



ANTH107

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

S1 Day 2013

Anthropology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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TBA on iLearn

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>Tutorial</u>	20%	ongoing
<u>Quiz 1</u>	10%	Week 6
<u>Ethnographic exercise</u>	25%	Week 8 - 2nd of May
<u>Quiz 2</u>	10%	Week 10
<u>Final research paper</u>	35%	week 13 - 6th of June

Tutorial

Due: **ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Each week you will prepare for the lectures and tutorials by completing the required readings. You will be given a question or questions that will require a written response but you must also come to the tutorial ready to engage in open discussion of the week's topics.

On successful completion 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.

Quiz 1

Due: **Week 6**

Weighting: **10%**

These are multiple choice quizzes that will test retention of terms and concepts covered in lectures and readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Ethnographic exercise

Due: **Week 8 - 2nd of May**

Weighting: **25%**

This is a short essay (1000 words) with an ethnographic focus, that is, you will describe anthropologically a particular cultural phenomenon from first hand experience. You will be given detailed instructions as to how to approach this assessment during lectures and tutorials.

FORMAT: if you are in doubt about the essay format and referencing system required in anthropology look up the guidelines on the Anthropology home page.

Your essay must be typed in 12 point font and double spaced. Make sure all of the pages are numbered. Please have a separate title page with your name and student I.D. number. Do not put your essay in any display paraphernalia, as it makes marking more difficult. Correct grammar and spelling is required and part of the assessment for your written work will reflect this.

Important Note: It is a requirement that all students keep a copy of their written work. In the event of work being lost, or if you say it has been handed in but it is not in our records, you must be able to present a second copy. If you do not do so, no consideration can be given and all marks will be forfeited for that piece of work.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Actively engage in ethnographic description, data collection and analysis.
- Understand key themes in the anthropology of religion.
- Develop writing and research skills.

Quiz 2

Due: **Week 10**

Weighting: **10%**

These are multiple choice quizzes that will test retention of terms and concepts covered in lectures and readings.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Final research paper

Due: **week 13 - 6th of June**

Weighting: **35%**

The essay topics will be distributed in week 8. These will focus on the various themes presented in readings and lectures throughout the course, whilst allowing you to investigate a particular area of interest.

Format: as for Task 3 but with particular attention to referencing. This will be covered in detail in your tutorials.

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.

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

Week 1

Feb 28

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

Dr Gabriele Marranci

Introduction: How do anthropologists study religion?

This week we will cover the key topics of the Unit and introduce students to the broad field of the Anthropology of Religion. We will identify the concepts, questions and issues that are currently at the centre of this field of study and make a start to understanding the unique ways in which anthropology undertakes the study of all things religious.

No tutorial this week but you should read the course outline thoroughly, familiarise yourself with the assignments for this Unit and make a start on the reading for next week. If you have any questions please bring them to next week's tutorial

Week 2

Mar 7

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

Part 1. In search of the sacred: What is religion?

Defining religion has been an ongoing challenge for anthropologists, but despite the difficulties we can identify a number of concepts that are generally connected to ideas about the religious. These include the idea of spirits and of the supernatural and certain moods and motivations but the most enduring concept in studies of religion is that of the sacred. What is 'sacred' is set against its opposite; the 'profane', but it is not always an easy or appropriate distinction when we take a cross-cultural view. Even in our own culture the way we define religion determines what exactly can be taken to be religious practise; for instance, Michael Jindra has explored Star-Trek Fandom as a religious phenomenon in the US.

Part 2. Culture and Belief: Santa Claus—a case study

One of the key questions to be debated as anthropological studies of religion developed was that of 'belief'. Studies of non-Western cultures revealed that much of what we take to be matters of belief are rooted in our particular histories and cultures. We will explore the fascinating question of belief through an examination of the cultural histories of what we know in Australia to be the phenomenon of Santa Claus.

Film: The Legends of Santa

Required Tutorial Readings;

Winzler, R.L. (2008) *Anthropology and Religion: What we Know, Think, and Question*. Ch 1,pp

1-22. Plymouth, UK: Altamira Press.

Wolf, E. (2007 [1964]) Santa Claus: Notes on a Collective Representation. In R. A. Manners (ed.) *Process and Pattern in Culture*, pp 147-155. New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Durkheim, E. (1979) The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. In W. A. Lessa and Evon Z. Vogt (eds), *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological approach*. 4th Ed. pp 27-35. NY: Harper & Row Publishers.

