

CONTEMPORARY SHAMANISMS

REL3938, RLG5937, ANT3930, ANG6930

MWF7: 1:55 - 2:45 . AND 101

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Objectives of Course: This course examines the varieties of religious experience that have come under the rubric of ‘shamanism’ and ‘shaman’. The course will include contemporary 'shamanisms' among indigenous peoples of South America, outer Asia, and North America; urbanized, non-indigenous movements, especially core shamanism and the neo-shamanic movements; and prophet movements of the Americas directly connected to shamanic cosmologies.

Part I presents an overview of **shamanic spiritualities** found throughout the world, the processes of becoming a shaman, altered states of consciousness and shamanic transformations, the relations of shamans to the cosmos, the long-range historical development of shamanic consciousness, historical consciousness and spiritual agency of shamans.

The next four units focus on:

II. **South American shamanisms;**

III. **Shamanisms of Outer Asia;**

IV. **Native North American shamanisms;**

V. **Core and Neo-shamanisms.**

While there is overlap amongst all of these units, there are clear features that distinguish one from the other, in regard to knowledge and powers, relations among human and other-than-human beings (spirits and deities, especially), and shamans’ relations to history, historical consciousness, and the state.

Each unit will be amply illustrated and discussed through readings, audio-visual material, including from the Professor’s own research and experiences. In addition, the course’s Canvas website has a Module section on Resources that contains several bibliographies and a selection of other relevant readings.

Course Readings: The most important books from which the readings for the course will be drawn, are:

Michael Harner, *Cave and Cosmos. Shamanic Encounters with Another Reality*. North Atlantic Books (paperback, \$19.95, Amazon.com); [Required]

Davi Kopenawa & Bruce Albert. *The Falling Sky. Words of a Yanomami Shaman*. 2013. Harvard University Press. Kindle book. \$23.99 [Required]

Manduhai Buyandelger. *Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Memory, and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia*. 2013. University of Chicago Press| Kindle eBook. \$19.25 [Required]

Ake Hultkrantz, *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama*. Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997.[Required]

Piers Vitebsky. *Shamanism*. 2001. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 2001.[Required]

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, FILMS AND EXAMS:

01/07: course presentation and introduction to the readings;

UNIT I: "THE WORLD'S OLDEST SPIRITUAL TRADITION"

01/09: Parameters of Shamanism - "shamans" are spiritual practitioners

Readings: York, "Shamanism – Traditional" & "Urban Shamanism", in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (hereafter *ERN*), v.2, pp. 1532-37 [pdf in Modules];

Graham Harvey, "Introduction" [pdf in Modules]

01/11: Parameters (cont.)

Readings: Vitebsky, Introduction and "The Shamanic Worldview", pp. 6-26; [pdf in Modules]

01/14: Diversity and Comparisons

Readings: Regional Traditions" pp. 26-51 [pdf in Modules]

01/16: Becoming A Shaman.

Readings: Vitebsky, *Shamanism*, pp. 52-95; [pdf in Modules]

01/18: The Shamans' Performance

Readings: Vitebsky, *Shamanism*, pp. 96-127 [pdf in Modules]

01/21: NO CLASS – Martin Luther King Day

01/23: The problematic of shamanism

Reading: Vitebsky, *Shamanism*, pp. 128-160 [pdf in Modules]

UNIT II: AMAZONIAN SHAMANISMS - THE YANOMAMI

01/25: Becoming Other – Acquiring The Shaman's Gaze

Reading: Kopenawa & Albert, "Part I. Becoming Other", pp. 17-33;

01/28: Becoming Other – Acquiring The Shaman's Gaze

Reading: Kopenawa & Albert, "Part I. Becoming Other", pp. 34-74;

Film: https://www.4shared.com/music/Lg2sFLWDBa/Xapori_Levi_Mateu.html

01/30: Becoming Other – Acquiring The Shaman’s Gaze

Reading: Kopenawa & Albert, “Part I. Becoming Other”, pp. 75-112;

02/01: Becoming Other – Acquiring The Shaman’s Gaze

Reading: Kopenawa & Albert, “Part I. Becoming Other”, pp. 113-144;

02/04: Becoming Other – The Shaman’s Performance

Video: “Xapiri” - B. Albert, 2012 •Experimental film/Documentary •54 mins

<https://archive.org/details/xapiri>

02/06: Spiritual Ecology of the Shamans

Reading: Kopenawa & Albert, “The Spirit of the Forest”, & “The Shamans’ Death” pp. 381-411;

