



ANTH107

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

S1 Day 2019

Dept of Anthropology

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General Information

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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: myth, magic, rituals, spirit possessions, the sacred and the secular; magic, sorcery. 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	Hurdle	Due
<u>Attendance and Participation</u>	20%	No	ongoing
<u>Take-home Exam</u>	15%	No	Week 6
<u>Ethnographic Exercise</u>	30%	No	3 May
<u>Research Essay</u>	35%	No	2 June

Attendance and Participation

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Active attendance at lecture and tutorials, including engagement with tutorial materials. You are expected to complete the weekly readings before class and come to class prepared to discuss the material. In addition, you *must bring the weekly readings to each class*. Class attendance is required. *No more than two absences will be accepted.*

Active participation entails contributing thoughtful comments regarding readings, films, and group discussions during each tutorial meeting. Students who regularly make positive contributions to class discussions and display serious engagement with required readings will receive extra credit towards their final grades. Participation in class discussion and overall engagement in the course will be assessed based upon the following considerations:

- How regularly student participates in discussions;
- Whether or not student exhibits that he/she has done the readings;
- Whether or not student is respectful toward tutor and classmates;
- Whether or not student speaks excessively, keeping other students from speaking or interrupting others.

Participation is worth 10% of your grade.

Discussion Preparation Guide submission:

To help your learning, from Week 2 onwards (Week 2 included) you must print and fill out a Discussion Preparation Guide and bring it to class. This will help prepare you to participate in class discussions. You are expected to submit your DPG at the end of each class. We will grade them as +√/√/-√.

Submission of weekly Discussion Preparation Guides is worth 10% of your grade

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.

Take-home Exam

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **15%**

This is a short exam containing questions that focus on various topics presented in course readings and lectures throughout the first 5 weeks of the unit (Week 5 material is included). You are asked to address four questions and provide 200 word answers to each.

The take-home will be distributed in your Week 5 class. You must return your responses in Week 6 class.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 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.

Ethnographic Exercise

Due: **3 May**

Weighting: **30%**

You will write an ethnographic paper of approximately 1,000 words based on an observational activity that you will undertake in groups.

For this assignment, you will work in groups of three or four. You will choose a particular religious place (a church, temple, mosque, synagogue, etc.) and attend a religious service or a ritual event of your choice that exhibits *religion in practice*. You will then produce an ethnographic account and analysis of this event. The lectures, readings and class discussions in this course, and the Grimes' handout, "Mapping the Field of Ritual", should direct you to consider issues such as: how is the ritual space organized? What is its physical design like? What hierarchies does the space facilitate? What ritual roles are operative? Are there any objects associated with the event? What is the duration of the ritual and when does it occur? (More information is provided below.) The task is to closely observe a religious ritual, and to provide some analysis of your observations based on the course material. You are expected to show that you can analyse your observations by way of engaging with the anthropological approaches and concepts that are examined and discussed during the first 6 weeks of the unit.

This assessment has two components:

1. **Your individual report** of 1,000 words is due on **3 May at 11:59 pm**. Submit this report via the Turnitin link in your iLearn site. The report is worth 20 per cent of your overall mark.
2. **In-class group presentation** in Weeks 8 and 9 (10 per cent of your overall mark)

Written report

Although this is a group project your written report must be your own work. There will be different interpretations of the project. Reports will be marked individually, according to the marking rubric available on iLearn.

Your 1000-word report should include the following sections:

- **Project title:** provide a short descriptive title
- **Project description:** explain clearly what you set out to do and how you went about it. Provide details of location, participants, times etc. In this section you are explaining the research method you used.
- **Findings:** summarise your observations in a clear and concise way. The first step is to include some 'ethnographic description' of your research site. What did you observe? Provide details of the setting, the ritual activity, and the practices used to generate the intended efficacy of the ritual. Did your observations meet your expectations?
- **Analysis:** this is an anthropological project and should be linked to the course material and ideas and theories we have covered in this course. You should include at least 3 academic references in this section. Discuss your findings and try and theorise them in some way.
- **Reference list** (not included in word count). Throughout the report you should use in-text referencing. These references can be from the course material.

