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**ANT 3241-U02  
MYTH, RITUAL, AND MYSTICISM  
FALL 2016**

**Meeting Location:** Viertes Haus 131

**Meeting Time:** W, 2:00-3:50PM

**Instructor:**

Dr. Aslihan Akkaya  
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**Teaching Assistant**

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By appointment only  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of religion and will focus upon phenomena that may be categorized broadly as “religion” and the closely related concept “supernatural”. It is not a theology course, but examines and analyzes the way religion is practiced and performed in diverse societies through reviewing central aspects of religion, such as mythology, symbolism, ritual, religious specialists, gods and spirits, witchcraft, and magic. This course will approach these topics from the perspective of anthropology. The course begins with an overview of anthropological approaches and theoretical contributions to the study of religion. We will look at the role religion plays in everyday life via reviewing topics such as sickness, death, and uncertainty. The course ends with an examination of religious change and movements.

**Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Understand the culturally informed and quite diverse imaginations about the supernatural world and supernatural forces in different societal contexts, from the post-industrial global north (Western Europe and North America), to the BRIC countries, and so-called traditional societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Australia.
- Better understand the linkages and non-hierarchically determining differences among distinct human beliefs, from more or less complex religious systems, about magic and witchcraft, superstition, sorcery and mysticism.
- Understand the links that exist, differently in different societies, between spirituality, religious beliefs, and conviction of the existence of supernatural forces on one side and other aspects of societies including health care.
- Be able to contextualize their own religious beliefs, spirituality, and/or lack thereof thanks to a better understanding of beliefs they are unfamiliar with.
- Be a better world citizen by understanding the existence of different ways of being human, of being spiritual and religious or atheist.
- Describe the nature of anthropological fieldwork and contrast its methodology with that of other disciplines.
- Explain how terms such as “culture” and “religion” are defined in anthropology.
- Explain and differentiate between different theoretical approaches to the study of religion.
- Explain the concept of ritual and categorize different types of ritual.
- Compare and contrast different types of religious specialists.

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- Explain altered states of consciousness and describe the role they play in religious experiences.
- Differentiate between various types of supernatural entities including gods, spirits, souls, ghosts, and ancestors.
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### **GL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical and contemporary inter-relatedness of key local, regional and global religious and spiritual issues and events, including beliefs in magic, witchcraft, sorcery and various kinds of superstitions. (GLOBAL AWARENESS)
- Demonstrate the ability to compose an analysis of various perspectives associated with different culturally-based conceptualizations of the supernatural world and their attendant practices and rituals, which can also be linked to different geographic locations on the global stage. (GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE)
- Willingly better engage in a number of problem solving activities in a variety of sociocultural contexts around the globe. (GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT)

### **TEXTBOOK (REQUIRED)**

Rebecca L Stein and Philip Stein, *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*, Publisher: Routledge; 3 edition (2010), ISBN-10: 0205718116, ISBN-13: 978-0205718115

### **CHECK BLACKBOARD FOR ADDITIONAL READINGS AND REQUIRED WORK FOR EACH WEEK!**

YOU ARE REQUIRED TO READ ASSIGNED READINGS AND COMPLETE REQUIRED WORK PRIOR TO CLASS. THE SUCCESS IN CLASS WILL DEPEND ON YOUR COMPLETION OF THESE ASSIGNED WORKS.

**BLACKBOARD:** Additional Readings, Requirements, Course Slides, Project Guidelines, Citation Guidelines will be on Blackboard. You will also use Blackboard to submit your weekly in-class activities and assignments.

Login via [fiu.blackboard.com](http://fiu.blackboard.com) and check that you can access the course website. If you encounter any technical problems, then call UTS at 305.348.2284 or go to Green Library Rm. 150.