Goody, J. (2010) Religion and Ritual from Tylor to Parsons: the definitional problem. In *Myth, Ritual and the Oral*, Ch 1, pp 13-40, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 3

Mar 14

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

Part 1: European Saints and Melanesian Magic

Bringing together our examination of the sacred and our brief meeting with Saint Nicholas, this week we consider closely the distinctions between 'magic' and 'religion', as we explore the different ways these concepts are used to describe what often turn out to be very similar phenomena.

Part 2: Pilgrims, Pilgrimage, and Sacred sites

Saints and their sacred relics, and sites of religious significance that we generally call sacred, draw many thousands of people or 'pilgrims' together in an experience that has famously been described by Victor Turner as *communitas*. In this lecture we also look at Turner's influential work on *liminality* as it is applied to the sacred domain and consider some apparently less 'sacred' sites such as the sporting arena and the music festival that might also initiate religious experiences.

Required Tutorial Readings;

Eliade, M. (1959) *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Introduction, pp 8-18. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Moore, J. D. (1997) Victor Turner: Symbols, Pilgrims, and Drama. In *Visions of Culture*, Ch 18,

pp 228-237. California, London, New Delhi: Altamira Press.

Turner, E. (2009) Legitimization or Suppression? The Effect of Mary's Appearances at Knock, Ireland. In A Hermkens, W. Jansen and C Notermans (eds) *Moved by Mary: The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World*, Ch12, pp 201-214. Surry and Burlington: Ashgate.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Orsi, R. (2005) 'The Many Names of the Mother of God', Ch 2, pp 48-72, *Between Heaven and Earth: The religious worlds people make and the scholars who study them*, Princeton and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morinis, A. (ed) (1992) 'Introduction; The Territory of the Anthropology of Pilgrimage', *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, pp 1-28. Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press.

Turner, V. and E. Turner (1978) *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Turner, V. (1970) 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in rites de Passage' *The Forest of Symbols*, (Ch IV) pp. 93-111. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Week 4

Mar 21

Guest Lecturer: Dr Timothy Lynch

The Dark Side?

Satan in the contemporary West

There is an apparently high and increasing level of belief in the contemporary West in the existence of Satan--a supernatural being who is the epitome of evil, a fallen angel and the implacable enemy of God and humanity. This lecture will consider Western ideas about Satan. We will critically examine the extent to which people in the contemporary West believe in the existence of the Devil, and what precisely it is that they believe. We will look at the history of this figure, and examine the ways in which certain contemporary attitudes are deeply rooted in the past. We will consider how ideas about the Devil are contextualised by Western cosmology and conceptions of the person, and we will contrast the Western devil, cosmos and the person with Balinese ideas about demons. We will conclude by considering a relatively recent panic that occurred, primarily in the English-speaking world, about the activities of certain of Satan's earthly

servants.

Required Tutorial Reading;

Murphy, J. (1990) 'Black Religion and "Black Magic": prejudice and projection in images of African-derived religions' *Religion* 20: 323-337.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Beal, T. (2002) 'Introduction' , *Religion and its Monsters* pp. 1-10, New York and London: Routledge.

Week 5

Mar 28

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

Part 1: Understanding sorcery as a religious phenomenon

This lecture is based on a case study of the cosmology of the Vula'a people of Papua New Guinea who were converted to Christianity during the colonial era at the end of the 19th century, and who continue to engage in the beliefs and practices that are today described as 'sorcery'. Anthropological analysis shows that what is today described as sorcery was once an important part of a pre-Christian religion.

Part 2: Writing the ethnography of death

Sorcery at its most fundamental is about the power over life and death, and it is often in matters of death that religion comes to the foreground, and where social relationships are laid bare. In this lecture we will look at some of the most influential ethnographies of mortuary rituals. We will also begin to prepare for your ethnographic writing assignment.

Film: *In her own time/ Act 111 Communications*; directed by Lynne Littman c2007.

Required Tutorial Readings;

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

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Van Heekeren, D. (2007) The Essence of Vula'a Historical Consciousness. *History and Anthropology*, Vol.18(4):405-426.

Myerhoff, B. (1992) A Death in Due Time: Conviction, Order, and Continuity in Ritual Drama, In M. Kaminsky (ed.) *Remembered Lives*, pp159-190. Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Leenhardt, M. (1979) The Living and the Dead. In *Do Kamo: Person and Myth in the Melanesian World*. Ch 3 pp24-42. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press

Week 6

Apr 4

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

What is a cult?

