Syllabus

Course Description: This course introduces a cross-cultural analysis of religion with a special emphasis on religious systems of indigenous societies. We study symbolic systems, rituals, religious organization, leadership, and religious change through functionalist, structural, and ecological and other materialist theoretical frameworks. The material illuminates the complex relationship between religious beliefs and practices, as well as the relationship between societal organizations and systems of religious thought and behavior. We strive to deepen our understanding of, and co-existence with, philosophies different from our own and to contemplate the role of religious thought and behavior in our own society and/or personal life.

Course Goals: At the end of the course you will be able to:

- Contrast European and Euro-American philosophical assumptions with other knowledge systems
- Describe major religious beliefs and practices in several different types of religious/spiritual traditions
- Apply specific theoretical perspectives to explain human spiritual/religious behavior and thought
- Use specific data to critically examine many commonly held assumptions about your own and other peoples’ religions
- Develop your analytical, observational, listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills
- Apply basic concepts of anthropology to real-life situations
- Thoughtfully reflect on the ethics of social research and our shared responsibilities as human beings

Required Texts:
Assigned articles (See course outline)

Course Evaluation:
Class attendance and participation: 20%
Field assignments: 20%
Reflections on assigned readings: 15%
Graded journal: 10%
Midterm exam: 15%
Final exam: 20%

(See detailed descriptions of each below)

Course Outline

January 11/12 (A/B1)
Reading assignments:
- American Anthropological Association website information
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 1 (pp. 1-17)
- George Cajete, Native Science, Ch. 2. “Philosophy of Native Science” (pp. 57-83), Ch. 6 “A Sense of Place” (pp. 177-213).

January 13/14 (A/B2)
Anthropological Theories of Religion: Structuralism, Functionalism, Psychological/Cognitive Causation, Cultural Ecology, Karl Marx and Historical Materialism. The ethics of anthropological research.
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 1 (pp. 17-28)
JANUARY 15-16: HILO, HAWAI’I
FIELD ASSIGNMENTS
Recommended in-port programs: TBA

JANUARY 17/18 (A/B3)
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 6 (pp. 119-135), Ch. 9 (pp. 189- 212)
Documentary: Excerpt on the San (!Kung) healing dance from The Power of Myth

JANUARY 19/20 (A/B4)
ECCLESIASTICAL RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION. Case Studies: The "Great" or "Universal" Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, See Index for references to the above religions.
- Specific assignments for the religion of your choice from Roger Schmidt, et al., Patterns of Religion and Raymond Scupin, Religion and Culture (on reserve)

JANUARY 22 STUDY DAY

JANUARY 25/26 (A/B6)
THE INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOLS AND MYTH. Sacred Objects, Images, Speech, and Dance.
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 2 & 3
- Laurel Kendall, Vũ Thị Thanh Tam & Nguyễn Thị Thu Huong, "Three Goddesses in and out of Their Shrine" Asian Ethnology Vol. 67, #2, 2008, (pp. 219-236)

JANUARY 27-31: YOKOHAMA & KOBE, JAPAN
FIELD LAB: ZEN BUDDHISM. LECTURE, TEMPLE VISITS, AND MEDITATION PRACTICE
This lab includes a shipboard lecture on the history Zen, visits to the Engaku-ji and Chojyu-ji temples in Kamakura and a brief introduction to Zen meditation. We will have a Q&A session following field trip. Student teams may choose, in consultation with the instructor, specific topics pertaining to the field experience and to issues discussed in class, to be described, analyzed and presented in a 4-5 page paper. The student teams are also expected to give a brief presentation of their findings in class.
PAPER AND PRESENTATION DUE DATE: FEBRUARY 28/MARCH 1 (See details under Explanation of Course Evaluation Procedures below)
ADDITIONAL FIELD ASSIGNMENT:
- Describe visible religious symbols, buildings, and places and briefly analyze their meaning within the relevant religious faith.
Other recommended in-port programs: TBA

FEBRUARY 1/ 2 (A/B7)
CALENDRICAL RITUALS AND RITES OF PASSAGE. A discussion of the variety of ritual functions and the commodification of religious ceremonies for tourist consumption.
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 4 (pp. 77-102), Ch. 8 (pp. 161-188).

**Documentary:** Excerpt from "Taboo" about Apache women's puberty ceremony.

**FEBRUARY 3-8: SHANGHAI AND HONG KONG**

**FIELD ASSIGNMENT:**
- Briefly describe the visible aspects of a living religious/ceremonial tradition and the use of 'religious,' 'pilgrimage,' and 'heritage' tourism in China today.

