

## CONTEMPORARY SHAMANISMS

**REL3938 (037E), RLG5937 (1018H), ANT3930 (212A), ANG6930 (212B):**

MWF6: 12:50 - 1:40

MAT103

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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 traditional peoples; urbanized, non-indigenous movements, especially core shamanism and the neo-shamanic movements; and prophet movements of the Americas directly connected to shamanic cosmologies. The societies we will be focusing our attention on in the course of the semester include: Amazonian; Central American; Asian; and North American.

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. **Amazonian and other South American shamanisms, including Ayahuasca shamanisms**; III. **Asian shamanisms**; IV. **Priestly knowledge and powers**; 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 regards to knowledge and powers, relations among human and other-than-human beings (spirits and deities, especially), and relations to history and historical consciousness.

Each unit will be amply illustrated and discussed through readings, audio-visual material from the Professor’s own research and experiences. Slides, films, tape recordings, CDs from that research will be used during class. In addition, the course’s Canvas website has a 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:

1. Michael Harner, *Cave and Cosmos. Shamanic Encounters with Another Reality*, 2013. North Atlantic Books (paperback, \$19.95, Amazon.com); [Required]

2. N. Whitehead & R. Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*. 2004, Duke. (paperback, used \$8.24 on Amazon.com); [Required]

3. Pedro Pitarch. *The Jaguar and the Priest. An Ethnography of Tzeltal Souls*. Austin: University of Texas Press. 2010; [Required]

4. R. Wright, ed. *Religion, Medicine and Healing. Contemporary Perspectives*. 2014. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt. [Recommended]

All required and recommended books are on Reserve at Smathers Library. Copies of articles and book chapters have been uploaded to the course Canvas website.

### **Schedule of Classes, Readings, Films and Exams:**

01/06: course presentation and introduction to the readings;

#### UNIT I: "The World's Oldest Spiritual Tradition"

01/08: Parameters Of Shamanism - Definitional Questions.

York, "Shamanism – Traditional" & "Urban Shamanism", in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature* (hereafter ERN), v.2, pp. 1532-37 (on website);

Piers Vitebsky, "Shamanism", pp. 55-67;

01/11: Parameters (cont.)

Graham Harvey, "General Introduction", *Shamanism: A Reader* (2002), pp. 1-20 (books.google.com - enter Graham Harvey, *Shamanism: A Reader* (2002))

01/13: Becoming A Shaman.

"You Will Save Many Lives", *Shamanism Annual*, 2011 (pdf copy on course website);

01/15: Poetics of the Shamans' Performance

Carol Laderman, "The Poetics of Healing in Malay Shamanistic Performances" (1996) – article on Canvas course website;

01/18: **NO CLASS** – Martin Luther King Day

01/20: Altering States Of Consciousness.

J. Langdon, “Dau: Shamanic Power in Siona Religion and Medicine”, in Langdon (ed.), *Portals of Power*, pp. 41-62;

Gerhard Baer, “The One Intoxicated by Tobacco”, in Langdon (ed.), *Portals of Power*, pp. 79-102;

01/22: Shamanism And Cosmologies.

J. Overing, “Shaman as a Maker of Worlds”: Nelson Goodman in the Amazon, *Man* (25), 602-19. Pdf on course website;

01/25: Overview of Religious Specialists – Powers and Knowledge

Religious Specialists table (doc on course website)

01/27: Shamanisms in the “New Age”

Kocku von Stuckrad, “Reenchanting Nature: Modern Western Shamanism and Nineteenth-Century Thought”, *JAAR*, 2002 (pdf copy on course website)

01/29: Discussion of Unit 1

**Written Take-Home Exam on UNIT I published on website; exams are due (upload or attach them) on February 03 by midnight.**

UNIT II: Amazonian and other South American Shamanisms

02/01: Becoming Other – The Shaman’s Body

“The Making of a Jaguar Shaman”, from *Mysteries of the Jaguar Shamans* (first half of chapter, on course website)

02/03: Becoming Other – The Shaman’s Performance

“The Making of a Jaguar Shaman”, from Chapter 2, *Mysteries* (second half of chapter)

02/05: The Shaman’s Spirits

“Words of Omama”, Davi Kopenawa & Bruce Albert, *The Falling Sky*, (pdf on website)

