

# ANTH R111: MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT AND RELIGION: ANTHROPOLOGY OF BELIEF

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**Originator**  
amelidonis

**College**

Oxnard College

**Discipline (CB01A)**

ANTH - Anthropology

**Course Number (CB01B)**

R111

**Course Title (CB02)**

Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: Anthropology of Belief

**Banner/Short Title**

Magic, Witchcraft & Religion

**Credit Type**

Credit

**Start Term**

Fall 2021

**Catalog Course Description**

Religion and magic are human universals. Anthropologists study contemporary religions and religious consciousness to help reconstruct religions in prehistory, as well as for an understanding of the modern world and of the human mind. The student will be introduced to a fascinating variety of rites, rituals, religious movements, symbolic systems, as well as anthropological theories about religion. Credit will not be awarded for both the honors and regular versions of a course. Credit will be awarded only for the first course completed with a grade of "C" or better or "P"

**Taxonomy of Programs (TOP) Code (CB03)**

2202.00 - Anthropology

**Course Credit Status (CB04)**

D (Credit - Degree Applicable)

**Course Transfer Status (CB05) (select one only)**

A (Transferable to both UC and CSU)

**Course Basic Skills Status (CB08)**

N - The Course is Not a Basic Skills Course

**SAM Priority Code (CB09)**

E - Non-Occupational

**Course Cooperative Work Experience Education Status (CB10)**

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

**Course Classification Status (CB11)**

Y - Credit Course

**Educational Assistance Class Instruction (Approved Special Class) (CB13)**

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

**Course Prior to Transfer Level (CB21)**

Y - Not Applicable

**Course Noncredit Category (CB22)**

Y - Credit Course

**Funding Agency Category (CB23)**

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

**Course Program Status (CB24)**

1 - Program Applicable

**General Education Status (CB25)**

Y - Not Applicable

**Support Course Status (CB26)**

N - Course is not a support course

**Field trips**

May be required

**Grading method**

Letter Graded

**Does this course require an instructional materials fee?**

No

**Repeatable for Credit**

No

**Is this course part of a family?**

No

**Units and Hours**

**Carnegie Unit Override**

No

**In-Class**

**Lecture**

**Minimum Contact/In-Class Lecture Hours**

52.5

**Maximum Contact/In-Class Lecture Hours**

52.5

**Activity**

**Laboratory**

**Total in-Class**

**Total in-Class**

**Total Minimum Contact/In-Class Hours**

52.5

**Total Maximum Contact/In-Class Hours**

52.5

**Outside-of-Class**

**Internship/Cooperative Work Experience**

**Paid**

**Unpaid**

**Total Outside-of-Class**

**Total Outside-of-Class**

**Minimum Outside-of-Class Hours**

105

**Maximum Outside-of-Class Hours**

105

**Total Student Learning**

**Total Student Learning**

**Total Minimum Student Learning Hours**

157.5

**Total Maximum Student Learning Hours**

157.5

**Minimum Units (CB07)**

3

**Maximum Units (CB06)**

3

**Student Learning Outcomes (CSLOs)**

**Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Students will identify and describe major theoretical approaches and key concepts central to the anthropological study of magic, witchcraft and religion and apply these theories and concepts to the analysis of religious beliefs and practices. |
| 2 | Students will demonstrate the ability to employ an anthropological perspective to compare and contrast religious practices critically while avoiding ethnocentrism and paying attention to issues of identity, power and discrimination.           |
| 3 | Students will improve their knowledge of human religious beliefs and practices including myths, rituals, religious conflicts, revitalization movements and altered states of consciousness.  |
| 4 | Students will develop their research, readings and writing skills relevant to the anthropological study of magic, witchcraft and religion.   |

