



ANTH2008

Cults, Saints, Shamans: Religion and Society

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2024

Macquarie School of Social Sciences

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General Information

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

(ANTH150 or ANTH1050) or 40cp at 1000 level or above

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit introduces students to anthropological approaches of studying religion and to some of the core themes of the anthropology of religion. We will explore multiple religious beliefs, meanings, experiences, expressions and practices across diverse sociocultural environments both in the past and within the contemporary moment. Topics to be examined include religious myths, symbols and rituals; material religion; religion and art practices; shamanism; theocracy; secularism; and interplay between religion and politics. Special attention will be paid to how anthropologists conduct ethnographic fieldwork, the central method for anthropologists, on the religious. Students will gain a sense of the range of challenges and issues that professional anthropologists engage with when doing extended field research on religious worlds and lives. Through studying these topics, students will gain new theoretical knowledge and analytical tools that will enable them to critically examine sociocultural dimensions of religion.

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:

ULO1: Demonstrate mastery of knowledge on key themes in the anthropology of religion.

ULO2: Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.

ULO3: Examine ethnographic texts on religious experiences, practices, and lives.

ULO4: Evaluate methodological dimensions of ethnographic research and data collection.

ULO5: Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.

ULO6: Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about other's practices.

General Assessment Information

Participation

Lecture attendance, or watching the Echo-live stream or recording, is strongly advised. The lecture content will provide information that you will need to participate in the tutorials and for the quizzes. External students will participate in the online discussion forum in lieu of attending on-campus tutorials.

Participation will be assessed based on presentations and your engagement in discussions, both of which will be graded.

During weekly tutorials, each student must prepare a response to at least one of the discussion questions posted on iLearn. The tutor will select several students to present their responses during the tutorial. If chosen, you will need to read your response aloud; ideally, you should stand up and use the whiteboard. Your response should be approximately five minutes long.

Failure to present your response will result in a participation mark of zero for that week.

Responses will be graded on a scale of 0-10, based on the following criteria:

1. Addressing at least one of the discussion questions posted on iLearn (2 points)
2. Referencing at least one of the week's readings (2 points)
3. Incorporating lecture content from the week (2 points)
4. Presenting within the five-minute timeframe (2 points)
5. Formulating a convincing response to questions asked after the presentation (2 points)

Tutorial Discussion: While one student presents, all other students must prepare a relevant question. After the presentation, the tutor will ask students to present their questions to the presenter. If you are chosen and fail to ask a question you will receive a participation mark of zero for that week. The tutor will grade your question on a scale of 0-5 based on the following

criteria:

1. Asking a question (1 mark)
2. Referencing lecture content in the question to make a point (2 marks)
3. Referencing at least one of the readings to make a point (2 marks)

Ethnographic Essay

For this assignment, internally-enrolled students will work in groups of 3 or 4 and attend a ritual activity that exhibits religion in practice. If possible, external students can also undertake this assignment in groups but we understand that this may not be possible, so you will have the option of working individually.

The aim is to attend and observe a religious ritual or worshipping ceremony of your choice, which might take place, for example, at a local church, temple, mosque, synagogue, etc. Based on your observations of the ritual activity, you will then write an individual essay, which should analyse and discuss the following essay question: In what ways is 'sacredness' generated and expressed in this ritual event?

Essays will be marked individually according to the marking rubric. When you conduct your observational activity try to take detailed notes. You might also want to sketch out a map of the social space and how people use it. You should divide up the workload amongst the group. You may each choose to observe and record different things, or you may all decide to observe the same thing but from different angles.

Quizzes

You will complete two online quizzes, each containing 15 multiple-choice questions. These quizzes are based on lecture materials and tutorial readings. These are open-note quizzes, so if you take the time to listen to lectures and do the readings, you will be able to answer them.

Quiz 1 will consist of questions that cover the unit material from Week 1 to Week 6 (included).

Quiz 2 will cover the unit material from Week 7 to Week 12 (included).

You will have 25 minutes to complete each quiz. The quizzes will open and close at a fixed time.

Take-home exam

The take-home examination is designed to assess your understanding of the material covered throughout the session. The questions are centred around the subjects explored in the course readings and lectures.

The examination comprises two sections. In Section 1, you are required to select any four out of seven questions and craft a 200-word response for each question. Section 2, entails a single question, and you are expected to provide a response of 500 words, with a permissible variation of plus or minus ten percent in the word count.

Special consideration

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the

7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-time sensitive assessment (incl. essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special Consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Ethnographic Essay	30%	No	11 October 2024
Take-home Exam	30%	No	1 November 2024
Quiz	30%	No	During Week 6 and Week 12
Tutorial participation (internal students)	10%	No	Weekly

Ethnographic Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 25 hours

Due: **11 October 2024**

Weighting: **30%**

Essay on Anthropology-related topic

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.
- Evaluate methodological dimensions of ethnographic research and data collection.
- Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.
- Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about other's practices.

Take-home Exam

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **1 November 2024**

Weighting: **30%**

An open-note, short-answer final exam will assess cumulative knowledge of the unit material from the entire semester.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate mastery of knowledge on key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.
- Examine ethnographic texts on religious experiences, practices, and lives.
- Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.
- Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about other's practices.

Quiz

Assessment Type ¹: Quiz/Test

Indicative Time on Task ²: 15 hours

Due: **During Week 6 and Week 12**

Weighting: **30%**

The quiz is cumulative and multiple choice, conducted online via iLearn page.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate mastery of knowledge on key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.
- Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about other's practices.

Tutorial participation (internal students)

Assessment Type ¹: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 12 hours

Due: **Weekly**

Weighting: **10%**

Active participation in tutorial discussion of topics related to weekly readings and lecture topic.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate anthropological theories of religion.
- Examine ethnographic texts on religious experiences, practices, and lives.
- Write cogently about the sociocultural dimensions of religion.
- Critically evaluate commonly held assumptions about other cultures and socio-religious differences and adopt an open-mindedness about other's practices.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

This unit will be delivered via 13 lectures, 12 tutorials and an online forum. Every week, several scholarly but enjoyable readings will be made available to the students. Building on these readings in the anthropology of religion and the specialisation of the lecturers and tutors, the unit introduces students to anthropological approaches of studying religion.

In the lectures, we will explore multiple religious beliefs, meanings, experiences, expressions and practices across diverse sociocultural environments both in the past and within the contemporary moment. Topics to be examined include religious myths, symbols and rituals; material religion; religion and art practices; shamanism; secularism; and interplay between religion and politics.

During the tutorials and via a hands-on ethnographic observation exercise, students will learn how anthropologists conduct ethnographic fieldwork on the religious. Students will gain a sense of the range of challenges and issues that professional anthropologists engage with when doing extended field research on religious worlds and lives.

All lectures in this unit are delivered in person and made available via the ECHO platform.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/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

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

[The Writing Centre](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via [AskMQ](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

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.

Unit information based on version 2024.01 of the [Handbook](#)