02/08: Symbolic Efficacy of a Shaman’s Performance

Reading: Langdon, E Jean, “The Symbolic Efficacy of Rituals: From Ritual to Performance” in Wright, RM, ed. *Religion, Medicine and Healing*, 2016. Kendallhunt. [pdf on website];

UNIT III: SHAMANISM OF OUTER ASIA

02/11: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender, and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, Introduction;

02/13: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, ONE. Mobile Histories;

02/15: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, TWO. Technologies of Forgetting;

02/18: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, THREE, Genealogies of Misfortune;

02/20: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, FOUR. Thriving and Silenced Stories;

02/22: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, FOUR. Thriving and Silenced Stories;

02/25: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, FIVE. Ironies...;

02/27: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, SIX. Persuasion and Power;

03/01: Shamans' Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Reading: Buyandelger, SEVEN. Incomplete Lives;

03/02-09: SPRING BREAK

03/11: Shamans' Historical Consciousness, Gender and Agency

Video: "In Pursuit of the Siberian Shaman", Kanopy Streaming, 2014

Reading: "Buryat Shamanism: Home and Hearth — A Territorialism of the Spirit", Eva Jane Neumann Fridman, 1999 [pdf in Modules]

UNIT IV: NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN MEDICINE POWERS

03/13: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, pp. 1-22;

03/15: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 2;

03/18: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 3;

03/20: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 4;

03/22: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 5;

03/25: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 6;

03/27: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 7;

03/29: Health and Medicine in Native North American Traditions

Reading: Hultkrantz, ch. 8 & Conclusions

04/01: Navaho Healing

Reading:

04/03: Haudenosaunee False Face Medicine Societies

Reading:

04/05: Pomo Healing

Reading:

04/08: Lakota Healing

Reading:

UNIT V. Core and Neo-Shamanism

04/10: Antecedents and History

Readings: Kocku von Stuckrad, “Re-enchanting Nature: Modern Western Shamanism and Nineteenth-Century Thought”, *JAAR*, 2002; Michael York, “Castaneda, Carlos...”, *ERN*, v. 1, 272-3; [pdfs in Module]

04/12: The Work of Michael Harner

Reading: Kocku von Stuckrad, “Harner, Michael – and the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, *ERN*, v. 1, 743-4; Joan Townsend, “Core Shamanism and Neo-Shamanism” (pdf in Modules);

Video: *Way of The Shaman*- Introduction to Harner’s work (from FSS video archives)

04/15: Other Realities

Readings: *Cave and Cosmos*, M. Harner, Chapters 1-3;

04/17: Other Realities

Readings: *Cave and Cosmos*, M. Harner, Chapters 4-6;

04/19: Other Realities

Readings: *Cave and Cosmos*, M. Harner, Chapters 7-9;

04/22: Other Realities

Readings: *Cave and Cosmos*, M. Harner, Chapters 10-12;

04/24: **CONCLUSION OF THE COURSE**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- There are five (5) major Units in the course. Each of the Units is worth 20 points. Each student will write a paper (3 - 5 pp.) about .
- A Reflection Paper on one of the films (3-5 pp.) to be aired during the semester (10 points).
- Class participation (10 points)

Your grade will be based on the sum total of the above assignments.

Grade Scale:

A: 94 - 100

A-: 90 - 93

B+: 87 - 89

B: 83 - 86

B-: 80 - 82

C+: 77 - 79

C: 73 - 76

C-: 70 - 72

D+: 67 - 69

D: 63 - 66

D-: 60 - 62

E: below 60

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For UF's policies on grade points and grading, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

REGULATIONS OF THE COURSE:

1. **Plagiarism or cheating:** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive a grade of zero on the assignment in question and will fail the course. In addition, they will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action.

See

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm>[http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm)

hm for more information on UF policies.

2. Incompletes are strongly discouraged and will be given only when students who have finished most of the assignments satisfactorily cannot complete the final requirements due to unforeseen events. If this is the case, students must arrange for the incomplete before the end of the semester.
3. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom. **Please turn phones and pagers off during class. Texting and all non-class related use of laptops, iPads, etc. are not allowed and will be penalized if done repeatedly.**
4. Students with Disabilities. Students requesting classroom accommodation or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation or special consideration.