Essays must be double-spaced, 12-point font, standard margins. Use Harvard referencing (in-text citations and bibliography). Include word count.

In-class presentation: During the Week 9/10 tutorials, you will have 10 minutes to share your mini-ethnographic project and findings with your classmates.

These group presentations are worth 10 per cent of your overall mark in this unit. All group members will receive the same mark for the presentation.

Details: You will have precisely 10 minutes to present and you will be strictly timed and cut off at 10 minutes, so please plan your presentation carefully.

The presentation should touch on the following:

- What was the focus of the observational activity that you took?
- What questions did you consider in your observation and analysis? What findings did you come up with?
- Include any observations about whether you feel the ritual was successful or not.
- Please also comment on what kind of data you were and were *not* able to gather using

the method of unobtrusive observation.

- Creativity in style and media of presentation is encouraged.

Assessment: Your presentation will be assessed based on how well you cover the above points and on your clarity and organisation of your presentation. (If your tutor cuts you off at 10 minutes and you haven't covered all your key points, then obviously you'll lose marks, so organise your presentation and practice and time it.)

Observational activity

The ritual event you choose to describe and analyse is up to you, but below are a few ideas. Note that you will find “Mapping the Field of Ritual” by Grimes very useful for structuring your observational activity. Make sure to read it before you undertake observation. You can address the following topics (as outlined by Grimes) during your observations, as well as in your report:

- Ritual space
- Ritual objects
- Ritual time/timing
- Ritual sound and language
- Ritual identity/roles
- Ritual action

You do not have to address all of these topics. This is only a suggestive list.

Note: This is **NOT** an interactional exercise. Do not talk with or interview people. Also, your notes should not focus on any individual person – rather, you should focus on the broader movements of people through space and aggregate social patterns that can be observed. This is about observing unobtrusively.

Photographing: Keep in mind that photographing the event might cause distraction and that some people might be sensitive to the possibility of being photographed. For these reasons, although we value visual material, photographing should be strictly avoided in this exercise. You are only allowed to use existing, publicly available visual images of the place/ritual that you choose to observe.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Research Essay

Due: **2 June**

Weighting: **35%**

You are asked to write a 1,300 word essay on a topic from a list that will be distributed in Week 8. These will focus on various themes presented in readings and lectures throughout the course, whilst allowing you to investigate a particular area of interest. In your essay you need to cite scholarly references in support of your interpretation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Technology used and required

Students will need to have access to iLearn because this unit's iLearn site is the unit guide. iLearn is also to be used to complete the weekly question assignments and to take the three quizzes scheduled throughout the semester.

All lectures are recorded, and many of the materials made use of in class are available through the library and iLearn. While the ECHO system records and may livestream lectures, ***we strongly encourage everyone to attend the lectures in person.*** ECHO has been known to fail and we have a tenuous (at best) relationship with the system. The recordings are also often difficult to hear and watch at times and you might miss valuable information. We will not offer notes or repeat lectures due to a system failure. The best approach is to attend lecture in person. Use the ECHO system only when unavoidable circumstances arise. We attempt to make lectures and tutorials as dynamic as possible and interact with students. You will also have the opportunity to share experiences and ask questions during and after the lecture. Attending in person is a unique and engaging experience. Moreover, honestly, the lectures are much more fun for everyone (including me) if people are actually present.

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

Will be made available on iLearn in mid-February

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Late submission, penalties, and special consideration

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for *timed* assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

All special consideration requests should be processed through <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research 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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research Essay

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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research Essay

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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research Essay

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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research 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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research Essay

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

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research 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.

Assessment tasks

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research Essay

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.

Assessment tasks

- Attendance and Participation
- Take-home Exam
- Ethnographic Exercise
- Research Essay