### **CLASS STRUCTURE**

This is not a lecture course though I will present some content each week; it utilizes Team-Based Learning (TBL). Most likely you have never been in a course using TBL so please read carefully: TBL has you prepare for classes by doing preparation work outside of class and applying it inside of class. Do not expect the professor to lecture much; instead most class time will involve applying and enhancing knowledge through in-class team projects. Don't confuse teams with groups. You will learn the difference; for now, please do not think this will be a class with group projects. To repeat, you are expected to get exposure to the course content prior to class, will be quizzed on your understanding of this content prior to class and in class, and then you'll spend most class time applying this information via short in-class projects with your team. You will be assessed for both your individual and teamwork – see grading below.

Learning is not the same as reading, watching etc. Research shows that it takes most people several exposures to learn new content. This is the main reason why in this course you start learning material through the required preparation work, then apply the content in class and then you are assessed in different ways. This approach helps knowledge and critical thinking “stick” but it may seem strange to you at first.

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## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course will use mixed teaching and learning methods to better accommodate particularities of students. We will have individual, group, and team-based projects and evaluations.

## **GRADING**

1. Individual Readiness Assurance Tests (iRATs)	15%	(taken prior to class on Blackboard)
2. Team Readiness Assurance Tests (tRATs)	5%	(taken in class w team on Blackboard)
3. In-Class Activities	20%	(completed in class w team)
4. In-Class Team Presentation/Participation	10%	(in-class)
5. Individual Assignments	20%	(completed prior to class)
6. Beyond My Cultural Comfort Project	20%	(outside class assignment)
7. Final Reflection Essay	10%	(outside class assignment)
TOTAL	100%	

### **1. INDIVIDUAL (ONLINE) READINESS ASSURANCE TESTS (15%)**

Individual & Team Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs) AKA short quizzes: RATs are short multiple choice, True/false, and/or short answer quizzes on the week's content that you will take individually (iRAT) online before class and then, again, as a team (tRAT) in class. Quiz dates will be indicated on Syllabus and on Blackboard. You will first take iRAT individually online (Blackboard). Team RATs are taken with your team at the beginning of class when assigned. You get one score for your iRAT and another for your tRAT. Miss an iRAT and you cannot get a make-up. However, I will drop every student's lowest iRAT and tRAT score of the semester.

### **2. TEAM READINESS ASSURANCE TESTS (5%)**

After taking iRAT individually prior to class, you will take the same test with your team in class. You will take them on Blackboard but in-class. Completing the test with your team will help you to see other's way of thinking.

### **3. IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES (20% OF GRADE): TEAM-BASED- COMPLETED IN CLASS**

The weekly class sessions are a main source of learning for the course. Please arrive class on time and plan to stay for the entire session. There will be multiple activities during class sessions throughout the semester. These may include short reflections, film viewing guides, and other team-based activities. No make-up or late assignments will be accepted. Missing more than one team activity will have a negative effect on your grade in the class. You will mostly work in teams to complete in-class activities. You will be assigned to permanent teams during the second week of the semester. During midterm and final exams, you will assess your team members' individual performances. Each assignment will be completed in class and will be submitted on Blackboard during class time. (Global Awareness, Global Perspective, Global Engagement)

### **4. IN-CLASS TEAM PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS (10% OF GRADE)**

Each week some teams will present their work that they complete during class time to other teams. Be ready to present your in-class team activity/report to class. I will ask different teams to present each week. In addition, you will be required to participate in class discussion. Some team members should volunteer to share their team's perspective/votes on certain issues. You have to choose a different volunteer each time. You will earn 10% by only presenting your work to others in addition to participating in in-class discussions. (Global Awareness, Global Perspective)

### **5. INDIVIDUAL WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS (20%)**

After you complete the required work for each week, you will be asked to complete a short assignment on the weekly topic. You will submit it via Blackboard prior to class. In addition, you will print and bring your report to class with you. (Global Awareness, Global Perspective)

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## **6. BEYOND MY CULTURAL COMFORTS PROJECT (20%)**

For this individual project students are required to write a term paper (4-5pages) that will be based on both library research and brief fieldwork conducted in at least one South Florida religious or spiritual community to which the students don't belong. Further guidelines for this project can be found on Blackboard. (Global Awareness, Global Perspective, and Global Engagement)

