

Anthropology 121 (8008): Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft (3 units)

West Los Angeles College, Spring 2015

Online through ETUDES (www.myetudes.org)

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Please use the Private Message system to contact me regarding the course.

Course Description: Anthropology provides a holistic and comparative approach to the study of religious beliefs and practices in societies throughout the world. Through the historical and contemporary anthropological research, this course will explore the similarities and differences in cross-cultural religious expression, such as magic, witchcraft, myth, ritual, shamanism, ancestor worship, beliefs in demons, ghosts, and spirits, and other related social phenomena.

Student Learning Outcomes: This course will help students achieve the following institutional SLOs:

Critical Thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence, and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences. Students will apply critical thinking to investigate and interpret the influences of culture and environment upon human beings. Students will apply anthropological method and theory in written assignments.

Cultural Diversity: Respectfully engage with other cultures in an effort to understand them. Students will participate in activities designed to elicit discussion and understanding of cultural variation found among humans, particularly in their belief systems concerning the supernatural. Students will research and analyze various features of religious systems and present results in written assignments and informal class presentations.

Course Level

SLO 1: Identify a ritual within the context of a religious service and interpret the role of that ritual within the context of the religion.

SLO 2: Recall and define terms and concepts that deal with the anthropological study of religion.

Reading: P. A. Moro (2013) *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural*, 9th edition. McGraw Hill, New York. (ISBN 978-0-07-803494-7)

You must have this edition of the text for the course. The book is an edited volume. There are 47 articles (numbered 1-47 in the text's table of contents and at the top of each article) arranged into 9 chapters (with chapter introductions). Required for the class are the first 8 chapters (40 articles plus chapter introductions). The final chapter is not assigned but highly recommended.

Modules: Modules, accessed from the left hand menu of the class site, are the "classroom" or lecture component of this course. Read the corresponding module before the assigned textbook chapter (see course outline). Module material is designed to add to course readings.

Discussions: There are three categories of discussions available for student participation. All discussions can be accessed from the left hand menu in our class site. Click on "Discussion and Private Message" to see two 'Main' discussion categories "Required Discussions" & "Questions" and one 'Other' category, "Student Lounge."
A. "Required Discussions" is where students post essays on topics posed by the instructor covering materials from readings and modules.

The topics and possible points are as follows:

Discussion	Topic	Points	Essay 1 Due	Essay 2 Due
D1	Online Course	10	4/15	4/17
D2	Nacirema	10	4/29	5/1
D3	Drug Use	10	5/13	5/15
D4	Impact	10	6/2	6/4

You must post D1 by the due date or you will be dropped as a "no show".

If you do not submit contributions to discussions, you run the risk of being dropped for nonparticipation.

B. "Questions & Comments" are for when you have a question or comment on the syllabus, material from the readings and/or the modules, assignments or any other aspect of class. Use this forum to ask all class questions (with the exception of individual grade or other private matters, in which case use Private Message). This will allow others to benefit from the question as well as contribute responses.

C. "Student Lounge" provides you with a forum to "talk" amongst yourselves about course material. These are informal discussions between students about class topics. The instructor will not answer questions in this forum. The instructor reserves the right to eliminate inappropriate topics from any forum.

Tests: The eight tests (T1-T8) cover the readings from the first eight chapters of the required course textbook and corresponding modules.

Tests are not timed. You can open tests and close them again as many times as you like until you submit/finish the test. I recommend opening the week's test and reading the questions prior to doing the assigned reading. Plan on submitting/finishing each test by the Friday of the week assigned (see Course Outline) even though in some cases the due date isn't until the following week. Tests turned in after the listed due date will lose 5 points - Late is defined as any time after the due date/time (even 1 minute).

Test Covers Chapter & Module

T1	1
T2	2
T3	3
T4	4
T5	5
T6	6
T7	7
T8	8

Due dates are listed in Assignments, Tests and Surveys as well as the Gradebook & CourseMap

Course Grade: Your course grade will be based on points earned from tests and required class discussions essays.

Tests	190	A 207 +
Discussions	40	B 184-206
<hr/>		C 161-183
Total Possible Class Points:	230	D 138-160
		F 137 and below

*'Incompletes' will only be given in extreme circumstances and with prior consultation with the instructor.

*No extra credit will be offered

Please remember it is ultimately the student's responsibility to drop a course that you do not plan on completing.

