ANTH / REL 422: Anthropology of Religion

Meets: Monday and Wednesday, 10:30-11:45 in BUSAD E201
Instructor: Dr. Eirik Sæthre
Email: saethre@hawaii.edu
Office: Saunders 306
Office Phone: 956-3995
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 12:00-1:00

Course Description
This course will examine human religious experience from an anthropological perspective, focusing on topics such as myth, ritual, magic, witchcraft, ghosts, and healing. To illustrate the wealth of religious expression that exists around the world, examples from a variety of societies, including our own, will be discussed.

Student Learning Objectives
- Students will learn the historical development of anthropological ideas regarding religion.
- Students will gain an understanding of religion as an institution through which gender, class, health, identity, morality and personhood are expressed.
- Students will examine the ways in which religions, and their adherents, respond to social, political and economic changes.
- Students will use appropriate research tools to formulate a scholarly argument within the context of anthropology.
- Students will learn to express ideas and arguments verbally in an academic environment.

Required Texts and Readings:
All additional readings for this class are posted as pdf documents on Laulima (in the Resources folder).

Grading and Student Evaluation
Paired Presentations (50%)
From Weeks 3 to 14, students will be divided into pairs and give three oral presentations, each one focusing on a single reading. Each presentation should (1) give a background to the reading including information on the topic and author, (2) succinctly summarize the main points and the evidence used to support them, and (3) relate the reading to current events and discussions. Presentations must be interesting and encourage class discussion. Use props, ask questions, get people talking.

Your first presentation should be given in a manuscript mode of delivery. This involves writing a presentation word-for-word and reading the presentation to the audience.
Writing out your presentation in advance allows a greater degree of precision. However, when reading verbatim, it is important to modulate your voice as well as using body gestures and eye contact to maintain the audience’s interest.

Your second presentation should be given in an extemporaneous mode of delivery. This involves preparing notes in advance and speaking conversationally but academically. Rehearse your presentation: ensure that you have the right amount of notes and use formal language. Avoid using filled pauses such as “um,” “uh,” “like,” and “you know.” Don’t be uncomfortable being silent in front of the class.

Your final presentation can be given in either mode.

**Group Presentations (25%)**
During the last two weeks, students will be split into four groups and each will be responsible for presenting an oral presentation on a portion of the ethnography as well as moderating class discussion. These presentations should communicate information in an innovative fashion and encourage debate.

**Final Exam (25%)**
The final exam will consist of essay questions and be given in class on Friday December 17 from 9:45 to 11:45.

**Missed Presentations**
If, for any reason, a student misses a presentation, the grade must be made up by writing a ten page research paper on one of the issues covered in the week that was missed. The paper must cite at least ten scholarly sources and is due either four weeks after the missed presentation or the day of the final exam, whichever is earlier. The paper must follow the standards outlined in the document ‘Guidelines for Papers’, which is available on Laulima. Any paper not conforming to all of these guidelines will be penalized. **If a student misses two or more presentations, the highest grade possible will be a D- and the student will not earn O Focus credit.**

**Grading Scale**

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<th>Grade</th>
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**Classroom Policies**
- Be on time for class.
- Cell phones must be turned off. No computers are allowed in class.
- All course handouts, readings, and assignments can be found on Laulima.
- Students are responsible for all course content, whether or not they are in class.
- For more information about writing resources on campus and online, go to http://www.mwp.hawaii.edu(writer_help.htm).
Class Schedule

**Week 1:** Defining Religion
8/23 Introduction to the class and oral presentations
8/25 Edward Tylor, Religion in Primitive Culture  
Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life

**Week 2:** Defining Religion
8/30 John Raines, Marx on Religion: Introduction  
Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism
9/1 Clifford Geertz, Religion  
Talal Asad, The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category

**Week 3:** Pollution and Liminality
9/6 Holiday – No class
9/8 Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger, Chapter 2  
Victor W. Turner, Betwixt and Between

**Week 4:** Myth
9/13 Scott Leonard and Michael McClure, The Study of Mythology
John Beattie, Nyoro Myth
9/15 Claude Levi-Strauss, Harelips and Twins: The Splitting of a Myth  
Edmund Leach, Genesis as Myth