In popular discourse the word 'cult' carries negative meaning. It has been said that if you believe in it, it is religion, but if you fear and hate it, it is a 'cult'. In this lecture we explore the gap between the theological meaning of the word, and the way it is deployed in popular usage. We will look at the development of the idea of the 'cargo cult' in anthropological studies and the relationship between cults, social change and 'new religious movements'.

Required Tutorial Readings;

Weiner, A. (1988) Death and the work of mourning. In *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*, Ch 2, pp 33-50. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.

Kila, T. A. and C. Kopyoto (1985) The Geno Gerega Movement. In G. Trompf and C. Loeliger (eds) *New Religious Movements in Melanesia*, Ch 11, pp106-118.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Wallace, Anthony F. C. (1956) Revitalization Movements, *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol 58(2): 264-281.

Williams, F. E. (1976) 'The Vailala Madness in Retrospect', Ch 6, pp 385-395, *"The Vailala Madness" and Other Essays*, London: C. Hurst & Company.

Hermann, E. (1992) The Yali Movement in retrospect: rewriting history, redefining 'cargo cult', *Oceania*, Vol 63(1): 55-71.

Lawrence, P. (1964) *Road Belong Cargo: A Study of the Cargo Movement in the Southern Madang District New Guinea*. Manchester University Press.

Week 7

Apr 11

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

Songs that move spirits

Music and song which is often connected to dance is perhaps the most powerful vehicle for religious expression and experience. It is often argued that direct interaction between spirits and humans is created through music and sound. As Anthony Seeger has suggested in his study of the Amazonian Suyá:

"whenever music is heard, something important is happening. Usually some connection is being created or recreated between different domains of life, the universe, or the human body and its spirits. Music transcends time, space, and existential levels of reality. It affects humans, spirits, animals, and those hard-to-imagine beings in between." (Seeger 1987:7)

In this lecture we will explore the place of music in a range of religious and cultural contexts.

Film: *The Gospel according to the Papuans*

Required Tutorial Readings;

Gray, E. R. And S. L. Thumma (1997) The Gospel Hour: Liminality, Identity, and Religion in a Gay Bar. In P. E. Becker and N. L. Eisland (eds), *Contemporary American Religion: An Ethnographic Reader*, Ch 3, pp79-98. California, London, New Delhi: Altamira Press.

Van Heekeren, D. (2011) Singing it 'local': the appropriation of Christianity in the Vula'a villages of Papua New Guinea, *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, Vol. 12(1): 44-59.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Jennings, M. (2008) 'Won't you break free?' An ethnography of music and the divine-human

encounter at an Australian Pentecostal Church, *Culture and Religion: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol (9)2: 161-174.

Friedson, S. (1996) The Musical Construction of clinical Reality. In *Dancing Prophets: Musical Experience in Tumbuka Healing*, (Ch 4) pp 100-127. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

Feld, S. (1990) *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Seeger, A. (1987) *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian people*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, M. L. (2008) The Weapons of our Warfare: Music, Positionality, and Transcendence among Haitian Pentecostals, *Caribbean Studies*, Vol 36(2): 23-64.

Week 8

May 2

Dr Deborah Van Heekeren

Myth Precedes Ritual?

In this lecture we will explore the relationship between myth and ritual. We will examine the major anthropological approaches to the study of myth and consider how the term is differently interpreted when it is applied to oral cultures and religions as opposed to text-based cultures and religions. We will also consider the place of myth in the modern world.

Required Tutorial Readings;

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

Malinowski, B. (2002) Myth in Primitive Psychology in M. Lambek (ed) *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, Massachusetts and Oxford: Blackwell.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Feld, S. (1982) "The boy who became a muni bird" Ch 1 pp. 20-43 in *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping Poetics and Song in Kaluli Expression*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Van Heekeren, D, (2012) "From myth as narrative to mythic being" Ch 8 pp. 173-190 in *The Shark Warrior of Alewai: a phenomenology of Melanesian identity*, Wantage UK: Sean Kingston Publishing.

Leach, E. (1967) 'Genesis as Myth' in J. Middleton (ed) *Myth and Cosmos: readings in mythology and symbolism*, Ch 1 pp1-13, New York: The American Museum of Natural History.

