

ANTH 3718 WAO: The Anthropology of Magic and Religion

M/W 2:30-4

Instructor: Melinda Vandenberg Giles

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Course Description:

Humans have a need to find meaning for our own existence. What we call religion provides answers to these many inexplicable questions about life, death, and a larger conceptualization of who are as humans and what we are capable of. This course will provide an overview of many different belief systems and forms of spirituality where there will be no distinctive divide between organized religion, belief systems, spirituality, magic, and witchcraft. All of these different ways of perceiving the world are united in an attempt to explain, justify, and in some cases try to control, the multifaceted forces of the universe.

Course Requirements:

Midterm Exam: 40%

Group Presentations: 40%

Presentation Journal 20%

Required Text:

Stein, Rebecca and Philip. *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft* (any version). Routledge, 2017.

Schedule of Readings

WEEK 1:

Jan 5 Chapter 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion

Jan 7 Chapter 2: Mythology

WEEK 2:

Jan 12 Chapter 3: Religious Symbols

Jan 14 Chapter 4: Ritual

WEEK 3:

Jan 19 Chapter 5: Altered States of Consciousness

Jan 21 Chapter 6: Religious Specialists

WEEK 4:

Jan 26 Chapter 7: Magic and Divination

Jan 28 Chapter 8: Souls, Ghosts and Death

WEEK 5:

Feb 2 Chapter 9: Gods and Spirits

Feb 4 Chapter 10: Witchcraft

WEEK 6:

Feb 9 Midterm Review

Feb 11 MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 7: READING WEEK

WEEK 8: Presentation

Feb 23

Feb 25

WEEK 9: Presentation

March 2

March 4

WEEK 10: Presentation

March 9

March 11

WEEK 11: Presentation

March 16

March 18

WEEK 12: Presentation

March 23

March 25

WEEK 13: Presentation

March 30

April 1

Class Policies

D2L

I will be using D2L to post the course syllabus and announcements. All material is to be submitted for grading on D2L by the due date.

Policy on Extensions

Extensions will only be granted in emergency situations with appropriate documentation. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day and you will receive 0% after 7 days unless prior arrangements have been made.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty (for instance, plagiarism) is a serious offence. Please keep in mind that I have zero tolerance for any forms of plagiarism.