

Introduction to Haitian Vodou

HAI 3930 (02H8) | REL 3938 (1B99) | LAS 3930 (1C00) | ANT 3930 (1092) | AFA 3930 (17FD)

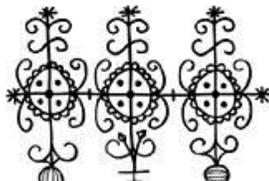
Fall 2014, M/W/F, 5th period; class location: LIT 0201

Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

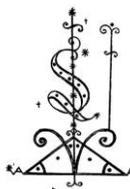
University of Florida, Gainesville



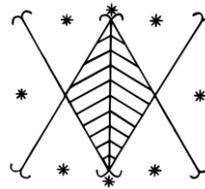
Legba



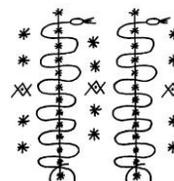
Marasa



Loko



Ayizan



Danbala & Ayida

Professor:

Ben Hebblethwaite, Ph.D.

Office location:

Dauer Hall, 363

Office hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4th period (10:40-11:30 am) and by appointment

Contact information:

hebble@ufl.edu

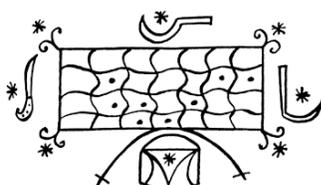
Tel: 352-273-3762

Class website:

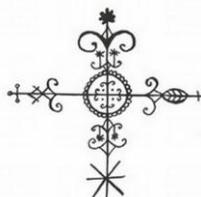
<http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/hebble/>

Short class description

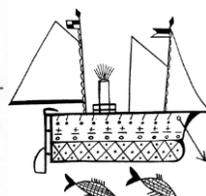
Vodou is a coherent and systematic religion and way of life for millions of people in Haiti and its diaspora which includes Miami, New York, Montreal and Paris, among other places. This class explores the structure, content, language, history, rituals, practices, beliefs, origins, temples, songs, rhythms, art, mythology, literature, philosophy, and culture of Vodou in Haiti, the Americas, and Africa.



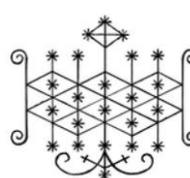
Zaka



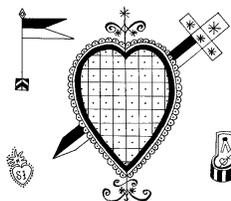
Simbi



Agwe Tawoyo



Ogou



Èzili Dantò

Class scope and objectives:

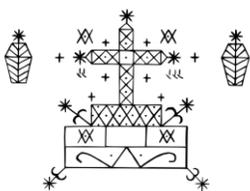
Vodou is a coherent and systematic religion and way of life for millions of people in Haiti. The Atlantic slave trade extended the ancient traditional religions of West and Central Africa to Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Haiti, the United States, and beyond where they fused into creolized and synthesized religious systems. In recent decades Haitian immigrants have established Vodou temples in the United States, especially in Miami and New York. In Haiti and the U.S. Vodou temples are places of profound spiritual, social, and cultural expression that provide meaning and cohesion to the lives of Vodouists. Vodou ceremonies last for several hours; the highly choreographed ceremonies that include singing,

drumming, dancing, ritualizing the feeding of the lwa through libations and animal sacrifice, and the appearance of the *lwa* ‘spirits’ in the bodies of worshipers constitute the heart of Vodou practice.

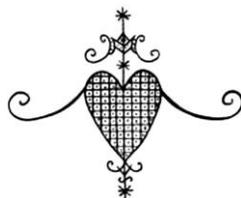
Vodou religion robustly preserves African historical and cultural traditions. Nevertheless, an excess of negative and distorted representations beleaguer Vodou traditions in the Americas. These distorted representations grow out of European colonialism, race-based slavery, and a popular culture with a long history of disrespecting and exploiting African traditions. One reason Vodou is easily victimized is because little Vodou sacred literature is available in published form in contrast to religions like Christianity, Islam, or Judaism. Following in the footsteps of Haitian scholars working in Haitian Creole and French, our *Vodou Songs in Haitian Creole and English*, strives to preserve, translate, and interpret Vodou source materials and collect and define Vodou terminology. As a result of these efforts, from a comparative religions perspective, Vodou emerges as an organized and systematic religion fully endowed with the richness, complexity, and depth expressed by other religions.