02/08: Spiritual Ecology of the Shamans

Chapter 8, The Sky and the Forest, Kopenawa & Albert, *The Falling Sky*, (pdf on website);

02/10: Shamans’ Historical Consciousness and Agency

Ana Mariella Bacigalupo, “Mapuche struggles to obliterate dominant history: mythohistory, spiritual agency and shamanic historical consciousness in southern Chile”, 2013 (pdf on website)

## II A. Of Sorcery and Salvation

02/12: Dark Shamans

Carlos Fausto, “A Blend of Blood and Tobacco. Shamans and Jaguars... *In Darkness and Secrecy*. 2004. (pdf copy on course website)

02/15: Sorcery and Anti-Sorcery Movements

RMW, “The Wicked and the Wise Men”, in Whitehead and Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*. 2004. (pdf copy on course website)

02/17: Sorcery and the Social Order

Fernando Santos-Granero, “The Enemy Within”, In Whitehead & Wright, *In Darkness and Secrecy*.

## II B. Ayahuasca shamanisms and neo-shamanisms

02/19: Indigenous shamans of Ecuador

Norman Whitten, “Soul Vine Shaman” (pdf on course website)

02/22: Experiences of an anthropologist turned shaman

Michael Harner, "The Way of the Shaman" (on pdf website)

02/24: Amazonian neo-shamanism

Film: "Ayahuasca, Vine of the Soul" (documentary film)

### III. Asian Shamanisms

02/26: Shamans and Nature in Siberia

Mihaly Hoppal, "Nature Worship in Siberian Shamanism" (pdf text on course website);

03/07: A Shamanistic Séance

Larry Peters, "The Man Chinni Exorcism Rite of Tamang Shamans", *Shamans' Drum*  
(Pdf on course website);

**02/27 – 03/05: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES.**

03/09: Yolmo Shamans

Robert Desjarlais, "Presence", Ch. 5 in Laderman and Roseman (pdf on website);

03/11: Korean Shamans

Laurel Kendall, "Korean Shamans and the definition of "religion": a view from the grass roots" (pdf on website)

### UNIT IV: Priestly Knowledge

03/14: The Mayan Priests

Pedro Pitarch, *The Jaguar And The Priest*;

03/16: The Mayan Priests

Pitarch, *Jaguar and the Priest*;

03/18: The Mayan Priests

Pitarch, *Jaguar and the Priest*;

03/21: The Mayan Priests

Pitarch, *Jaguar and the Priest*;

03/23: Comparative: Kogi *Mama* of the Sierra Nevada

Oyuela-Caycedo, Augusto, "Ritual Paraphernalia and the Foundation of Religious Temples...", 2006 (pdf on course website);

03/25:

Film: *Aluma*

03/28:

Film Discussion

03/30: TBD

04/01: Discussion Of Units III & IV;

UNIT V: Core and Neo-Shamanism

04/04: Background

Michael York, "Castaneda, Carlos...", ERN, v. 1, 272-3;

Kocku von Stuckrad, "Harner, Michael – and the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, ERN, v. 1, 743-4;

04/06: Core vs. Neo Shamanism

Joan Townsend, "Core Shamanism and Neo-Shamanism" (pdf on website);

04/08: Chapters 1-3

*Cave And Cosmos*, M. Harner;

04/11: Chapters 4-6

*Cave And Cosmos*, M. Harner,

04/13: Chapters 7-9

*Cave And Cosmos*, M. Harner;

04/15: Chapters 10-12

*Cave and Cosmos*, M. Harner;

04/18: Comparative

“Comparative Table...” (on website)

04/20: Final Discussion

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Three (3) reflection papers.** The three papers count for 60% of the final grade.
2. A written **take-home** on Unit 1 = 30%.
3. Class participation (10%). Students are expected to attend all classes and complete assigned readings prior to each class meeting. Continued absence will not be tolerated; unexcused absence will be penalized: 2 grade points will be taken off the final grade for unexcused absence. More than 3 unexcused absences will lead to administrative withdrawal from the course; Pop-quizzes are part of class participation and will be administered whenever the Professor considers them necessary.

### **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.htm> 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. **Make-up exams and quizzes** will be given only under very special circumstances, such as a medical emergency. In that case, students must bring a doctor's note.

4. 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.**

5. **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.