origin, apocalyptic, trickster, etc..) the stories are. Specific attention in the discussion of the myths will center on the role of women in the stories (especially "Corn Mother" and "The Flood"), the importance of community ("Son of Light..."), and the use of myth to explain the landscape ("Earth Dragon", "Corn Mother", and "The Flood"). You may be asked to prepare for the class by writing a short analysis of one or two of the myths.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Clarity and accuracy in answers about the narratives
- Clarity and coherence in written answers
- Depth of analysis regarding the type, timing and circumstance of the myth, as well as themes of gender, landscape creation, and community.
- Insightfulness in connecting content from the myths to larger themes in the course

How assignment will be adapted in online format

This assignment can be adapted for the online format by using the Discussion Boards in the CMS to assign the articles, pose the discussion prompt and facilitate the discussion. Students would then be expected to respond within the CMS Discussion Board to several of their classmates and either respond to the key point identified in the first student's post or attempt an answer to questions posed by their peers. Instructors will review the student's posts and provide feedback either through the discussion board itself, through the comments function in the CMS, or via email. Feedback will be done within 48-72 hours of the assignment deadline.

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Create a religion. You must describe all relevant aspects of the religion including the gods, religious specialists, the mythology, at least three important rituals, the role that the religion plays in society and the development of morals and ethics, and the use of symbols in the religion. Special attention must be made to the culture that believes in this religion. You will submit this in a 5-8 page paper.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Clarity and relevance of the religion to the described culture
- Identification and accuracy/relevance of three different types of rituals
- Identification and accuracy/relevance of three different types of symbols
- Identification and accuracy/relevance of religious specialists
- Identification and accuracy/relevance of supernatural beings

- Identification and accuracy/relevance of mythology

How assignment will be adapted in online format

This assignment can be completed in the same exact manner in the online format, and submitted via the CMS. Alternatively, the assignment can be modified to allow for students to observe cultural or subcultural behavior as depicted in a film and using class vocabulary discuss and analyze the observed behavior. This alternative assignment could also be submitted via the CMS. Instructors will grade the assignment and provide feedback through the comments function in the CMS within one to two weeks of the assignment's deadline.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

You will be placed into groups and have to create a slide in a class online slideshow that describes a particular ritual. As part of the slide, you will need to include the name of the ritual, the geographic location where this ritual is performed, a brief discussion of the ritual, and identify the type of ritual it is, as well as provide two relevant images related to the ritual or culture. The slide will also need to include appropriate attribution of the information and images on the slide.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Identification of the culture and the name of the ritual
- Accurate description and analysis of the ritual
- Correct attribution of sources
- Effective use of images in the construction of the slide

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The Assignment can be done in the online format either by dividing students into breakout rooms (for Synchronous classes) or by incorporating the use of discussion boards (for asynchronous classes). For synchronous classes, the activity can take place practically identically as in face to face classes within the breakout rooms in the conferencing platform. For the asynchronous classes, students can divide the labor of working on different components of the slide and then ensure the all aspects are met prior to informing the instructor of its completion. Slides will be graded within a week of the class activity and instructor feedback will be given through the assignment comments function in the CMS.

Honors Assignments

Assignment

Students will complete all regular course requirements for Anth 125 and be graded according to the standards used for the rest of the class. In addition students will be expected to complete one of option A, B or C as well as either option D or E.

Assignment

A. The student will complete a research paper, 8-12 pages long, typed, double-spaced on a topic selected by the student in collaboration with the instructor. The paper will have an original thesis or argument. A minimum of 8 sources (with a minimum of 5 peer-reviewed) will be used in the development of the paper. Potential options for the paper may include an analysis of the relationship between a religion's pantheon and mythology and their attitudes towards particular demographic groups within their society (such as women, the elderly or foreigners), or choosing a particular historical or modern event (such as the witchcraze of the 15th century or the confirmation of recent supreme court justices) and analyze how religion affected the events that occurred.

Required or Optional

Required



Honors Core Values

Academic Rigor and Research

Justify how the assignment reflects the Academic Rigor and Research Core Value

The paper should incorporate academic research and advance the academic conversation in an effective manner

Assignment

B. The student will engage in a service learning project. The student and instructor will identify a local religious organization (or an organization that is in some way religious or spiritually focused) where the student can volunteer to assist in some community outreach manner. For instance, social justice related examples might include at a soup kitchen, thrift shop, child care. The student will be expected to volunteer a minimum of 10 hours with this organization over the course of the semester. Additionally the student will prepare a 4-7 page reflection on the experience incorporating a minimum of 3 outside, academic sources. The research component of the reflection paper can examine topics such as how well does the outreach component reflect the overall mission of the religious or spiritual group, or examine behaviors observed among the other members of the charitable organization (such as gender roles, political structure or degree of religiosity).

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

As part of this project, the student will be involved in the community and be able to see how people interact with the chosen organization and the role that belief systems play in the particular organization.

Assignment

C. The student will conduct a mini-ethnography of a sub-culture focusing on the role that religion or a belief in the supernatural plays in their life. The student will be expected to incorporate outside research by using a minimum of 4 peer-reviewed sources into a 6-8-page, double-spaced paper. The paper should have an original thesis or argument. The student will be expected to use appropriate ethnographic participant observation techniques in the research of the particular subculture which will involve multiple visits and several hours of ethnographic research with their chosen subjects.