Herd, G. (1994) *Guardians of the Flutes: Idioms of Masculinity*, Ch 8 'Male Parthenogenesis: a myth and its meaning' pp. 255-294, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

****Ethnographic Paper due 5pm today****

Week 9

May 9

Dr Gabriele Marranci

Reading Rituals

What are rituals? How can we make sense of them? In this lecture we will discuss traditional and more recent approaches to the study and explanation of rituals. We will also observe a particular ritual in South Italy, which has been popularised in a well known musical stereotype: the tarantella.

A) The complexity of studying rituals

The first part of the lecture will focus on understandings of rituals both in classical anthropological theories as well as more recent developments, including cognitive theories of rituals.

B) The study of the tarantella by Ernesto De Martino.

In the second part of the lecture we will observe a particular ritual that was performed until the 1960s in the Italian region of "Salento" in Apulia, which then has been transformed into a stereotyped musical form, the tarantella. We will use the ethnography of Ernesto de Martino and we will observe how we can understand such ritual, which after hundreds of years has disappeared in its original and pure form.

Required Tutorial Readings;

Fogelin, L. (2007). The archaeology of religious ritual. *Annu. Rev. Anthropol.*,36, 55-71.

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

Further recommended readings

Torsello, D. (2008). The Land of Remorse: A Study of Southern Italian Tarantism, by Ernesto De Martino. *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe*, 8(1), 35-36.

Week 10

May 16

Dr Gabriele Marranci

To Study Religion or Study Believers?

One of the questions that, as an anthropologist researching Muslim communities, I found challenging and necessary to debate is what exactly are we studying. Are we studying a cultural expression labelled 'religion' or are we studying human beings' practices and beliefs? What came to be known as the anthropology of Islam is still debating this question. This week we will follow the debate and try to observe the impact that it has on understandings of Muslims and often also policy-making.

A) Muslims as Cultural Objects?

The first part of the lecture will discuss theories and anthropological approaches which tend to understand Muslims as products of a symbolic discourse. These approaches derive in particular from the influential views of anthropologists such as Geertz and Gellner.

B) Muslims as Human Beings?

The second part of the lecture will discuss a different approach to understanding Muslims. This starts from two postulates: the universality of some characteristics of how we are human (i.e biological, neurological and cognitive) and the understanding of culture as part of a larger complex environmental system.

Required Tutorial Readings;

Varisco, D. M. (2005). *Islam obscured: The rhetoric of anthropological representation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Ch 1, pp 1-20.

Maranci, G. (2010) Sociology and Anthropology of Islam: A Critical Debate in B. S. Turner, *The new Blackwell companion to the sociology of religion*. Chichester, West Sussex, U.K: Wiley-Blackwell. Ch 16, pp 364-386.

Marranci, G. (2008) Elenchos in G. Marranci *The anthropology of Islam*. Oxford: Berg. pp 1-3.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Marranci, G. (2008) Beyond the stereotype: challenges in understanding Muslim identities, in G. Marranci *The anthropology of Islam*. Oxford: Berg. pp 89-102.

****Nb: Quiz this week****

Week 11

May 23

Dr Gabriele Marranci

The Power of Spirits: Heteropraxy, Hegemony and Religion

In the Muslim world, as in many other religions and cultures, spirits, saints and the supernatural play an important role despite being sometimes met with opposition. As in many other contexts, anthropologists have noticed the politics of gender that affect such phenomena, as well as the counter-hegemonic character of such beliefs.

A) Female Muslim Saints in South Asia

In the first part of the lecture, we will discuss the social and cultural role of female saints (pirs) in

South Asia through an ethnographic example from Bangladesh. In a society such as the rural Bengali one, women are in a subordinate position vis-a-vis the men within a strong patriarchal social structure. Even in the domain of pirs, we will see that there are gender differences, so that while the power of male saints is attributed to the individual, the female saint's power is adduced to the spirit that associates with her. Yet the saintly status, including the fear of spirits, helps these women to resist some of the patriarchal norms, such as the virilocal rule of residence.

B) Conversion and Spirits in Africa

In the second part of the lecture, we will observe the ethnographic case of conversion to Islam through spirit possession in Giriama. Spirits make people ill until they accept Islam, which consists of values and practices that clash with Giriama culture. We will observe how the anthropological analysis shows that the possession in reality helps the conversion transition by naturalizing the notion that there is an intrinsic clash between their ethnic habits and Islam.

Required Tutorial Readings;

Callan, A. (2008) Female saints and the practice of Islam in Sylhet, Bangladesh. *American Ethnologist*, 35(3):396-412.