*Last day to drop the class without a "W" is Monday, April 20.

*Last day to drop the class with a "W" is Friday, May 22.

Course Outline

This is a fast paced course; please keep up with readings, modules, discussion essays, and tests. Listed below is what is required for each week of the course. Work ahead whenever possible—there is a lot to accomplish in eight weeks.

Chapter readings are from the 9th edition of the Moro reader. Note that different editions contain different articles. Syllabus is subject to change. Changes if any will be announced.

Week 1

Module: [Getting Started](#)

Discussion: **D1** - Essay 1 & Essay 2

Module 1: Anthropology and the Study of Religion

Reading: [Chapter 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion](#)

Test: [T1](#) - Objective and Short Answer Questions

Week 2

Module 2: Myth and Symbolism

Reading: Chapter 2: Myth, Symbolism, and Worldview

Test: T2 - Objective and Short Answer Questions

Week 3

Module 3: Ritual

Reading: Chapter 3: Ritual

Discussion: D2 - Essay 1 & Essay 2

Test: T3 - Objective Questions

Week 4

Module 4: Clerics

Reading: Chapters 4: Shamans, Priests, and Prophets

Test: T4 - Objective Questions

Week 5

Module 5: Altered States

Reading: Chapter 5: Altered States of Consciousness and the Religious Use of Drugs

Discussion: D3 - Essay 1 & Essay 2

Test: T5 - Objective Questions

Week 6

Module 6: Religion and Health

Reading: Chapter 6: Illness, Healing, and Religion

Test: T6 - Objective and Short Answer Questions

Week 7

Module 7: Evil Magic

Reading: Chapter 7: Witchcraft, Sorcery, Divination, and Magic

Test: T7 - Objective Questions

Week 8

Module 8: Power of the Dead

Reading: Chapter 8: Death, Ancestors, Ghosts, and Souls

Test: T8 - Objective Questions

Discussion: D4 - Essay 1 & Essay 2

Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and require accommodations, please contact the Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSP&S) Office. The DSP&S Office provides special assistance in areas including: registration assistance specialized tutoring, academic and career guidance counseling, instructor liaison, special instruction and testing assistance. For more information go to the DSPS page at <http://www.wlac.edu/dsps/>.

Location

Student Services Building (SSB 320)

Telephone

(310) 287-4450

Department Email

dsps@wlac.edu

Communication Policies

All students will please follow these policies for all private messages, emails, and discussion communications:

1. No profanity or foul language of any kind at any time
2. Please politely address everyone by formal name
3. Under no circumstances may you use the classroom forum to ask for a classmate's personal contact information or in any way ask for a personal meeting or date
4. Do not include in your signature or other material in your messages any kind of sales solicitations, information about a business, or a political or religious message of any kind. Do not include a blind or other kind of hyperlink to such information
5. Please use common sense and common courtesy. Please check with me first if you have any questions about what is appropriate
6. The instructor maintains the right to delete any public posting deemed inappropriate

Communications with the Instructor:

Please, do not email, private message, or post a message to the instructor as you would text a message to your friend. Please follow these basic rules:

1. Sign off with your full name - first and last
2. If emailing, state in which class you are enrolled
3. Do not tell me to reply ASAP or make other demands
4. Do a spell check on your communications
5. Use upper- and lower-case letters as appropriate in any formal academic written communications (this includes "I")

I will reply to your messages as quickly as possible, and with every effort to do so within 48 hours during weekdays (except holidays).

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of higher education and WLAC; therefore, acts of cheating, plagiarism, falsification or attempts to cheat, plagiarize or falsify will not be tolerated in this course. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is and you can read about it here: <http://www.plagiarism.org>.

Acts of academic dishonesty may result in zero points for the assignment, being reported to Student Services, and/or receiving an F for the class.

The following is from LACCD student code of conduct as it relates to student dishonesty (Board Rule 9803.28):

"Violations of academic integrity of any type by a student provides grounds for disciplinary action by the instructor of college. Violations of Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following actions: cheating on an exam, plagiarism, working together on an assignment, paper or project when the instructor has specifically stated students should not do so, submitting the same term paper to more than one instructor, or allowing another individual to assume one's identity for the purpose of enhancing one's grade. For more information on the Standards of Student Conduct refer to the college catalog available in hardcopy and online at www.wlac.edu."