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

Through participant observation the student will interact with members of the selected culture or subculture.

Assignment

D. The student or students will read a book that is focused on the belief in the supernatural and its role within a particular society. Appropriate books can include ethnographies such as Life, Ritual and Religion Among the Lacandon Maya, or more popular readership focused books such as Meeting the Invisible Man: Secrets and Magic in West Africa, or collections of famous articles such as Baseball Magic or Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande. The student will also complete a 2-3 page response paper analyzing some of the themes in the readings and discussion.

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

Through reading these selected texts, students will be able to gain knowledge and perspectives about cultures or groups with which they may have limited familiarity, gaining a greater appreciation for the lived experiences of others.

Assignment

E. The student will complete a 10-15 minute presentation using the material and conclusion generated through the research constructed from option A, B, or C. The presentation will be done to either the class as a whole or in another venue (such as the college wide research symposium).

Required or Optional

Required

Honors Core Values

Engagement

Justify how the assignment reflects the Engagement Core Value

Through the presentation of their research, students will be able to interact in an academic manner with others while helping to gain skills that will help them as they continue on their educational path.

Course Materials**Textbooks**

Wade Davis (1997). *The Serpent and the Rainbow* Simon and Schuster. ISBN: 0684839296
Moro, P. and J. Myers (2013). *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion* McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 9780078034947
Stein, R. and P. Stein (2025). *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft* Routledge. ISBN: 9781032572994
Winzler, R. (2012). *Anthropology of Religion* Altamira Press. ISBN: 978-0-7591-2189-8
Jensen, J., S. (2019). *What is Religion?* Routledge. ISBN: 9781138586345

Open Educational Resources

Welcome to the Anthropology of Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion by Amanda Zunner-Keating, Madlen Avetyan, and Ben Shepard.
<https://oer.pressbooks.pub/beliefs/>

Class Size Information**Class Size**

40

Class Size Category

A - Lecture/discussion 40

Diversity and Inclusion**Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.**

Although the focus of the class is on the belief systems that exist in societies around the world, the discussions will be centered in an anthropological framework that emphasizes aspects of gender, culture/race, sexuality, and other aspects of identity. Discussion of the Wai Brama's Celebration of Origins (a ritual focused on the Wai Brama's origin story) cannot exist without a thorough discussion of a matrilineal society and the role of women in the ritual. Likewise, discussing syncretic religions in the Caribbean and in South America such as Vodou or Umbanda cannot take place without an historical focus on the role of enslaved peoples in the development of the religion and the incorporation of their traditional belief systems. As part of the teaching of the class, students will read articles and watch movies about different cultural, ethnic, gender and sex identity groups and by being taught the practice of cultural relativism will learn to suspend judgment of the practices of others until those practices can be understood from the context of the culture that generated the behavior. Care will be taken to also incorporate more studies and research written by individuals who are typically underrepresented in the Anthropological literature.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

Course content includes information from many different cultures from around the world allowing all students an opportunity to see examples of societies to whom they may relate, strengthening their connection to the material. The assignments have been updated to include both formative and summative assignments to help student scaffold their work and work towards being able to complete the more extensive tasks. In addition, the assignments allow for significant student input (on selecting the culture or subculture to study and include in the slide assignments) so as to allow for greater ownership over the research the student will complete. The use of different types of instruction and interactions (Lecture, film, small and large group discussions, student to student interaction, and student to self interaction) will help to allow different styles of learners an opportunity to interact with the material in ways that are meaningful to them.

Interactions**Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.**

Students will engage in student-to-student interaction through the use of small group discussion, either in person or through the use of breakout rooms in synchronous online classes. Additionally the use of the CMS Discussion Boards will also facilitate student-to-student interaction. Student-to-student interaction can also be achieved through accessible in-class group activities (for instance the slide assignments where students will work cooperatively and build a slide about an Japanese origin myth, a syncretic religion such as Santeria, or a religious specialists such as Navajo hand-tremblers.)

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

Instructor-to-student interaction will be achieved through the use of lecture, either in person, mediated via video-conference software (if synchronous online) or through the use of accessible online lectures (Video, audio or text lectures). Additionally, the presence of the instructor in large group discussions either face to face or through the use of the CMS Discussion boards will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction. Instructor-to-student interaction will also be achieved through the syllabus and the CMS by describing the structure of the class and sharing of background information about the instructor. Feedback on assignments and exams will also incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

Student-to-content interaction will be achieved through the assigned readings and assignments. Students will also interact with the content through the practical fieldwork assignments such as the ritual observation project. In class activities, such as the slide assignments, and written assignments will also allow the student to interact with the content.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

Student-to-self interaction will be achieved through the use of in-class and online discussions (for both face to face and online (both synchronous and asynchronous) where students will be expected to write their thoughts first before sharing them in both small group and large group discussions. Writing assignments such as journals and thought papers will also help students with their metacognition. Actively taking fieldnotes when doing ethnographic research projects (ritual observation project) will further allow student-to-self interaction.