## **7. GLOBAL LEARNING ESSAY/FINAL REFLECTIONS (10%)- COMPLETED OUTSIDE CLASS**

Through the end of the semester you will write a reflection essay to summarize your key learning points from the course and explain how you can put these learning points into practice in your everyday life. Detailed guidelines will be on Blackboard. This is part of your Final Exam. However, you will complete it before the exam. (Global Perspective, Global Engagement)

## **GENERAL CLASS POLICIES**

**Attendance:** Since every student is entitled to full participation in class without interruption, all students are expected to be in class and prepared to begin on time. Students are expected to treat the instructor, TA and other students with dignity and respect, especially in cases where a diversity of opinion arises. Students who engage in disruptive behavior are subject to disciplinary action, including removal from the course.

You are expected to come to every class, arrive on time and come to class having done the work assigned to that week. In addition, you must participate in class and in your team, as in-class activities and tRATS worth 40% (in-class activities + team presentations+tRATs) of your final grade. You cannot be a slacker, as your team and group members will evaluate your participation and performance during the midterm and at the end of the semester.

Everyone in the class has the responsibility of making the classroom a "safe" environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and in which everyone can feel that their opinions are respected, even when they are not shared by all members of the class. Class discussions and activities will help you to understand the connection between what is being taught in class and how it relates to the everyday life.

You should not miss more than 1 class and you have to fully participate in class and in your team. Missing more than 1 class will lower your grade (2% per absence). If you need to miss a class due to illness (medical doctor's note), religious observances or team participation (official paper work) you must notify me prior to the class.

**Teams:** You can either create your own team or ask us to assign you to a team at the beginning of the semester. There will be 20 teams with 5-6 team members in each. MAKE SURE YOU ENROLL IN YOUR TEAM ON BLACKBOARD TO EARN CREDIT FOR TEAM ASSIGNMENTS!

**Blackboard- My Grades:** Check your grades periodically. It is your responsibility to check your grades on Blackboard and inform us on missing grades/assignments before the semester ends. DO NOT EMAIL US AFTER FINAL GRADES ASSIGNED ABOUT MISSING GRADES!!!

**Academic Conduct:** Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which

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demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Plagiarism/Academic Honesty:** As an FIU student, you are always expected to abide by the university's policies particularly those governing academic honesty and plagiarism as they appear in the FIU Student Handbook. If you are not familiar with how to avoid plagiarism, you will receive some instruction and additional guidelines in this course. In sum, should anything you/your team produces cite any data, research or information that you have not generated and which is not general knowledge then you must cite it appropriately following one of the disciplinary conventions of the academic disciplines represented by the faculty teaching this course. More information about citation formatting will be given to you via Blackboard. Please become completely familiar with bibliographic styles and citation conventions. If you do not cite others' work adequately you can be accused of plagiarism and FIU takes these accusations very seriously. Several of your written assignments will be submitted using Turnitin.com to check your work for plagiarism. Finally, I reserve the right to alter the syllabus as needed. You will be notified of any changes.

**Tardiness:** Assignments received after the deadline will lose 1/2 or 1 grade; one week and over 1 full grade or more.

**Use of Electronic Devices (Cell Phones, Computers, etc.):**

**Electronic device and cell phone policies will be debated and announced in class early in the term.**

**Special Needs Students:** Please notify the faculty prior to or immediately upon commencement of this course about your accommodation needs as in accordance with FIU policy. You will be accommodated accordingly.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**T:** Textbook

**B:** Blackboard

**WEEK 1**

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August 24, Wednesday Introduction, Syllabus Review, Team-based Learning, Brief Introduction to Anthropology, Getting to Know Each Other  
**\*\*\* Take a Practice Test on Syllabus prior to Week 2 class!!! See Blackboard for the link to the test.**

**WEEK 2**

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August 31, Wednesday The Anthropological Study of Religion, The Anthropological Perspective, What is "Religion"?, Attempts at Defining Religion, Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Religion  
**Take iRAT-1 prior to class time- Syllabus Test if you have not yet Complete the Worksheet on "Anthropology-Religion" prior to class**