This class provides an introduction to this central Haitian religion and culture. The class will examine the Vodou system, theology and philosophy, mythology, songs, dances, rhythms, rituals, traditions, objects, structure, and culture. In addition, Vodou’s important intersection with painting, proverbs, music and culture will also be examined. Understanding the roots of Vodou in West Africa (primarily Benin, Togo, and Nigeria) and Central Africa (primarily the Kongo and Angola) is another important goal of this class. The class primarily strives to situate Vodou from a Vodouist perspective. Sound recordings, audiovisual footage, and photographs are a regular part of the class because they provide students with perspectives on Vodou that engage all the senses. This class explores the form these ancient African Traditional Religions and cultures take in Haiti and it explores how Vodou has spread into North America.

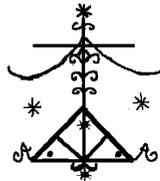
The objective of this class is to help students develop an educated understanding of Haitian Vodou. To do so, the class format involves lectures, slide-presentations (art slides), daily student presentations, classroom discussions in pairs, class discussions and debate, films, photographs, and music. The class will have no more than **7 quizzes (most of which will be pop-quizzes), one midterm, one final, and 2,000 words of essay writing (Gordon Rule)**. The textbooks provide the background knowledge needed to follow lectures, participate in discussions and pair-work, and to prepare for and perform well on the presentation, quizzes, examinations, and the writing assignments. Reading the assigned passages carefully while noting key spirits and their traits and history, traditions and ideas, events, objects, and individuals is a good way to study the material. Also, the assigned readings are your key sources for your paper and they must be cited and included in your bibliography.



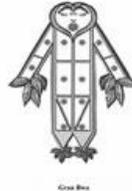
Bawon Samdi



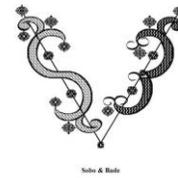
Èzili Freda



Ogou Feray



Granbwa



Sobo & Badè

Required readings (books you need to buy for this class):

1. Deren, Maya. 1970 [1953]. *Divine Horsemen: the Living Gods of Haiti*. Kingston, NY: McPherson & Company.
2. Hebblethwaite, Benjamin. 2012. *Vodou Songs in Haitian Creole and English*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
3. Beaubrun, Mimerose. 2013. *Nan dòmi: An initiates Journey into Haitian Vodou*. Translated by D.J. Walker. San Francisco: City Lights
3. The Vodou Archive: www.dloc.com/vodou

Materials Ben will share (time-permitting):

Films

Of men and gods (homosexuality and Vodou), *Real Voodoo*, *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (Haiti-sploitation)

Music

Racine Mapou de Azor, Chandèl, Boukman Eksperyans, Wawa & Racine Kanga, Toto Bissainthe, Koudjay, Tokay, Kanpèch, Boukan Ginen, Ram, Racine Figuier, Mambo Diela, Rasin Okan, Ragiloje, Ayabonmbe, Christopher Laroche, etc.

Grade distribution:

- (1) 5 % = 1 Class presentation

In the course of the semester students present one 8-minute presentation + 3 minutes for questions. You are free to select the topic of your presentation.

However, avoid presenting on something that has already been addressed by other students. You may either select your own topic or you may present on part of the reading covered on the day you present. You are required to **create a PowerPoint presentation with images (5 slides maximum)**. Graded for clarity; organization; preparation; effectiveness of your communication (are you connecting with us? are we convinced?); insight of your critique. Memorize your material; do not read off of a sheet of paper!).