**FEBRUARY 9/10 (A/B8)**

**REFLECTIONS ON READINGS AND PORT EXPERIENCES IN HAWAII, JAPAN AND CHINA.** Student presentations on East Asian religions - Buddhism, Shintoism.

**FEBRUARY 11/19 (A/B9)**

**RITUAL AND ALTERED STATES:** Drugs, Prayer, Trance, and Reversals.

**Reading assignments:**
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 5 (pp. 103-118)
- Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do (Cao Dai website) [http://caodai.org/web/content.aspx?pageID=1]

**FEBRUARY 12-18: HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM**

**FIELD ASSIGNMENT:**
- Describe the visible expressions (sacred sites, rituals, symbols, dress, functionaries, etc.) of the religion of your choice in Vietnam

**Recommended in-port programs:** TBA

**FEBRUARY 21-22: SINGAPORE**

**FEBRUARY 20/23 (A/B10)**

**HEALING AND FAITH.** Religious/spiritual explanations of the causes and cures of disease and misfortune.

**Reading assignments:**
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 4 (pp. 84-85), Ch. 5 (p. 119), Ch. 6 (pp. 130-131), Ch. 7 (136-142).
- Amber Haque, "Culture-bound syndromes and healing practices in Malaysia," Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 11 (7) 2008 (pp. 685-696)

**FEBRUARY 24-27: PENANG, MALAYSIA**

**FIELD ASSIGNMENT:**
- Describe what you have learned about the co-existence of several religious traditions in Malaysia.

**Recommended in-port programs:**
- TEMPLE VISITS IN MALAYSIA

**FEBRUARY 28/MARCH 1 (A/B11)**

**FIELD LAB PAPER AND PRESENTATIONS.** (See details below)

**MARCH 2/3 (A/B12)**

**GENDER AND RELIGION:** When gods, spirits, and religious leaders are women and other genders.

**Reading assignments:**
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 2 (pp. 37-38), Ch. 9 (202-206)
- Alice Walker, excerpt from The Color Purple (on reserve)

**Documentary:** Segment on women in The Power of Myth.

**MARCH 4-9: KOCHI, INDIA**
FIELD LAB (Plan B): VISITS TO HINDU, BUDDHIST, JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, AND/OR MUSLIM PLACES OF WORSHIP.

FIELD ASSIGNMENT:
- Describe a specific aspect (ritual, sacred site, gender symbolism, nature references, etc.) of a religion practiced in India

Recommended in-port programs: TBA

MARCH 10/11 (A/B 13)
REFLECTIONS ON READINGS AND PORT EXPERIENCES IN INDIA. Student presentations on Shintoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

MARCH 12 STUDY DAY

MARCH 13/14 (A/B14)
MIDTERM EXAM

MARCH 16: PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

MARCH 15/17 (A/B15)
DIVINATION, MAGIC, WITCHCRAFT, AND SORCERY.
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 7 (pp. 136-160), Ch. 10 (pp. 213-229).
- Rosalind Hackett, "Discourses of Demonization in Africa and Beyond." Diogenes, 50 (199) Fall 2003 (pp. 61-).

MARCH 18/20 (A/B16)
RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: Colonialism, Syncretism, and Revitalization.
Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 11 (pp. 241-252)
- Alice Kehoe, "The Ghost Dance Religion,"

MARCH 19 STUDY DAY

MARCH 21/22 (A/B17)
RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: Revolution vs. the Status Quo.
Reading assignments:
- Gustavo Gutierrez, "Liberation, Theology, and Proclamation," in Claude Geffré and Gustavo Gutierrez (eds.). Theology of Liberation, Concilium 6(10) June 1974 (pp. 59-)

MARCH 23-28: CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA
FIELD ASSIGNMENT: Reflect, in writing, on what you have learned about the role of religion in the struggle against apartheid and patriarchy.

Recommended in-port programs:
- BISHOP PETER STOREY: INTERFAITH RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID & WALKING TOUR OF CAPE TOWN
- CHURCH SERVICE
- OPERATION HUNGER

MARCH 29/30 (A18)
REFLECTIONS ON READINGS AND PORT EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA. Student presentations on Judaism and Christianity.
MARCH 31/APRIL 2 (A/B19)
SPIRITUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT. Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces.

Reading assignment:
- George Cajete, Ch. 8 "Creating New Minds and Worlds," In *Native Science* (pp. 259-289).

