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ANTY 336.01: Myth, Ritual and Religion

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ANTY 336: Myth, Ritual and Religion

Autumn 2013
Stone Hall 304
MWF 12:10-1:00 P.M.
T.A. Cheyenne Laue
Office hours:

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Office hours: MF 1:10-3:10 p.m. and by appt.

Description: Theories and practices concerning supernatural phenomena found among non-literate peoples throughout the world. Writing Approved for General Education.

Readings: Bowen, John R. 2013. Religions in Practice: an approach to the anthropology of religion. Prentice Hall. Sixth Edition. **plus MySearchLab.**

Optional Reading: Bessac, Suzanne. 2008 (1988) Embroidered Hmong Story Cloths. Contributions to Anthropology Series, #9. Department of Anthropology, The University of Montana.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To gain a comparative perspective on world religions and also on indigenous cosmological traditions, i.e. 'an anthropological approach' to the study of religion.
- 2) To use descriptive and analytic vocabulary in the study of myth, ritual and religious ideas and practices, and related application in the medical anthropology of health and well-being.
- 3) To demonstrate writing skills which meet, or exceed standards for a Writing Approved class.

Course Requirements: Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off for the duration of class. Please conduct class related email communication through UM account. Students must comply with the **Student Conduct Code** http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php in all course matters.

Grading criteria: Grades are based on performance and points earned when a student

1) attends all classes (as documented by informal writing assignments)	40 points
2) completes 13 objective quizzes based on assigned readings	130 points
3) writes two formal writing assignments*	200 points
4) revises and resubmit one essay	30 points
5) completes final exam (objective and short essay questions)	<u>100 points</u>
	Total possible: 500 points

Grades are based on points assigned according to the following percentages: **A 90-100%, B 80-89%, C 70-79%, D 60-69%. Below 60% F. +/- grading is at the discretion of the instructor.**

***Formal writing assignments** must be 6-8 pages excluding endnotes and bibliography, typed, double-spaced, and proofread, in 12-point Times New Roman with 1-inch margins. Citation should follow the American Anthropological Association style guide <http://aaanet.org/publications/styleguide/pdf> Paragraph structure must include an introduction, body and conclusion in development of an argument, and appropriate use of evidence to support the author's views, as well as to refute contrary views. The essay must identify a clear purpose, audience or genre. The instructor will provide summary feedback and grade based on four criteria: clarity of communication, development of ideas, identification of purpose and audience, and use of evidence. **At least one formal writing assignment will be revised and resubmitted for a final grade.**

Accessibility: University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with documented disabilities to contact instructors during the first week of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations to ensure equity in grading, classroom experiences, and outside assignments. The instructor will work with the student and the staff of the Disability Services for Students (DSS) to arrange accommodations. Students should contact DSS (243.2373, Lommasson Center 154) for more information.

A web-based supplement for this class is available on Moodle: <http://umonline.umt.edu/>. Technical support is provided at: <http://umonline.umt.edu/techsupport/helpdesk.aspx>. This syllabus provides a general plan for the course. If deviations are necessary they will be announced in class.

SYLLABUS

Week One: What is myth, and why is it significant in the comparative study of religion?

Aug. 26 Introduction and Pretest

READ: Bowen, Chapter 1

Aug. 28 Concepts: Culture, Society and Religion

Optional read: Bessac, preface

Aug. 30 Studying Religion through Practice: Bowen's approach

and one myth

Week Two: Theories of Religion

Sept. 2 HOLIDAY no class

READ: Bowen, Chapter 2

Optional read: Bessac, chap. 1

Sept. 4 World Religions

Sept. 6 The Twin Transformations of "Religion" in state societies

Week Three: State Religion

READ: Bowen, Chapter 3

Optional read: Bessac chap. 2

Sept. 9 Domains and Boundaries of Religion

Sept. 11 State Religion in Japan and in the U.S.

Sept. 13 Indigenous religious traditions

Week Four: How is ritual central to anthropology and the study of religion?

Sept. 16 Rituals of Transition

READ: Bowen Chapter 4

Optional read: Bessac, chap. 3

Sept. 18 Pilgrimage to Mecca

Sept. 20 Life and Death

Week Five: Medical Anthropology

Sept. 23 Health and Healing

READ: Bowen Chapter 5

Optional read: Bessac, chap. 4

Sept. 25 Magic and Science

Sept. 27 Prayer

Week Six: Sorcery, Witchcraft and Modernity

Sept. 30 Sorcery and Witchcraft

READ: Bowen, Chapter 6

Optional read: Bessac, chap 5

Oct. 2 Witches in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the U.S.

Oct. 4 Puritans and Modernity: Weber's thesis

First Essay due Oct. 4th

Week Seven: Worship, Hierarchy and Conflict

Oct. 7 Sacrifice *READ: Bowen, Chapter 7* *Optional read: Bessac, chap. 6*
Oct. 9 Violence
Oct. 11 Conflict and Community: Hindus and Muslims in India

Week Eight: Imagery and Faith

Oct. 14 Relics and Images *READ: Bowen, Chapter 8* *Optional read: Bessac, chap. 6*
Oct. 16 Gender and Fetish
Oct. 18 European Colonialism

Week Nine: Transatlantic Religion

Oct. 21 Pilgrimage *READ: Bowen, Chapter 9*
Oct. 23 Trance
Oct. 25 Shamans

Week Ten: Boundaries and Selves

Oct. 28 Taboo *READ: Bowen, Chapter 10*
Oct. 30 Orthodoxy
Nov. 1 Day of the Dead

Week Eleven: Speech and Grace

Nov. 4 Scripture and Testament *READ: Bowen, Chapter 11*
Nov. 6 Charisma
Nov. 8 Conversion *Second Essay due Nov. 8th*

Week Twelve: New Religious Movements

Nov. 11 Holiday no class *READ: Bowen, Chapter 12*
Nov. 13 Cults
Nov. 15 Revitalization Movements

Week Thirteen: Revelation and Authority

Nov. 18 Divination and Prophecy *READ: Bowen, Chapter 13*
Nov. 20 Revelation and Authority
Nov. 22 Writing Revisions Discussion

Week Fourteen: Virtual Religion

Nov. 25 Virtual Religions *READ: Bowen, Chapter 14* *Revisions due Nov. 25th*
Nov. 27 Travel Day No class
Nov. 29 Holiday No class

Week Fifteen: Secularism

Dec. 2 Secularism *READ: Bowen, Chapter 15 (Chapter 16 optional)*
Dec. 4 Indigenous Others
Dec. 6 Conclusion and Evaluation

Final Exam: Tuesday, Dec. 10th 8:00-10:00 A.M.

Pre-test

ANTY 336W

Name and Student ID: _____

Briefly define the following terms:

ancestor _____

animism _____

cult _____

divination _____

magic _____

myth _____

offering _____

pilgrimage _____

ritual _____

sacred _____

sacrifice _____

shaman _____

taboo _____

trance _____

witchcraft _____

Respond to ONE of the following questions in a paragraph.

1. What distinguishes world religions from indigenous cosmological traditions?
2. What is the relationship of myth and ritual, according to anthropology?
3. Debate the proposition: religion is a cultural universal across societies.