**Course Objectives**

**Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:**

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Classify the world's major and minor religions using the basic social structural precepts of cultural anthropology.   |
| 2  | Collect and synthesize information on a variety of human belief systems, through interview and observational techniques.  |
| 3  | Demonstrate understanding of the role of mind, imagination, consciousness and creativity in the production and maintenance of religious and symbolic beliefs.                                       |
| 4  | Recognize and recall details about the world's major religions, and some of the world's minor religions.  |
| 5  | Recognize and recall universal components of religion, such as symbols, rites and rituals, and traditions.  |
| 6  | Debate the relative rationality, merits, ethics, social functions, historical purposes and usefulness of various human belief systems.  |
| 7  | Read, comprehend and interpret various types of published ideas.  |
| 8  | Differentiate between facts, influences, assumptions, major and minor arguments or ideas and conclusions.   |
| 9  | Generate new ideas, and express the ideas creatively.   |
| 10 | Use logic to draw well supported conclusions from information given.  |
| 11 | Write clearly and accurately in a variety of contexts and formats while checking, editing, and revising their written work for correct information, appropriate emphasis, form, style, and grammar. |

## Course Content

### Lecture/Course Content

1. Religion as a human universal
  - a. Anthropological approaches to recognizing religious phenomena
  - b. Prehistory and archaeology of religion
  - c. Evolutionary perspectives on religious belief
  - d. Religion as a major type of belief system
  - e. The general components of religion
  - f. Major theoretical approaches (Freud, Durkheim, James, Jung)
2. A brief cultural history of religion
  - a. The animisms: an introduction
  - b. The religions of civilizations (major religions): basic historical background
  - c. Is witchcraft a human universal? Definitions of witchcraft
3. Spirits and animisms
  - a. Ancestor cults
  - b. Ghost beliefs
  - c. Complex animisms
  - d. The relationship of animism to polytheisms
  - e. Magic in the context of animism
4. Gods and goddesses
  - a. Deism, theism, polytheism, pantheism
  - b. Greek polytheism
  - c. Creation myths featuring gods and goddesses
  - d. Archaeology of gods and goddesses
  - e. The priestly religions vs. the magical religions
5. Consciousness and paranormal claims
  - a. Early human views on consciousness
  - b. Shamanism
  - c. Prophets, diviners, soothsayers and distance viewers
  - d. Mages and sorcerers
  - e. Theories of ordinary consciousness (Jaynes, Ornstein, others)
  - f. Symbols, archetypes and the transpersonal
6. Altered states of consciousness
  - a. Joan Halifax, Michael Harner and the anthropology of altered states
  - b. Proposed universals in ASC
  - c. Meditation
  - d. Problems in researching ASC
7. Rituals, rites and ceremonies
  - a. Joseph Campbell, the notion of mythos, myth as underpinning of religious ceremony
  - b. Corporate, traditional rituals
  - c. Magic and Magick
  - d. Post-modern, non-traditional rituals
  - e. Why anthropologists spend so much time studying rituals.
8. The ethnography of religion
  - a. Anthropological standards: Dogon, Hopi, Nuer, Azande, Lakota
  - b. Post- modern religions
  - c. Anthropological ethics in the study of religion
9. Religion as a contemporary force in world cultures
  - a. Religion and current events
  - b. Unusual religious trends noted by anthropologists
  - c. Religion, globalization and homogeneity
  - d. Rise of atheism and materialism as forces in modern world
10. Religion as moral/ethical force.
  - a. How religious approaches to morality are distinct from political or philosophical ones
  - b. Conflicting moral principles in the world's cultures
  - c. Marvin Harris's views on how religions embody important moral principles
11. Selected topics in specific religions/religious movements

- a. The Western Magickal tradition
  - b. Buddhism in the modern world.
  - c. Shinto: The legacy of Confucius and Lao-Tze
  - d. Revitalization movements (such as Huna or the Native American Sweatlodge)
  - e. Millenarian movements
  - f. The religious views of Plato and Pythagorus
  - g. Bushido: notions of death among the Samurai
  - h. Cults in America
12. Conclusions
- a. What have we learned about religion in the modern world?
  - b. How has an anthropological perspective aided our understanding?
  - c. What are some other disciplines that might aid in our understanding?
  - d. How might a student organize future study of religion?
  - e. Becoming a lifelong student of culture and religion.