McIntosh, J. (2004) Reluctant Muslims: embodied hegemony and moral resistance in a Giriama spirit possession complex. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 10 (1): 91-112.

Week 12

May 30

Dr Gabriele Marranci

Religion and Body Modification:

Anthropologists had for a long time an interest in body modification such as tattoos, piercing and scarification. Many of these practices are linked to religious beliefs and performed at rituals. Circumcision is a body modification that can still be found in monotheistic religions. Jews, Muslims and some Christian groups practice male circumcision. In a few regions Christians and Muslims also perform female circumcision. Such practice is today referred to as genital mutilation and there are efforts to eradicate it. This has opened debates among anthropologists who have studied the phenomenon. In this lecture we will discuss the different forms of circumcision, how anthropologists have explained such practices and the ethical issues derived from the discussion. Also we will see that such genital modifications are not limited to "primitive" or non-western cultures, as some have assumed, but rather can indeed be found in western countries,

including among Australia's white population as part of 'cosmetic' procedures.

A) Circumcision and Anthropology

The first part of the lecture will focus on how anthropologists have tried to make sense of circumcision as a cultural and religious practice. We will also discuss the ethical issues and the efficacy of the UN-sponsored campaigns aimed at the eradication of female circumcision, but not male circumcision, and the reasons behind such gender differentiation.

Finally we will discuss some examples of genital mutilation which are performed today among western people but which are often excluded from the discussion of genital mutilation.

B) Discussing Circumcision in Southeast Asia and Australia

In this second part we will observe first female and male circumcision among the South Thai Muslims, particularly how the practices are changing and the local discourse which supports both. We will discuss how the Southeast Asian practices differ from the African ones. Then we will move to the ethically problematic and contentious issue of circumcised refugee women of African origin in Australia, their views about female circumcision and the reasons for which they may ask, after giving birth, to be re-infibulated.

Required Tutorial Readings;

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

Merli, C. (2008). Sunat for girls in southern Thailand : its relation to traditional midwifery, male circumcision and other obstetrical practices. *Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration*. pp 32-41.

Further recommended readings for this topic;

Manderson, L. (2004). Local Rites and Body Politics. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 6(2):285-307.

Week 13

Jun 6

Dr Gabriele Marranci

Understanding Societies Through Death

Death is certain. Anthropologists have often paid attention to it as a part of life-cycle rituals. Yet

death and the surrounding practices and norms can help us, as anthropologists, to understand more about the societies and communities we are studying, their way of coping and the mourning process may, for instance, disclose important information about emotions.

A) Comparing Mourning in Egypt and Indonesia

In the first part of the lecture we will observe, through the anthropological methodology of comparative studies, how two different Muslim societies react to death in two vastly differing ways, despite having the same religion and beliefs. This not only shows how the practice of Islam is not monolithic in its expression but also how human groups may differ in the expression of emotions and identity.

B) The Politics of Death in Gambia

In the second part of the lecture we will move to Africa. Although death often unites people, sometimes it can divide, as in the ethnographic example we will discuss from a village in Gambia. In this case, studying a dispute over a graveyard enabled an anthropologist to unveil deeper political and religious divides.

Required Tutorial Readings;

Janson, M. (2011) Living Islam through death: demarcating Muslim identity in a rural Serahuli community in the Gambia. *Journal- Royal Anthropological Institute*, 17(1):100-115.

Wikan, U. (1988) Bereavement and loss in two Muslim communities: Egypt and Bali compared. *Social Science & Medicine*, 27(5):451-460.

****Final essay due 5pm today****

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://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

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

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Special Consideration Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/special_consideration/policy.html

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

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these services can be accessed at: <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

UniWISE provides:

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops http://www.students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_skills/
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions.
- The Learning Help Desk is located in the Library foyer (level 2).
- Online and on-campus orientation events run by Mentors@Macquarie.

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

Details of these services can be accessed at <http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/>.

IT Help

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the university's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students and it outlines what can be done.

Graduate Capabilities

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

- Tutorial
- Quiz 1
- Ethnographic exercise
- Quiz 2
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Quiz 1
- Ethnographic exercise
- Quiz 2
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Quiz 1
- Ethnographic exercise
- Quiz 2
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Ethnographic exercise
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Ethnographic exercise
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Ethnographic exercise
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Quiz 1
- Ethnographic exercise
- Final research paper

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

- Tutorial
- Ethnographic exercise

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.