

THE SUPERNATURAL: MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT AND RELIGION ANTHROPOLOGY 4751

Dr. Pankaj Jain

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on one of the unique aspects of human culture, which is religion and supernatural belief. As approached from the perspective of anthropology, the study of religion is both comparative and wide-ranging. The study of religion has played a central role in the theoretical development of anthropology. In this course students will study that role as well as a wide variety of anthropological topics dealing with religion such as myth, ritual, magic, shamanism, and witchcraft. By comparing what is "religious" in many cultures, we will develop a better understanding of the relationship between human beings and religion.

COURSE GOAL

To enrich the awareness and understanding of human behavior from an anthropological perspective by studying what human beings consider religious and to familiarize with the rich variety of beliefs and rituals that anthropologists study as religion.

Required:

Moro, Pamela and Myers, James. *Magic, Witchcraft and Religion*. 8th edition, 2010, McGraw Hill. Buy it online or from UNT bookstore.

Recommended:

Jain, Pankaj. *Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities*. 1st edition, 2012, Ashgate Publishing. Buy it from <http://www.ashgate.com/isbn/9781409405917> (use this discount code to get 35% discount: PJDEUS35). Alternatively, place your order by calling Ms. Suzanne Sprague at: 802-276-3162 ext. 302.

Course Schedule:

(Page nos. refer to the textbook by Moro and Myers)

Week 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion pp.1-41

Week 2: The Myth, Symbolism, and Taboo 42-82
Video: The Three worlds of Bali

Week 3: Ritual pp.83-138

Week 4: Shamans, Priests and Prophets pp.139-183

Wednesday 9/26/2012 **PAPER TOPIC DUE**

Week 5: Altered States of Consciousness pp. 184-235

Week 6: Ethnomedicine: Religion and Healing pp. 236-275

Week 7: Old and New Religions pp. 356-407

Wednesday 10/17/2012 **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8: Religion as Global Culture pp. 408-454

Week 9: The Swadhyayis from Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities

Week 10: The Bishnois from Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities

Wednesday 11/7/2012 **PAPERS DUE**

Week 11: The Bhils from Dharma and Ecology of Hindu Communities

Week 12: Witchcraft, Sorcery, Divination, and Magic pp. 276-327

Week 13: Ghosts, Souls, and Ancestors pp. 328-355

Week 14: Dharma and Religion: A Class Discussion

Week 15: Pre-finals week

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 14th 2012 at 10:30am–12:30pm in the regular classroom

Students must complete the reading assignments listed for each day prior to that day's class and post at least one significant post on Blackboard (<http://learn.unt.edu>).

Grading Procedure:

Grades in this course will be based on two major exams, one research paper, blackboard discussion postings on readings and class participation. Students will be notified in class of any changes in the course schedule.

Exam I = 100 pts.

Final Exam = 100 pts.

Research Paper = 100 pts.

Quizzes = 50 pts.

Class Participation = 50 pts.

Final Grade Determination

100-90% of pt. total = A

89-80% of pt. total = B

79-70% of pt. total = C

69-60% of pt. total = D

59% and below = F

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory. Students with five unexcused absences will have their final grade lowered one letter grade. Without a proper official document, all absences are treated as unexcused. Also, coming to the class later than ten minutes (or leaving early) will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Other Information:

Professor's Office: Chilton Hall 308 K

Telephone: 940-369-6980

Email: pankaj.jain@unt.edu

Office Hours: M/W/F 9:30 -10:30am or by appointment (skype: pjain5ncsu)

TA: Ms. Sarah Jay rosaleen.jay@gmail.com

Office Hours: M/W 9 to 9.50am or by appointment

Anthropology does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program provides academic adjustments and aids to individuals with disabilities in its program and activities.

Laptop computers used in class may only be used for work pertaining to the class content.

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAPER

Requirements: Length should be 6 typed pages, double spaced, and 1" margins. At least 8 sources must be used and should be accurately referenced in the text of the paper. Include articles from at least two scholarly journals. Encyclopedias are not acceptable references.

Due Dates: 9/17 Topic Approval, 11/7 Paper Due

TOPIC: Analyze a topic in the anthropological study of religion that is of interest to you. The instructor must approve the topic, but you may choose whatever in the field appeals to you. You may study the religion of a single culture in depth, or you may look at some aspect of religion cross-culturally. For example, you might want to explore "Religious Symbolism of the Nuer of Africa" or "Funeral Rituals in MesoAmerica" or "Cult Movements in 20th Century American" or "A Comparison of Witchcraft in Three Cultures" or "The Internet and the Spread of Islam."

Write a paper in which you: a) introduce your topic and the thesis you wish to defend, b) present data from your research that defends that thesis and c) draw conclusions regarding your thesis that are based on the data you presented.