### Laboratory or Activity Content

None

### Methods of Evaluation

Which of these methods will students use to demonstrate proficiency in the subject matter of this course? (Check all that apply):

Written expression

Methods of Evaluation may include, but are not limited to, the following typical classroom assessment techniques/required assignments (check as many as are deemed appropriate):

Essay exams

Essays

Group projects

Objective exams

Quizzes

Research papers

### Instructional Methodology

Specify the methods of instruction that may be employed in this course

Audio-visual presentations

Computer-aided presentations

Collaborative group work

Class activities

Class discussions

Distance Education

Demonstrations

Field trips

Group discussions

Instructor-guided interpretation and analysis

Instructor-guided use of technology

Internet research

Lecture

Small group activities

Describe specific examples of the methods the instructor will use:

1. The instructor will lead discussions on topics that may include theoretical positions in the anthropology of religion, mythology, symbolism, ritual, altered states, religious specialists, funerary rituals, magic, witchcraft, religious violence, revitalization movements, monsters, zombies and the undead.
2. The instructor will utilize lectures, films, and internet materials to explore and critically analyze topics relevant to the understanding and application of the anthropology of religion.
3. Students will learn about religious beliefs and practices in other cultures and utilize an anthropological perspective to understand how these beliefs and practices operate from the culture's point of view.

## Representative Course Assignments

### Writing Assignments

1. Essays and other forms of expressive writing as assigned by instructor, typically to include a visual and written description of a common ritual (such as a dinner party or Thanksgiving), in which direct observation by the student or the use of cultural imagination is required.

### Critical Thinking Assignments

1. Participate in class, online and small group discussions regarding the importance of utilizing an anthropological perspective in the study of religion, on anthropological theory related to the functions of religion, and on specific religious practices from cultures around the world.
2. Students will complete short writing assignments reflecting on how specific religious practices including myths and rituals operate within a culture and fit within theoretical analysis from Marx, Durkheim, Geertz, Malinowski, and Freud.

### Reading Assignments

1. One to two chapters from the course textbook per week.

## Outside Assignments

### Representative Outside Assignments

1. Film viewing, documented by brief write-ups. Example: Watching a video clip regarding spirit possession as a healing ritual in Haiti.
2. Participating in online discussions related to the course materials for that particular week. Topics may include: myth, symbolism, the application of anthropological theory, funerary rituals, spirits, ghosts, monsters, neo-shamanism, religious specialists, etc.
3. Interviews with friends and families about such topics as their knowledge of religion, fieldwork time in settings conducive to understanding animism, working with informants to build religious genealogies, possible visits to religious sites, rituals and ceremonies.

## Articulation

### Comparable Courses within the VCCCD

ANTH M11 - The Anthropology of Magic, Witchcraft and Religion  
ANTH R111H - Honors: Magic, Witchcraft and Religion: Anthropology of Belief  
ANTH V07 - The Anthropology of Magic, Witchcraft and Religion

## District General Education

### A. Natural Sciences

### B. Social and Behavioral Sciences

### C. Humanities

### D. Language and Rationality

### E. Health and Physical Education/Kinesiology

### F. Ethnic Studies/Gender Studies

#### F. Ethnic Studies/Gender Studies

Proposed

**CSU GE-Breadth**

**Area A: English Language Communication and Critical Thinking**

**Area B: Scientific Inquiry and Quantitative Reasoning**

**Area C: Arts and Humanities**

**Area D: Social Sciences**

**Area E: Lifelong Learning and Self-Development**

**CSU Graduation Requirement in U.S. History, Constitution and American Ideals:**

**IGETC**

**Area 1: English Communication**

**Area 2A: Mathematical Concepts & Quantitative Reasoning**

**Area 3: Arts and Humanities**

**Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences**

**Area 5: Physical and Biological Sciences**

**Area 6: Languages Other than English (LOTE)**

**Textbooks and Lab Manuals**

**Resource Type**

Textbook

**Description**

Stein, Rebecca and Philip L. Stein (2016). *The Anthropology of Religion, Magic and Witchcraft* (4th- Latest Edition). Pearson. 0133808017