**WEEK 2- READINGS:**

- Chapter 1: The Anthropological Study of Religion (T)
- Article-1: Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (B)
- Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!**

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**Optional Readings:**

- Edward B. Taylor, Animism (T)
- Clifford Geertz, Religion as a Cultural System (B)
- Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (B)

**FILM:**

- Fieldwork Video: MIT Dept- Doing Fieldwork: <http://bit.ly/bugDDJ>
- “Off the Veranda: Malinowski” -Excerpts from the documentary

**WEEK 3**

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September 7, Wednesday      Myths and Symbols, The Nature of Myths, Understanding Myths, Approaches to Analysis of Myths, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT: Myth prior to class  
Complete the Individual Assignment on “Myth”

**WEEK-3 READINGS:**

Chapter-2: Mythology  
Bronislaw Malinowski, The Role of Myth in Life (T)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**Optional Readings:**

- Edmund Leach, Genesis as Myth (T)
- Bronislaw Malinowski, Myth in Primitive Psychology (B)
- Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen, The Dogon (F)

**WEEK 4**

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September 14, Wednesday      Religious Symbols, Sacred Art, Sacred Space and Time, The Symbolism of Music and Dance, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Symbols prior to class  
Complete “Symbols” worksheet prior to class

**WEEK-4 READINGS:**

Chapter-3: Religious Symbols  
Eric Wolf, “The Virgin of Guadalupe:A Mexican National Symbol” (T)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**Optional Readings:**

- E.E. Evans-Pritchard, The Problem of Symbols (T, B)
- Sherry Ortner, On Key Symbols (B)
- Medusa’s Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience

**WEEK 5**

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September 21, Wednesday      Ritual and Myth, The Basics of Ritual Performances, Rights of Passage, Classification of Rituals, Religious Obligations, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Ritual prior to class  
Complete “Ritual” Worksheet prior to class

**WEEK-5 READINGS:**

Chapter-4: Ritual  
V. W. Turner, Ritual Symbolism, Morality,&Social Structure among the Ndembu (T)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

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**Optional Readings:**

- Edmund Leach, Ritual Symbolism (B)
- Turner, Victor (1964) Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage. The Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society. University of Washington Press. Pp. 4-20.
- Paul Radin, The Winnebago Trickster Figure (B)

**WEEK 6**

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September 28, Wednesday      Altered States of Consciousness (ASC), Entering an ASC, Ritual setting in ASC, Ethnographic Examples of ASC, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Altered States of Consciousness prior to class  
Complete ASC worksheet prior to class

**WEEK-6 READINGS:**

Chapter-5: Altered States of Consciousness  
Napoleon A. Chagnon, My Adventure with Ebene: A "Religious Experience" (T)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**Optional Readings:**

- Douglass Price-Williams and Dureen Hughes, Shamanism and Altered States of Consciousness (B)
- Michael Harner, "The Sound of Rushing Water" (T)
- I.M. Lewis, "Trance, Possession, Shamanism, and Sex," pp. 188-195 (B)

**WEEK 7**

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October 5, Wednesday      Religious Specialists, Shamans, Priests, Other Specialists, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Religious Specialists prior to class  
Complete "Religious Specialists" Worksheet prior to class

**WEEK-7 READINGS:**

Chapter-6: Religious Specialists (T)  
Margery Wolf, The Woman Who Didn't Become a Shaman (B)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**Optional Readings:**

- Victor W. Turner, Religious Specialists (B)

**WEEK 8**

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October 12, Wednesday      Magic and Divinations, Magic and Religion, The Function of Magic, Magic in Society, Divination, Forms of Divination, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Magic and Divination prior to class  
Complete "Magic" worksheet prior to class  
\*\*Deadline to drop a course with a DR grade\*\* (March 21)  
\*\*Deadline to withdraw from the University with a WI grade\*\*

**WEEK-8 READINGS:**

Chapter-7: Magic and Divination (T)  
George Gmelch, Baseball Magic (B)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**Optional Readings:**

