GENERAL INFORMATION
PROFESSOR INFORMATION

Instructor:
Prof. Erin Weston
Office Hours: By appointment only
E-mail: Please use Blackboard course mail

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will examine the role of magic, witchcraft, and the supernatural in various religions and cultural contexts. Students will analyze magical beliefs, practices, and symbols. This course will employ interdisciplinary methods with an emphasis on anthropology. Various religious/magical practices and beliefs will be viewed from both etic and emic perspectives. While this course will look at a variety of source cultures, it will also emphasize the supernatural aspects found in contemporary religions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Students will be able to:
Express a general understanding of the role of magic, witchcraft, and the supernatural in various religions and cultural contexts.
Explain key theories on why magic has sustained itself despite shifts in science and technology, which theoretically should have made it obsolete according to some traditional scholars of religion.
Cross compare and interpret various magical practices, techniques, and symbols in a variety of cultural contexts.
Explore a variety of Neopagan traditions; such as, Wicca, Goddess traditions, and others.
Analyze magical practices from both etic and emic perspectives.
Articulate one's own beliefs about the existence of magic and the supernatural in the contemporary world.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

COURSE PREREQUISITES
For information about prerequisites, click here.
This online section does not require an on-campus meeting and/or exam.

TEXTBOOK
Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft
Ed. James R. Lewis
SUNY Press (1996)
ISBN-10: 0-7914-2890-7

Anthropology of Religion, Magic, and Witchcraft (2nd Edition)
Rebecca Stein & Philip L Stein
EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE
This is an online course, meaning that most of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:
Review the Start Here folder located in the course content.
Review the Policies Page as it is important to the quality of your education.
Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum under the Start Here folder.
Take the practice quiz under the Start Here folder to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
Interact online with instructor/s and peers and keep up with all assignments.
Review and follow the course calendar

COURSE DETAILS
GRADING
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
WEIGHT
Midterm Exam
25%
Final Exam
25%
Quiz Average (11 Quizzes - The lowest score will be dropped)
20%
Essay
20%
Discussion/ Student Biography Participation
10%
Total
100%

LETTER
GRADE
RANGE
LETTER
GRADE
RANGE
LETTER
GRADE
DISCUSSION FORUMS
There will be three discussion topics. The topics will be posted on "Discussion Topics" folder in the Course Content. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 10% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. All students are required to participate in all the three topics (at least 200 words). Discussions must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:59 pm on the Sunday which ends that particular lesson.

Once you have composed your original posting, take some time to carefully review other postings within your discussion group. Pick two that are most interesting to you and provide meaningful, detailed, and constructive feedback.

QUIZZES & EXAMS

Quizzes
There will be online quizzes covering each section. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped and your remaining quiz scores will be averaged together for a final quiz score worth 20% of your final grade. All quizzes consist of 10 multiple choice questions, and each question will be worth 10 points. A quiz will be available from Thursday 12:00am
till Sunday 11:59pm of the given week. Once you open a quiz, you will have 20 minutes to complete and submit it. You will have two attempts to take a quiz. The highest score will be counted.

Exams
There will be two non-cumulative exams based on the readings and materials covered throughout the course. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade. All exams consist of 50 multiple choice questions, and each question will be worth 2 points. Exams will be available for two days from 12:00am to 11:59pm. Once you open an exam, you will have 60 minutes to complete and submit it.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Online Learning Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements.

ESSAYS
There will be one essay assigned throughout the semester which is aimed at assisting in comprehension and retention of the ideas. This essay will be at least 1000 words long (4 pages double-spaced) and will be worth 20% of your grade. This is a formal academic essay and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies.

Submission: Students must submit their essays to Turnitin.com via Blackboard's Assignment Dropbox.

PEERMARK
In addition to writing your own essay, you will read three of your classmates' essays and provide commentary. This peer review process will help improve your writing and editing skills, as well as deepening your understanding of the subject matter. Turnitin.com will assign two of the three papers randomly and the third paper will be your choice.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
In addition to the completion of writing assignments, discussions, quizzes, and exams, a key requirement for successful completion of this course will be an open mind. Students are expected to exhibit respect to all religious traditions and peoples at all times. Thus, disrespectful or derisive commentary will not be tolerated in this course. Religion is, after all, a very personal and sensitive subject for many.

On the other hand, class participants can expect academic freedom to express their views. Although religion can be personal, this is an academic course taken for college credit and thus students are expected to examine the topics rigorously. Religion shall not be exempt from the scrutiny placed on any and all academic subjects.