Documentary: In the Light of Reverence

APRIL 1 STUDY DAY

APRIL 3 /4 (A/B20)
RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE: New and New Age Religions.

Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 11 (pp. 244-250)

APRIL 5-8: TEMA/ACCRA

FIELD ASSIGNMENT: Describe what you have learned about the features (e.g. functions, organizational structure, history, symbolism, rituals, gender constructs and environmental attitudes) of evangelical Christianity in Ghana.

Recommended in-port programs: TBA

APRIL 9/10 (A/B 21)
RELIGION, NATIONALISM, AND THE STATE. Religious influences on state policies and states’ control over religious life.

Reading assignments:
- Stein & Stein, Ch. 11 (pp. 251-258)
- Patricia Chang, "A Foreign Policy for Foreign Religion," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Oct. 2007
- Reading on contemporary fundamentalist Christianity in the United States (to be selected later)

APRIL 13: STUDY DAY

APRIL 11/12 (A/B22)
ISLAM & "THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK." Interrogating dominant myths and reconsidering perspectives.

Reading assignments:
- Religious Facts, Comparative chart
- Zakia Salime, "Mobilizing Muslim Women: Multiple Voices, the Sharia, and the State." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28(1) 2008 (pp. 200-211)

APRIL 14/15 (A/B 23)
SUMMARY AND PERSONAL REFLECTIONS. What is the relevance of what we have learned? What will we do with our knowledge?

Reading assignment: Each student is asked to select one reading assignment or in-port experience that directly or indirectly speaks to the ethics of anthropology and religious studies.

APRIL 16 & 17: STUDY DAYS

APRIL 18-21: CASABLANCA

Recommended in-port programs:
- VISIT TO HASSAN II MASJID
EXPLANATION OF COURSE EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

**Class Preparation, Attendance and Participation (20% of grade)**
The important work of integrating readings, lectures, and field experiences takes place in the classroom. Therefore, class preparation, attendance, and general participation will be monitored and highly valued.

*One unexcused absence is allowed.* Any further unexcused absences are penalized by an automatic loss of a full grade for every missed class. You must show a nurse’s or doctor’s note in order to be excused from class.

**FIELD LAB: (20%) ZEN BUDDHISM. LECTURE, TEMPLE VISITS AND MEDITATION PRACTICE**
You will be organized into sets of field research partners and submit a jointly written paper (4-5 pages) due on **February 28/March 1**. The paper is to contain:

a) a description of the team’s observations and interpretations of what you have learned during the lab,
b) a discussion of how the lab information relates to other relevant course material, and an analysis of the similarities and differences in the interpretations of the team members’ observations and understanding of the relevant course material. [A student may choose to work alone.]

The course includes discussions of the concept of religion, religious symbols and rituals, altered states of consciousness, gendered and environmental aspects of religion, and religious change. Student teams may choose to contemplate whether Zen Buddhism is indeed a religion and whether serving tea is a religious ritual. You may study the effects that meditation has on one’s consciousness or the purpose of meditation in the Zen tradition, the concept of sacred space and sacred place, the relationship between Zen Buddhist beliefs and the ‘natural’ environment, the gendered aspects of the Zen tradition, the symbols found in Zen temples and tea ceremony, and the changes that have occurred in Zen beliefs and practices. This Field Lab provides a great opportunity to develop observational, note-taking, analytical, writing, and speaking skills.

Each team or individual student is expected to present their findings in class on **February 28/March 1**.

**Graded journal:** (10%) The journal allows students to keep track of what they have read, heard, observed and experienced throughout the semester. The graded journal entries should explicitly address course-related issues. Students submit the journals twice during the semester for feedback and finally for grading at the end of the journey. A recurring in-port assignment is to take notes on the religion of each student’s choice in the countries visited.

**Reading reflections:** (15%) Periodically students receive questions about specific reading assignments, which they are expected to comment on, sometimes verbally in class, sometimes in writing.

**Midterm exam** (15%) & **Final exam:** (20%) The exams give students an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the course materials and their relevance to the field assignments and cultural experiences in the countries visited. Study questions are given ahead of time from which the instructor selects some (the students will not know which ones) for them to answer in class.

*******

**TEXT BOOK INFORMATION:**
**AUTHOR:** Rebecca Stein & Philip Stein
**TITLE:** The Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft
**PUBLISHER:** Prentice Hall (December 2010 3rd ed.)
**ISBN-10:** 0205718116
**ISBN-13:** 978-0205718115
**PRICE:** $51.00