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**Resource Type**

Textbook

**Description**

Moro, P. Myers, J. (2009). . *Magic, Ritual and Religion: A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion* (8th). New York McGraw Hill (Latest Edition- Classic Text). 0078140013

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**Distance Education Addendum**

**Definitions**

**Distance Education Modalities**

Hybrid (51%–99% online)  
 Hybrid (1%–50% online)  
 100% online

**Faculty Certifications**

Faculty assigned to teach Hybrid or Fully Online sections of this course will receive training in how to satisfy the Federal and state regulations governing regular effective/substantive contact for distance education. The training will include common elements in the district-supported learning management system (LMS), online teaching methods, regular effective/substantive contact, and best practices.

Yes

Faculty assigned to teach Hybrid or Fully Online sections of this course will meet with the EAC Alternate Media Specialist to ensure that the course content meets the required Federal and state accessibility standards for access by students with disabilities. Common areas for discussion include accessibility of PDF files, images, captioning of videos, Power Point presentations, math and scientific notation, and ensuring the use of style mark-up in Word documents.

Yes

## Regular Effective/Substantive Contact

### Hybrid (1%–50% online) Modality:

Method of Instruction	Document typical activities or assignments for each method of instruction
Asynchronous Dialog (e.g., discussion board)	Students will post on discussion board topics such as the how rites of passage work to engender social values on ritual participants.
E-mail	Faculty will communicate with students via email regarding course information and concerns.
Other DE (e.g., recorded lectures)	Faculty may record video lectures on the course content including videos on anthropological theory, mythology, symbolism, rituals, altered states, religious specialists and the search for new meaning.

### Hybrid (51%–99% online) Modality:

Method of Instruction	Document typical activities or assignments for each method of instruction
Asynchronous Dialog (e.g., discussion board)	Students will post on discussion board topics such as the how rites of passage work to engender social values on ritual participants.
E-mail	Faculty will communicate with students via email regarding course information and concerns.
Other DE (e.g., recorded lectures)	Faculty may record video lectures on the course content including videos on anthropological theory, mythology, symbolism, rituals, altered states, religious specialists and the search for new meaning.
Video Conferencing	Faculty may utilize online live meetings with students to deliver lectures and have discussions on topics related to the course content.

### 100% online Modality:

Method of Instruction	Document typical activities or assignments for each method of instruction
Asynchronous Dialog (e.g., discussion board)	Students will post on discussion board topics such as the how rites of passage work to engender social values on ritual participants.
E-mail	Faculty will communicate with students via email regarding course information and concerns.
Other DE (e.g., recorded lectures)	Faculty may record video lectures on the course content including videos on anthropological theory, mythology, symbolism, rituals, altered states, religious specialists and the search for new meaning.
Video Conferencing	Faculty may utilize online live meetings with students to deliver lectures and have discussions on topics related to the course content.

## Examinations

### Hybrid (1%–50% online) Modality

Online  
On campus

### Hybrid (51%–99% online) Modality

Online  
On campus

## Primary Minimum Qualification

ANTHROPOLOGY



## Review and Approval Dates

**Department Chair**

08/21/2020

**Dean**

08/24/2020

**Technical Review**

09/09/2020

**Curriculum Committee**

09/09/2020

**Curriculum Committee**

11/25/2020

**CCCCO**

MM/DD/YYYY

**Control Number**

CCC000276679

**DOE/accreditation approval date**

MM/DD/YYYY