



ANTH107

Saints, Shamans, Cults and Demons: The Anthropology of Contemporary Religions

S1 Day 2016

Dept of Anthropology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Gaining knowledge about the varieties of religious experience and practices in the contemporary world is an essential aspect of understanding modern societies. This unit covers some of the core themes of the anthropology of religion and introduces students to a wide range of contexts in which we can study the religious. Topics include: the sacred and the secular; pilgrims, relics and tourism; Christianity and saints in the Western world; magic, sorcery and religion in Melanesia; myths and legends around the world; revitalisation movements and cargo cults; issues and debates in the study of Islam; spirit possession; music, song and emotions; and more. Students are also introduced to the anthropological method of doing ethnography.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.

Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.

Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.

Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
<u>Tutorials</u>	10%	Starting from Week 2
<u>Short Essay</u>	30%	Week 10
<u>Online Quizz</u>	20%	week 12
<u>Final Exam</u>	40%	Week 13

Tutorials

Due: **Starting from Week 2**

Weighting: **10%**

Students are expected to have done the reading for the week prior to the tutorial.

Students may miss one tutorial without needing an excuse.

NOTICE: Students who miss 60% of the tutorials without an approved Disruption of Studies will not be admitted to the final exam.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

Short Essay

Due: **Week 10**

Weighting: **30%**

Students will be provided with a selection of titles related to the course. Full information about the essay and helpful suggestions on how to write an essay will be found on the course iLearn

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.

- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Online Quizz

Due: **week 12**

Weighting: **20%**

Students will take the quizzes online on iLearn.

Quizzes will consist of approximately **20** multiple choice or true/false questions that **focus on the readings and lectures**

Students will have a 48-hour window in which to complete the work. The quiz will be timed, however, once the student opens the assignment online through iLearn. The quiz will not be repeated for any reason.

More information will be provided on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

Final Exam

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **40%**

Students whom have missed 60% or more of the tutorials without an approved Disruption of Studies will not be admitted to the exam.

The exam consists of **40 questions to be answered in 1 hour and 10 min that cover the entire course and readings.**

The exam consist of both false and true questions as well as multiple choices

More information will be made available on iLearn

It will be held during Week 13 in the lecture theatre

Please do not schedule any out of town engagements during this period

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

Delivery and Resources

Technology used and required

Students will need to have access to iLearn in order to complete the weekly question assignments and to take the three quizzes scheduled throughout the semester. Especially in the case of the quizzes, we suggest to students that they find a high-speed, secure internet connection.

At times, iLearn can be slow to reload, so students will find that, especially if their connection is weak, they may be under unnecessary stress.

All lectures are recorded, and many of the materials made use of in class are available through iLearn however, remember that this course has a Course Reader that you are required to buy.

Lecture and Tutorial times.

Please see the university time table for your update Lecture and Tutorials times. Also they will be posted on iLearn

Teaching and Learning Strategy

Detailed information can be found in iLearn.

Unit Schedule

Notice: All readings will be available on iLearn.

Week 1 Introduction

(Notice- No Tutorials this week)

About the Course and the Assessment

Why Studying Religion

Defining Religion

Patterns in the Study of Religion

What is specific about Anthropology?

(no reading for this week)

Week2 Anthropology and Religion

Is Religion a Human Universal?

The Anthropology of Religion

Types of Anthropological Studies of Religion

Types of Religion

Religions versus Religion

Reading

Winzler, R.L. (2008) *Anthropology and Religion: What we Know, Think, and Question*. Ch 1, pp 1-22. Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press.

Week 3 Symbols

What symbols are?

Animals

Colors

Percussion Sounds

Natural Symbols and Natural Religion?

Required Reading Geertz, Clifford. "Ethos, world-view and the analysis of sacred symbols." *The Antioch Review* (1957): 421-437.

Week 4 Myth

What Is Myth?

Theories, Approaches, and Studying Myth

Myth and Gender

Contemporary Urban Myths?

Required reading

Cohen, P. (1969) *Theories of Myth*, Man New Series Vol 4 (3): 337-353.

Week 5 Ritual

What is Ritual

Religious Ritual

Some Common Types of Ritual

Ritual According to Arnold van Gennep

Rites of Passage

Mortuary Rituals

Funerals as Rites of Passage

Required reading

McCauley, R. N. (2001). "Ritual, Memory, and Emotion: Comparing Two Cognitive Hypotheses," *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Experience*. J. Andresen (ed.). Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 115-140

Week 6 Witchcraft and Sorcery

Traditional Witchcraft and Sorcery in Small-Scale Societies

Witchcraft in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Modern Witchcraft or Neo-paganism

Required reading

Stephen, M. (1987) Master of Souls: the Mekeo Sorcerer. In Sorcerer and Witch in Melanesia, Ch 2, pp 41-80. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Week 7 Spirit Possession, Spirit Mediumship, and Shamanism

Spirit Possession and Spirit Mediumship

Shamanism

Shamanism in the Modern World

Required reading Cohen, E., & Barrett, J. L. (2008). Conceptualizing spirit possession: Ethnographic and experimental evidence. *Ethos*, 36(2), 246-267.

Week 8 Gender and Religion

Religion and Women

Religion and non-heterosexuality

Monotheism and gender

Required reading

Rasmussen, S. J. (1991). Lack of prayer: Ritual restrictions, social experience, and the anthropology of menstruation among the Tuareg. *American Ethnologist*, 18(4), 751-769.

Week 9 (Gust Lecture)

TBA

Week 10 Religion and body modification

Bosy, Marks and Ritual

Tattoos

Circumcision

What we can conclude?

Required reading Silverman, E. K. (2004). Anthropology and Circumcision. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol 33: 419-445.

Week 11 Religion Fundamentalism

Starting from the word

Behaviours and conceptualisation

Cognitive Opening and Cognitive Dissonance

Studying Religious Radicalism

Required reading

G. Marranci (forthcoming 2016) "Drones, jihad and justice" in G. Marranci, Wars of Terror, London and New York, Bloosblury Academic.

Week 12: Revision and exam preparation (only on iLearn and no-Tutorial)

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

New Assessment Policy in effect from Session 2 2016 http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy_2016.html. For more information visit http://students.mq.edu.au/events/2016/07/19/new_assessment_policy_in_place_from_session_2/

Assessment Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy prior to Session 2 2016 <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/complaint_management/procedure.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.
- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Short Essay

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Short Essay
- Online Quizz
- Final Exam

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Online Quizz
- Final Exam

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.
- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Short Essay
- Online Quizz
- Final Exam

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary

societies.

- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Short Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.
- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Short Essay
- Final Exam

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Examine and evaluate theoretical and ethnographic texts.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

- Develop writing and research skills.

Assessment tasks

- Tutorials
- Short Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Participate in group discussions on a range of topics related to religion in contemporary societies.
- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.