

Healing, Rituals, and Spirituality – An introduction to the Anthropology of Religion

This course will help students:

- Analyze and interpret beliefs, practices, and social structures in religious traditions from an anthropological perspective
- Cover sufficient conceptual and background material on the selected topic.

- Reflect on the literature directly related to the history and theories of anthropology of religion and magic and the debate over the mystical and the modern mind/mentality.

- Compare and contrast popular spiritual healing practices from around the globe with those prevalent in Egypt.

- Conduct ethnographic fieldwork on a topic of the student's choice.

Part One: The Craft of Anthropology

Session 1 (September 21st) - What is Anthropology and Fieldwork

- Campbell Galman, Sally. 2007. *Shane the Lone Ethnographer: A Beginner's Guide to Ethnography*

Session 2 (September 28th) - Anthropology of Religion and Magic

Reading:

- Bowie, Fiona (2002) 'Theories and Controversies' (Chapter 1) *The Anthropology of Religion*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers (Blackboard)

OR

- Greenwood, S. (2000) *Introduction in Magic, Witchcraft, and the Otherworld: An Anthropology*

□ Assignment:

Fieldnote about an encounter with signs, healing, and/or fate.

(Due Saturday, October 2nd or before class on the 5th)

Recommended films:

- Living with the invisibles
- Seance reflections

<https://anthropology4u.medium.com/30-must-watch-videos-in-cultural-anthropology-religion-80d5695bc46b>

Part Two: History of Religion and Rituals

Session 3 (October 5th)

Reading:

- Durkheim. The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life
OR
- Geertz. Religion as a Cultural System.
OR
- Eriksen, Thomas H. 2010. 'Religion and Ritual' (Chapter 14) Small Places, Large Issues an Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology. Pluto Press.

Session 4 (October 12th)

Reading:

- Mijares, S. (2002) Modern Psychology and Ancient Wisdom: Psychological Healing Practices from the World's Religious Traditions. Routledge.
(Buddhism – Christianity – Goddess Spirituality – Judaism – Native American Psychspirituality – Sufism – Taoism – Yoga and Hinduism)

□ Assignment:

500-words reflection on a tradition that is not your own (Due before class on the 12th).

Recommended films:

- Saheb El Maqam
- Gods and Satans
- The Man Who Made Witchcraft
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M56-6XA3h2M>

Part Three: Healing and Spirituality

Session 5 (October 19th) – Sickness and Healing

- Hahn, R. (1995). Introduction in Sickness and Healing: An Anthropological Perspective. Yale. P. 1-10

AND

Susan J Matt, "Recovering the Invisible: Methods for the Historical Study of the Emotions," Doing Emotions History, p. 41-53.

OR

Mate, G. (2003). When the Body Says 'No': The Cost of Hidden Stress. NY and Toronto: A.Knopf., Ltd.

□ Assignment: Watch and write a film review for either of the below documentaries or a reflection on a healing encounter. (Due Saturday, October 23rd)

Recommended films:

- (Un)Well
- Heal

Session 6 (October 26th) - Spiritual and Alternative Healing Practices

Reading:

- Mason, S. (2010) Spiritual Healing: What Is It? Does It Work and Does It Have A Place In Modern Healthcare?

AND

- Konecki, K. (2016). Introduction in [Is the Body the Temple of the Soul?](#) Modern Yoga Practice as a Psychosocial Phenomenon.

OR

- Sosteric, M. (2014). A Sociology of Tarot. The Canadian Journal of Sociology.

OR

- Carlos, K. (2018). Crystal Healing Practices in the Western World and Beyond" (2018). Honors Undergraduate Theses.

In class activity:

Mini presentation or essay on a spiritual ritual or the history of a practice.

Session 7 (November 2nd) - Spirituality as a Service (Might reschedule to 6th)

Reading:

- Rindfleish, J. (2005). Consuming the Self: New Age Spirituality as “Social Product” in Consumer Society. Consumption Markets and Culture.

AND

- Koch, A. (2015) Alternative Healing as Magical Self-Care in Alternative Modernity. Brill.

OR

- Bateman, A. (2018). Mindfulness. Cambridge University Press

Session 8 (November 9th)

- Creative project on a spiritual practice.