



**CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

**A:** Division: **INSTRUCTIONAL** Date: **FEBRUARY 2002**

**B:** Department/ **ANTHROPOLOGY** New Course  Revision

Program Area: **HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES**

If Revision, Section(s) Revised: **F, M, N, P, Q, R**

Date Last Revised: **OCTOBER 1987**

**C:** **ANTH 130** **D:** **THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION** **E:** **3**

Subject & Course No. Descriptive Title Semester Credits

**F:** Calendar Description: An introduction to the varieties and experiences of religion in a variety of cross-cultural contexts. We will analyze the social construction of belief systems as well as the relationship of religion to other aspects of social systems, including how people use religion to make their lives meaningful.

**G:** Allocation of Contact Hours to Types of Instruction/Learning Settings

Primary Methods of Instructional Delivery and/or Learning Settings:

**Lecture**

Number of Contact Hours: (per week / semester for each descriptor)

**Lecture: 4 hrs. per week / semester**

Number of Weeks per Semester: **14**

**H:** Course Prerequisites:

**NONE**

**I.** Course Corequisites:

**NONE**

**J.** Course for which this Course is a Prerequisite:

**NONE**

**K.** Maximum Class Size:

**35**

**L:** PLEASE INDICATE:

Non-Credit

College Credit Non-Transfer

College Credit Transfer:

Requested

Granted

SEE BC TRANSFER GUIDE FOR TRANSFER DETAILS ([www.bccat.bc.ca](http://www.bccat.bc.ca))

**M: Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an adequate grasp of basic terminology in the sub-field.
2. Discuss the nature of belief systems and how they are socially constructed.
3. Explain the relevance of the anthropological approach to the study of religion.
4. Demonstrate a knowledge of the connections between belief systems and other aspects of the social system.
5. Identify various traditional peoples and their beliefs from a variety of ethnographic sources.

**N: Course Content:**

1. Introduction
  - Basic premises and definitions
  - Culture, society, religion
  - Relativity of religious beliefs, traditions and world religions
2. Mystical Power
  - The problem of meaning in human social life
  - Everyday reality and the paradigms of the self
  - Belief systems and personal identity
  - Mystical power and the person
3. Homo Symbolicus: Animals and Plants in Religions
  - The power of symbols, cultural universals
  - Sacred and profane
  - Incest taboo
  - Animals, plants and society
4. Shamanism and Mystical Beings
  - Divinity; spirit world & supernaturals
  - Shamanism & possession
5. Spirit Possession & Communication
  - Induction of trance
  - Altered states of consciousness
  - Possession and channelling
  - Speaking-in-tongues
  - Exorcism
6. Drugs and Other Altered States of Consciousness: Wizardry
  - Magic mushrooms and chemical substances
  - Medieval European witchcraft and feminism
  - Wizardry & society
7. Illness & Healing
  - Specialization and curing
  - Indigenous medicine and medical systems
  - Core clinical functions
  - Traditional versus modern healers
  - Surgery and psychology
  - Reactions to illness

**Course Content Cont'd.**

8. Rites of Passage & Relation Between the Sexes: Social Construction of Reality
  - Explanations and symbols
  - Ideology and practice
  - The process of legitimation and consensus
  - Consensus and personal identity
  - Males & females
  
9. Ancestors & Ghosts: Death & the Afterlife
  - Survival of death and the power of spirits
  - Hearth fires and ancient cities
  - Blaming the ancestors
  - The origins of ancient beliefs
  - Survival and reincarnation
  
10. Waiting for the Goods; Cargo & Renewal
  - Culture and identity
  - Culture and transformation
  - Contact and diffusion
  - Sacrifice and exploitation
  - Cults and charisma
  - Syncretism and religious change
  
11. Altered States, Altered Time
  - Religion and economy
  - Personal identity and beliefs
  - The confines of language and rationality
  - Beliefs and gender issues
  - Bridging from old to new
  
12. What Traditional Religions Do for the People: Symbolic Universes & Paradigms
  - Video Diary
  
13. Anthropology as Possession
  - Anthropology as a way of being in the world
  - Anthropology and critical thinking
  - The need to believe and the will to believe
  - The relativity of belief
  - The tyranny of belief

**O: Methods of Instruction**

This course will be presented mainly by way of lectures, with class discussion of selected ethnographic material. This may be supplemented by films, slides, videos, and class discussion.

**P: Textbooks and Materials to be Purchased by Students**

Texts will be updated periodically. Typical examples would include the following:

Lehmann, Arthur C. and Myers, James. E. (2001). Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural. Palo Alto: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Child, Alice B. and Child, Irvin L. (1993). Religion and Magic in the Life of Traditional Peoples. Prentice Hall.

**Q: Means of Assessment**

The evaluation of this course follows Douglas College policies as outlined in the current calendar. During the first week of classes the instructor will provide students with a typed course outline handout setting out the evaluation scheme for the course. A sample evaluation scheme follows.

SAMPLE EVALUATION

- |                                                                                    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. A series of examinations, up to 30% each, multiple choice or essay style; total | 60% |
| 2. An individual/group assignment or research paper                                | 30% |
| 3. Student presentation                                                            | 10% |

**R: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: specify whether course is open for PLAR**

No.

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Course Designer(s): Paul Biscop

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Education Council/Curriculum Committee Representative

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Dean/Director

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Registrar