- (2) 25 % = Essay: 2,000 words total.

(5% for outline, 15% for first draft, 5% for final draft).

- (3) 15 % = As many as 7 quizzes (most are pop-quizzes).

- (4) 25 % = Participation; attendance; punctuality, courtesy, attentiveness; respect for learning environment; etiquette; insights (please, no phones, no texting, no surfing on the internet, and inappropriate actions).

- (5) 30 % = 2 Exams (15% each)

!!! Academic honesty/professionalism statement !!!

Last semester I had one student cheat on a Scantron quiz, two students submit falsified medical letters (yes, faculty call the doctor's number), and two disruptive students who regularly engaged in rude private conversations. All such cases are sent to the Dean of Students and result in the lowering of the violator's grade or failure in addition to sanctions from the Dean of Students. The instructor can lower a grade as appropriate if students disregard UF policy.

General Education Learning Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

- **International** – In this class we will learn about the values, attitudes and norms that shape the cultural differences of peoples who live in countries other than the United States. We will learn about the roles of geographic location and socioeconomic factors on the lives of citizens in other countries. Haiti and Benin, West Africa, will be our primary international focuses.

In this class you will analyze and evaluate your cultural norms and values in relation to those held by citizens in other countries.

- **Humanities** – In this class we will learn about the history, underlying theory and methodologies used within the disciplines of Vodou Studies, Religious Studies, and Haitian Creole and Haitian Studies.

In this class you will identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the disciplines of Haitian Language and Cultural Studies, Haitian civilization, Vodou Studies, Religious Studies and World Religions. You will approach issues and problems within these disciplines from multiple perspectives.

You will learn to communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the discipline, individually and/or in groups.

Class Policies

Late or makeup work policy

Work may be turned in up to one week late for a **10% penalty**. Work that is turned in late with an excuse letter (letterhead & phone number required) that conforms to UF policy is acceptable and not penalized. Work that is turned in **after I have collected** the assignment, even if it is during the same class on the day it is due, is penalized **5%**. Note for your essay you must submit both a paper version and an electronic MS Word version via elearning. **Work is generally collected at the beginning of class.**

Attendance/comportment policy

Students are expected to attend class *every period*. Athletes must be excused by the athletics department. **Unexcused absences** and **tardiness** result in a lowering of the participation grade. Missing class can affect a student's ability to perform in other categories of the syllabus (such as missed quizzes or late penalties).

If a student *is* absent and the absence is excusable, he or she is expected to contact the instructor with the reason for his or her absence within 48 hours. Medical treatment or a personal or family crisis are acceptable reasons for an excused absence: *a note including a contact phone number and legible letterhead is required*.

If you arrive late, you are considered absent (but you are still welcome to class). If you are late, please enter discreetly at the back.

Leaving in the middle of class to go to the bathroom or answer a phone is not okay, unless it is an emergency. If you do leave in the middle of class, you will be considered **absent** for the day, resulting in the lowering of your grade.

Engaging in distracted forms of behavior like **texting, emailing, reading the newspaper or chatting inappropriately with other students is not acceptable.** Talking during listening activities is not okay. If you do engage in such behavior, you will be considered **absent** for the day, resulting in the lowering of your grade.

If you disregard UF policy, the instructor reserves the right to ask you to leave the class, to make an appointment with the Dean of Students, and to engage in a conflict resolution procedure. (See the Dean of Students' website about this: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/resolution/>). The instructor can lower your grade if you do not comply with UF and class policies.

Examinations

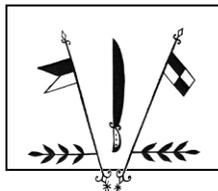
Class quizzes and exams are based upon readings, lectures and presentations. Students are expected to review their notes and readings prior to these evaluations.

Get e-published in our new peer-reviewed electronic journal

The Journal of the Vodou Archive

<http://www.dloc.com/vodou>

Editor-in-chief: Benjamin Hebblethwaite



Publishing in academia is highly competitive. *The Journal of the Vodou Archive* will only include the best essays: only the top essays will be invited for e-publication in the Journal of the Vodou Archive.