- E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande (B)
- Shanafelt, Robert (2004) Magic, Miracle, and Marvels in Anthropology Ethnos, 69 (3):317-340. (B)
- Stanley J. Tambiah, Form and Meaning of Magical Acts (B)

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### WEEK 9

October 19, Wednesday      Souls and Ancestors, Variation in the Concept of the Soul; Souls, Death, and the Afterlife, Bodies and Souls, Death Rituals, Funeral Rituals, In-class Activities: Halloween  
Take iRAT:Souls, Ghosts, Death prior to class  
Complete "Halloween" worksheet prior to class

#### WEEK-9 READINGS:

Chapter-8: Souls, Ghosts and Death  
Lyle B. Steadman et. al., The Universality of Ancestor Worship (T)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

#### Optional Readings:

-Walter W. Whiteaker III, The Contemporary American Funeral Ritual  
-J.H.M. Beattie, The Gohst Cult in Bunyoro

### WEEK 10

October 26, Wednesday      Gods and Spirits; Supernatural, Gods, Spirits and Society; Monotheism; Polytheism, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Gods and Spirits prior to class  
Beyond My Cultural Comforts Assignment due-Submit it via BB

#### WEEK-10 READINGS:

Chapter-9: Gods and Spirits  
Classical Mythology, p. 128-136 only (B)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

#### Optional Readings:

-M. Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, 20-65. (B)

### WEEK 11

November 2, Wednesday      Witchcraft and Sorcery; Witchcraft in Small-Scale Societies, Euro-American Witchcraft Beliefs, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT:Witchcrafts prior to class  
Complete "Witchcraft" worksheet prior to class

#### WEEK-11 READINGS:

Chapter-10: Witchcraft  
E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Men Bewitch Others When They Hate Them (B)  
-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

#### Optional Reading:

Paul Boyer et al., Witchcraft and Social Identity

### WEEK 12

November 9, Wednesday      Adaptation and Change; Syncretism and Revitalization; Domains and Boundaries of Religion, Fundamentalism, Secularism, and New Religious Movements, In-class Activities  
Take iRAT: Syncretism, Adaptation prior to class  
Complete "Adaptation and Change" worksheet prior to class

#### WEEK-12 READINGS:

Chapter-11: The Search for New Meaning  
Alice Beck Kehoe, "The Ghost Dance Religion"



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-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**Optional Readings:**

Peter M. Worsley, "Cargo Cults"

**WEEK 13**

November 16, Friday ONLINE CLASS: Religion and Technology; Virtual Religion, Religion and Media; Information, Communication, and Performance  
**\*\*Complete "Religion and Technology" worksheet by Midnight**

**WEEK-13 READING:**

Cheryl Casey, Virtual Ritual, Real Faith (B)  
Campbell, Heidi (2007), 'What Hath God Wrought?' Considering How Religious Communities Culture (or Kosher) the Cell Phone (B)

-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**WEEK 14**

November 23, Wednesday THANKSGIVING WEEK-NO CLASS  
**FINAL ESSAY DUE by Midnight- SUBMIT IT VIA BLACKBOARD**

**WEEK 15**

November 30, Wednesday Looking Back, Moving Forward  
Workshop-I and Workshop-II  
**\*\*Bring a hard copy of your Final Reflections Essay to class**

-Check Blackboard for additional required work for this week!

**WEEK 16**

\*\*\*\*\* FINALS WEEK-NO CLASS-NO FINAL EXAM \*\*\*\*\*

This course syllabus is subject to change if the instructor deems it necessary in order to accomplish the course objectives. Students will be advised about any change made to the syllabus.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Choosing a Team.....August 31, Wednesday  
iRATs.....iRATS online prior class  
Individual Worksheets/Short Assignments.....Prior to class on Wednesdays  
tRATS .....Wednesdays in class when assigned  
In-class activities.....Wednesdays in class  
BEYOND MY CULTURAL COMFORTS.....October 26, Wednesday  
FINAL ESSAY/REFLECTIONS.....November 23, Wednesday

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**TAKE PRACTICE TEST ON THE SYLLABUS PRIOR TO WEEK 2 CLASS ON BLACKBOARD!**