

*Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.*

---Neale Donald Walsh

## ANTY 336: *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*

The University of Montana—Missoula  
Fall Semester 2019

**Instructor:** C. Riley Augé, PhD

**Time and Place:** Tue. & Thurs. 2:00-3:20      **Room:** LA 205

**Office:** SS 224    **Office Hours:** by appointment

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**Course Description:** Offered in an experiential exploration format, this course introduces students to the anthropological study of supernatural concepts. Unlike the approaches of theologians and historians, anthropologists view mythological, magical, and religious belief and their associated rituals as integral components of social and cultural systems to be studied in comparative and historical perspective. Students will become acquainted with the diversity of belief systems worldwide and learn to apply anthropological concepts to the study of myth, ritual, magic, and religion. In addition to traditional topics, the course will also include food rituals, supernatural landscapes, sport as religious phenomenon, and monstrosity.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- gain vocabulary for the anthropological comparative study of belief systems and practices
- analyze and evaluate ethnographic case studies from literate and nonliterate societies
- gain an understanding of the roles and mechanisms of myth, ritual, and religion as cultural constructs
- learn and practice analytical writing formats as a vehicle for critical thinking and anthropological analysis

### **Required Text and Materials:**

Moro, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion* (9th edition)

Bowen, *Religions in Practice* (6<sup>th</sup> edition)

(Supplemental reading materials and suggestions for optional reading will be provided in each class.)

You will also need a field journal. This does not need to be weatherproof—unless you plan to conduct your ritual project outdoors. It should be sturdy and ample enough to accommodate notes, images, etc. from throughout the semester and particularly through your ritual project observations. A standard spiral notebook is probably not sufficient.

**Disability accommodation:** If you are registered with Disability Services and need accommodation, please notify the instructor by the end of the first week of the course.

### **Class Preparation**

The lectures will be based on readings, films, class discussion, and handouts. Be prepared for class by completing the assigned readings and any writing assignments before class. Bring your textbook and journal to every class meeting.

## Grading

Students will be assessed on class participation, writing assignments, two in-class exams, and a final presentation:

Exam 1

Exam 2

Journal

Question Paper

Pilgrimage

Participation

Classification Exercise

Ritual Project

Final Presentation

**Final Course Grades will be accorded plus/minus designations.**

**Exams:** All grades are based on the traditional 100 point scale (A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 and below). Make-up exams are only allowed in the case of illness, family emergency, military duty, participation in University sponsored sports competition (documentation from Athletics department required), or participation in academic events (documentation required). You will not be eligible for a make-up exam for your family reunion, vacation, or 'personal day.'

## Attendance

Attending every class meeting is very important since we cover a great deal of material during the semester. Information and experiences presented in class go beyond that found in your textbook and readings and will reflect topics on the exams. Additionally, material generated from class discussions and activities may be included on the exams.

## Academic Misconduct (<http://www.umt.edu/studentaffairs/sccAcademicConduct.htm>)

Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Academic misconduct is defined as all forms of academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to: 1) plagiarism, 2) misconduct during an examination or academic exercise, 3) unauthorized possession of examination or other course materials, 4) tampering with course materials, 5) submitting false information, 6) submitting work previously presented in another course, 7) improperly influencing conduct, 8) substituting, or arranging substitution, for another student during an examination or other academic exercise, 9) facilitating academic dishonesty, and 10) altering transcripts, grades, examinations, or other academically related documents.



Meoto Iwa Shinto Shrine, Japan

## Class Schedule

<b>Week One</b> Aug. 27 Aug. 29	<b>The Anthropology of Religion</b> Introductions, Syllabus, Writing Projects Anthropology of Religion
<b>Week Two</b> Sep. 3 Sep. 5	<b>Mythological Foundations</b> Mythology Cosmology and Worldview
<b>Week Three</b> Sep. 10 Sep. 12	<b>Symbolic Classification</b> Symbolic Classification and Totem Taboo, Identity, and Boundary Maintenance
<b>Week Four</b> Sep. 17 Sep. 19	<b>Spiritual Beings</b> Gods, Demons, and Supernatural beings/ Ancestors and Ghosts; Spirits and Souls No class
<b>Week Five</b> Sep. 24 Sep. 26	<b>Ritual</b> Nature of Ritual: Environment, Symbol, and Speech Ritual Process: Initiation (film)
<b>Week Six</b> Oct. 1 Oct. 3	<b>Ritual Specialists</b> Divination and Trance <i>First Exam</i>
<b>Week Seven</b> Oct. 8 Oct. 10	<b>Magic and Witchcraft</b> Magic Magic cont.
<b>Week Eight</b> Oct. 15 Oct. 17	<b>Magic and Witchcraft</b> Witchcraft and Sorcery Witchcraft cont.
<b>Week Nine</b> Oct. 22 Oct. 24	<b>Death</b> Funerals and other Deathways Symbolic Associations of Death
<b>Week Ten</b> Oct. 29 Oct. 31	<b>The Natural Environment</b> Animism Pilgrimage and Place
<b>Week Eleven</b> Nov. 5 Nov. 7	<b>Agents of Change</b> Revitalization Movements and Cargo Cults (film)

<b>Week Twelve</b>	<b>Sex, Gender, and the Sacred</b>
Nov. 12	Fertility and Creation
Nov. 14	Gender and the Social Order
<b>Week Thirteen</b>	<b>Contemporary Issues</b>
Nov. 19	Proselytism and Conversion/New Age
Nov. 21	Sports as Religious Phenomenon
<b>Week Fourteen</b>	<b>Contemporary Issues</b>
Nov. 26	Monstrosity: Vampires, Werewolves, Cannibals, and Zombies
Nov. 28	No class—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
<b>Week Fifteen</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>
Dec. 3	<i>Second Exam</i>
Dec. 5	Conclusion and Evaluation and Presentations

**Final Exam Day: TUESDAY, Dec. 10, 3:20-5:20pm**

You will not have a final exam, but you will do your final presentations during this time slot.

**Chronology of Paper Due Dates:**

- Question Paper (**Oct 1**)
- Magical Material Culture Classification (**Oct 15**)
- Ritual Observation #1 Journal review (**Oct 22**)
- Ritual Observation Comparative Analysis Paper (**Nov 26**)
- Journal (**Dec 5**)
- Presentations (**Dec 5 & 10**)