**Week 5:** Symbolism and Ritual
9/20 Eric Wolf, The Virgin of Guadalupe
Mary Lee Daugherty, Serpent-Handling as Sacrament
9/22 Barbara Myerhoff, Return to Wirikuta: Ritual Reversal and Symbolic Continuity on the Peyote Hunt of the Uichol Indians  
Tanya Luhrmann, Ritual: Techniques for Altering the Everyday

**Week 6:** Shamans and Priests
9/27 G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, Training for the Priesthood among the Kogi of Colombia  
Michael Harner, The Sound of Rushing Water
9/29 Susan Harding, Convicted by the Holy Spirit  
Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, South Korea: Modernization with a Vengeance, Evangelization with the Modern Edge

**Week 7:** Magic, Divination, Sorcery and Witchcraft
10/4 Bronislaw Malinowski, Rational Mastery by Man of His Surroundings  
James Frazer, Sympathetic Magic  
E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Consulting the Poison Oracle among the Azande
10/6  *Naomi M. McPherson*, Sorcery and Concepts of Deviance among the Kabana, West New Britain

*Filip De Boeck*, On Being Shege in Kinshasa

**Week 8: Death**

10/11  *Peter A. Metcalf*, Death Be Not Strange

*Beth A. Conklin*, “Thus are Our Bodies, Thus was Our Custom”

10/13  *C. Allen Haney, Christina Leimer, and Juliann Lowery*, Spontaneous Memorialization: Violent Death and Emerging Mourning Ritual

*Elizabeth Harrison*, I Can Only Move My Feet Towards mizuko kuyo: Memorial Services for Dead Children in Japan

**Week 9: Gender and Sexuality**

10/18  *Homa Hoodfar*, The Veil in Their Minds and on Our Heads: Veiling Practices and Muslim Women

*Daniel Gordon*, Female Circumcision in Egypt and Sudan: A Controversial Rite of Passage

10/20  *Serena Nanda*, The Hijras of India: Cultural and Individual Dimensions of an Institutionalized Third Gender Role

*Robert Fulton and Steven Anderson*, The Amerindian Man-Woman

**Week 10: Health and Healing**

10/25  *L.A. Rebhun*, Swallowing Frogs: Anger and Illness in Northeast Brazil

*Anne Fadiman*, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down

10/27  *Scott Hutson*, The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures

*Thomas Csordas*, A Handmaid’s Tale

**Week 11: Colonization and Change**

11/1  *Ann Fienup-Riordan*, Selavik

11/3  *Jean and John Comaroff*, The Colonization of Consciousness

*William E. Mitchell*, A New Weapon Stirs Up Old Ghosts

**Week 12: Revitalization Movements and Cults**

11/8  *Anthony F.C. Wallace*, Revitalization Movements

*Kenelm Burridge*, New Heaven, New Earth

*Alice Beck Kehoe*, The Ghost Dance Religion

*Peter M. Worsley*, Cargo Cults

11/10  *Michael Barkun*, Reflections after Waco: Millennialists and the State

*John Hall*, Apocalypse at Jonestown

*Eileen Barker*, The Unification Church

**Week 13: Techno Religions**

11/15  *John Whitmore*, Religious Dimensions of the UFO Aductee Experience

*Stephen D. O’Leary*, Cyberspace as Sacred Space: Communicating Religion on Computer Networks

11/17  Film: *The Devil’s Playground*
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<th>Week 14:</th>
<th>Appropriating Religion</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>Film: <em>The Devil’s Playground</em> and Group Discussion</td>
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| 11/27   | Mattijs van de Port, Re-Scripting the Afro-Brazilian Religious Heritage  
          | Galit Hasan-Rokem, Martyr vs. Martyr |

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<th><em>Witchcraft, Violence and Democracy in South Africa</em></th>
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<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>Introduction – Chapter 3</td>
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<th><em>Witchcraft, Violence and Democracy in South Africa</em></th>
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<td>12/8</td>
<td>Chapters 11 – Epilogue</td>
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| Week 17: | Final Exam |