



COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number ANT 222	Course Title The Anthropology of Myths, Magic, and Witchcraft	Credits 3
Hours: lecture/Lab/Other 3/0	Co- or Pre-requisite none	Implementation sem/year Spring 2012

Catalog description:

Examines the supernatural belief systems and practices of various cultures. Myths, rituals, animism, witchcraft, magic, shamanism, and syncretic religions are critically analyzed to understand the integrative effects of the sacred world. From that foundation, study progresses with a cross-cultural, anthropological comparison of religion and the supernatural.

Is course New, Revised, or Modified? New

Required texts/other materials:

Rebecca Stein and Philip Stein. *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft*. Pearson/ Prentice Hall 2011. **Edition:** 3rd. **Pages:** 257+. **ISBN:** 978-0-205-71811-5

Revision date:
Spring 2014

Course coordinator: (Name, telephone number, email address)
Gianna Durso-Finley and Denise Ingram

Information resources: (Describe the primary information resources that support the course, including books, videos, journals, electronic databases, websites, etc. To request new materials for your course, use the library request form at: www.mccc.edu/student_library_course_form.shtml)

Other learning resources: (Describe any other student learning resources that are specific to this course, including any special tutoring or study group support, learning system software, etc.)

Course Competencies/Goals:

The student will be able to:

1. Understand and discuss with confidence key concepts and methods basic to the study of the four fields of anthropology. (Unit 1)
2. Compare and contrast the similarity and diversity of the human experience, including the various religious traditions and practices that allow different cultures to accomplish the same vital tasks. (Units 1-6)
3. Appreciate and provide illustrative examples for the various roles that culture plays in the development of supernatural belief systems. (Units 1-6)
4. To read critically, to understand, evaluate, respond to, and synthesize a variety of texts (scholarly articles, research findings, etc.) (Units 1-6)
5. Demonstrate an ability to view the world from an anthropological perspective and release culture-bound theories. (Units 1-6)

Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.

General Education Knowledge Goals

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 5. Social Science. Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

MCCC Core Competencies

Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Goal B. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Goal F. Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

Goal G. Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

Units of study in detail.

Unit one: *The nature of anthropology and the concepts of culture and supernatural belief systems*

The student will be able to:

1. Define and list the characteristics of the four fields of anthropology. **(CG 1, GE 5)**
2. Discuss the holistic perspective intrinsic to the discipline of anthropology **(CG 1; GE 5)**
3. Compare and contrast anthropological research methods to other natural science techniques **(CG 1; GE 5)**

4. Illustrate the significance of “participant-observation” in anthropological fieldwork **(CG 1; GE 5)**
5. Explain ethics in anthropology **(CG 1; GE 5)**
6. Define the characteristics of culture and critique the concept of culture according to anthropological theory **(CG 1; GE 5)**
7. Define religion in anthropological terms **(CG 1, 2; GE 5, 6)**
8. Assess the integrative effect of belief systems both culturally and cross-culturally **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5; CC G)**
9. Classify key concepts of types of religion/supernatural beliefs **(CG 1, 2, 3, 5; GE 5, 6)**

Unit two: *Mythology and Mythography*

The student will be able to:

1. Define the characteristics of “myth” according to anthropological theory **(CG 2; GE 5)**
2. Distinguish the types of myths (creation myths, hero myths, place/object myths, trickster myths, apocalyptic myths) **(CG 2; GE 5, 6)**
3. Analyze the core cultural concepts illustrated in the myth **(CG 2; GE 5, 6)**
4. Discuss the impact of myth on other cultural structures/processes **(CG 2; GE 1, 5, 8; Core Comp G)**
5. Define the functions of myth **(CG 2; GE 1, 5, 8; Core Comp G)**
6. Design a cross-cultural comparison of mythography **(CG 4, 5; GE 1, 5, 8; Core Comp B, G)**

Unit three: *Ritual*

The student will be able to:

1. Define the characteristics of “ritual” according to anthropological theory **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
2. Classify the types of rituals (rites of passage, rites of intensification, ideological rituals, protective rituals, therapy rituals, technological rituals) **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
3. Evaluate the concept of ritual as a blueprint for culture **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
4. Analyze the core cultural concepts illustrated in the ritual **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
5. Summarize the stages of rites of passage and intensification **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
6. Analyze the functions of rituals **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 1, 5, 8)**
7. Define taboos and discuss their social significance **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
8. Design a cross-cultural comparison of sacred rituals **(CG 4, 5, GE 1, 5, 8; Core Comp B, G)**

Unit four: *Religious Specialists*

The student will be able to:

1. Classify the characteristics of a religious/spiritual specialist **(CG 1; GE 5)**
2. Discuss the purposes of shamanism and shamanic journey **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
3. Define, compare, and contrast shaman, witch, priest/priestess, and healer **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
4. Differentiate the methods used to achieve an “altered state of consciousness” (ASC) for spiritual intent **(CG 4; GE 5)**
5. Explain the significance of achieving altered states of consciousness **(CG 4; GE 5)**

6. Analyze the notion of witchcraft in western and non-western cultures **(CG 4; GE 5)**
7. Critically assess the “How vs. Why” theory of witchcraft **(CG 4; GE 5, 8)**
8. Analyze the significance of religious specialists within the cultures and on other cultural institutions **(CG 4; GE 5, 8)**
9. Analyze the integrative impact of healers **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**

Unit five: *Magic and Divination*

The student will be able to:

1. Differentiate magic from conjuring **(CG 2; GE 5)**
2. Identify the types of magic (imitative, contagious) **(CG 1, 2, 3; GE 5)**
3. Discuss the functions of magic, magic rituals, and social control through magic **(CG 3; GE 5)**
4. Summarize the characteristics, forms, and techniques of divination **(CG 2; GE 5)**
5. Debate the impact of magic and divination on the social structures of the culture **(CG 2, 3, 4; GE 1, 5, 8)**

Unit six: *The Supernatural World*

The student will be able to:

1. Define animism and explain its functions and cultural influence **(CG 1; GE 5, 6)**
2. Identify cultural structures that support an animistic belief system **(CG 1, 2, 3; GE 5, 6)**
3. Discuss various ideologies of death **(CG 1, 2, 3; GE 5)**
4. Summarize “after-death” belief models **(CG 5; GE 5)**
5. Design a cross-cultural comparison of supernatural/spiritual entities, including gods, goddesses, ghosts, spirits, angels, demons, ancestor spirits, tricksters, and jinn **(CG 4, 5; GE 1, 5, 8; Core Comp G)**
6. Identify cultural structures that support spiritual entity belief systems **(CG 2; GE 5; Core Comp G)**
7. Discuss revitalization movements **(CG 2, 3, 5; GE 5)**
8. Explain the significance of syncretism in oppressed cultures (e.g., Vodun, Santeria, Candomblé) **(CG 3, 5; GE 5)**
9. Analyze the integrative effects of supernatural belief systems on the social structures **(CG 3, 4, 5; GE 5, 6)**
10. Analyze the supernatural model as reflections of holistic culture **(CG 3, 4, 5; GE 5, 6)**

Evaluation of student learning:

- Quizzes: 10%
- Graded Homework: 10%
- 3 Unit Tests: 30% total
- Semester-long Project: 20%
- Comprehensive Final Exam: 20%
- Weekly Class Participation: 10%

Academic Integrity Statement:

Mercer County Community College is committed to academic integrity – the honest, fair and continuing pursuit of knowledge, free from fraud or deception.

- Students should never:
 - Knowingly represent the work of others as their own
 - Knowingly represent previously completed academic work as current
 - Fabricate data to support academic work
 - Use or obtain unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work
 - Give fraudulent assistance to other students
 - Unethically use technological means to gain academic advantages

Violators of the above actions will be penalized. For a single violation the faculty member will determine the course of action. This may include, assigning a lower grade on the assignment, lowering the course grade, failing the student, or another penalty that is appropriate to the violation. The student will be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee, who may impose other penalties for a second (or later) violation. The student has right to a hearing and also to appeal any decisions. These rights are outlined in the student handbook.