COURSE CALENDAR

GETTING STARTED
May 6 – May 12
Course Introduction
Review and fully familiarize yourself with the course and site. Print and read the course syllabus and course calendar.
Obtain texts and read ahead for Lesson 1.
Student Introduction on discussion board due Sunday, May 12, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 1
May 6 – May 12
The Anthropological Study of Religion
Read
Chapter 1 - Stein & Stein

PowerPoints
"Chapter 1" & "The Nature of the Divine"

Additional Reading
"The Contemporary Neo-Pagan Revival" by Judy Harrow Lewis

Videos
"Culture Clash New World Meets Old: The Hunt for Society" (4:46) & "How to Study Cultures" (24:14)

Due
Discussion #1 – Due Sunday, May 12, 2013 by 11:59 pm
Ch. 1 Quiz – Thursday, May 9 – Sunday, May 12, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 2
May 6 – May 12
Myth, Symbolism, and Taboo
Read
Chapter 2 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 2

Additional Readings:
"Who on Earth is the Goddess?" by Morning Glory and Otter G'Zell- Lewis
"Emergent Nature Spirituality: An Examination of the Major Spiritual Contours of the Contemporary Pagan Wonderview" by Dennis D. Carpenter- Lewis

Videos
"Sketches of the World: In The Search of the Light" (26:12) & "Scrabble Creek" (5:39)

Due
Ch. 2 Quiz – Thursday, May 9 – Sunday, May 12, 2013 by 11:59 pm
LESSON 3
May 13 – May 19
Religious Symbols
Read
Chapter 3 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 3

Video
"Sketches of the World: The Winds of Mystery" (27:18)
Ch. 3 Quiz – Thursday, May 16 – Sunday, May 19, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 4
May 13 – May 19
Ritual
Read
Chapter 4 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 4

Videos
"Peruvian Blood" &
"Santeria Ritual"

Due
Ch. 4 Quiz – Thursday, May 16 – Sunday, May 19, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 5
May 20 – May 26
Altered States of Consciousness
Read
Chapter 5 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 5

Videos
"San Pedro Ceremony" (6:42),
"Possession" (1:55), &
"Phuket Pain Rituals"
Due
LESSON 6
May 20 – May 26
Religious Specialists
Read
Chapter 6 - Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 6 - Religious Specialists

Additional Reading
"Practitioners of Paganism and Wiccan Spirituality in Contemporary Society: A Review of the Literature" by Dennis D. Carpenter-Lewis
Videos
“Korean Shaman Kut " (14:48) & "Becky Fisher"
Due
Ch. 6 Quiz – Thursday, May 23 – Sunday, May 26, 2013 by 11:59 pm

MIDTERM WEEK
May 27 – June 2 (University closed May 27 for Memorial Day holiday)
Midterm Exam: Friday, May 31 – Sunday, June 2, 2013 by 11:55 pm

LESSON 7
June 3 – June 9
Magic and Divination
Read
Chapter 7 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 7

Additional Readings:
"As I Do Will, So Mote It Be: Magic as Metaphor in Neo-Pagan Witchcraft" by Sian Reid-Lewis
"Ritual is My Chosen Art Form: The Creation of Ritual as Folk Art Among Contemporary Pagans" by Sabina Magliocco-Lewis
"The Resurgence of Magical Religion as a Response to the Crisis of Modernity: A Postmodern Depth Psychological Perspective" by Adrian Ivakhiv-Lewis
Videos
"Mexican Witchcraft" (4:00) & "Divination" (0:41) & "Bolivian Healing"
Due
Discussion #3 – Due Sunday, June 9, 2013 by 11:59 pm
Ch. 7 Quiz – Thursday, June 6 – Sunday, June 9, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 8
June 3 – June 9
Ghosts, Souls, and Dead
Read
Chapter 8 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 8

Videos
“Mystic Lands Haiti: Dance of the Spirit” (25:00) & "Aghoris" (3:13
Due
Ch. 8 Quiz – Thursday, June 6 – Sunday, June 9, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 9
June 10 – June 16
Gods and Spirits
Read
Chapter 9 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint:
Chapter 9

Videos
"Ethiopian Healing" & “Indian Exorcism"
Due
Ch. 9 Quiz – Thursday, June 13 – Sunday, June 16, 2013 by 11:59 pm

LESSON 10
June 10 – June 16
Witchcraft
Read
Chapter 10 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 10
Additional Readings:
"Spells of Transformation: Categorizing Modern Neo-Pagan Witches" by Shelley Tsivia Rabinovich- Lewis
"Forging Magical Selves: Gendered Bodies and Ritual Fires at Neo-Pagan Festivals" by Sarah M. Pike- Lewis
"White Witches: Historic Fact and Romantic Fantasy" by James W. Baker- Lewis
Videos
"Wicca" (5:57) & “Zimbabwean Magic”
Due
Ch. 10 Quiz – Thursday, June 13 – Sunday, June 16, 2013 by 11:59 pm
Essay on Magic Due: Sunday, June 16, 2013 by 11:59 pm to Turnitin.com via Blackboard

LESSON 11
June 17 – June 20
The Search for New Meaning
Read
Chapter 11 – Stein & Stein

PowerPoint
Chapter 11
Additional Readings
"Embracing Jesus and the Goddess: Towards a Reconceptualization of Conversion to Syncretistic Religion" by Christel Johanna Manning- Lewis
Videos
"Circumcision" (1:58) & "XTC - Rave Culture" (14:47)
Due
Ch. 1 Quiz – Thursday, June 18 – Sunday, June 20, 2013 by 11:59 pm

FINAL EXAM
June 19 – June 21
Final Exam & Peermark Assignment

Peer Mark
Due: Thursday, June 20, 2013 by 11:59 pm

Final Exam
Wednesday, June 19 – Thursday, June 20, 2013 by 11:59 pm