Essays will be selected on the basis of the strength of the writing, insightfulness, creativity and scholarship, organization and style, and the depth of the research and their use of sources.

Paper – (Read carefully!)

Students are expected to write a 1 page **outline** and, once the outline is approved, a 2,000 word research paper; the **bibliography is not counted among those 2,000 words.** Both submissions must

use **.12 Times New Roman, be double spaced, with have 1 inch columns on all sides. Your outline must be an outline. I will not accept a “prose” paper proposal. Below is an example of an outline format:**

- Title of your essay
- I. Introduction
- II. Main topic 1 (write a complete sentence for each topic and subtopic)
 - a. Subtopic 1
 - b. Subtopic 2
 - c. Subtopic 3
- III. Main topic 2
 - a. Subtopic 1
 - b. Subtopic 2
 - c. Subtopic 3
- IV. Main topic 3
 - a. Subtopic 1
 - b. Subtopic 2
 - c. Subtopic 3
- V. Conclusion

Include at least 5 refereed sources (i.e. books or articles; UF online database books and articles are OK; but NOT the open access WWW). Your 5 sources must also include the 3 required readings in this class. The required readings should form a foundation for your paper topic. You are free to select your own topic.

Make sure your essay is divided into **sections** with **section headings**. Do not submit a 7 page paper with no sections or section headings. Essays of that kind are often rushed and poorly organized.

Citations must be accompanied by appropriate bibliographical references. Your paper will be graded based on the basis of the originality of the ideas, on the clarity and concision of your writing and editing and the adherence to the requirements given above and below in the reference and bibliography guideline. **You need to show that you have carefully read the class books, found and read additional sources**, reflected on them and added your unique interpretation of events, individuals, ideas and phenomena. Aim to write a scholarly paper in which you strive to produce an objective and accurate analysis of your topic. **Avoid advancing personal ideological/religious preferences and try to take an empirical approach where the facts are considered. There is no judgment of “goodness” or “badness” in academic writing on religion. Instead, we are interested in empirical/factual representations and analyses that are based on evidence. You may draw your own inferences (a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning) but avoid judging the religion. You may compare Vodou with other religions but avoid doing so in order to advance a personal religious conviction.**

Note you must turn your draft and your final essay in via e-learning. The version you submit via e-learning will be submitted to “Turn it in” plagiarism software. Copy and pasting from online or published sources is unacceptable and results in failure.

Avoid citing at all costs. I recommend you explain the author’s ideas in your own words, but always give her or him credit for the idea, i.e. (Dubois 2012:213).

Please use Chicago citation and bibliographical style.

You must indicate the word count below your name on the first page. You may exceed the 2000 word requirement by as many as 50 words.

Failure to follow the formatting guidelines explained in the paragraphs above will result in the lowering of your grade by as much as 5%.

Reference and Bibliography Guidelines

In the text:

- (a) Zéphir (1997: 223) advocates the instruction of Haitian Creole in the United States' secondary education system.
- (b) Misclassifying Creole-speakers as African Americans fails to properly account for linguistic and cultural differences (Zéphir 1997: 223).

In the bibliography:

Zéphir, Flore. 1997. Haitian Creole Language and Bilingual Education in the United States: Problem, Right or Resource? Article in *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 223-37

a. Book:

Author. Year of publication. *Title of book*. City of publisher: Publisher.

b. Article in journal, magazine, etc.:

Author. Year of publication. Title of article. Article in *Name of source*, Volume/number of issue, page numbers.

See the bibliography for further examples.

Academic Honesty Guidelines

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. An academic honesty offense is defined as the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action.

Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines include but are not limited to:

Cheating. The improper taking or tendering of any information or material which shall be used to determine academic credit. Taking of information includes copying graded homework assignments from another student; working with another individual(s) on graded assignments or homework; looking or attempting to look at notes, a text, or another student's paper during an exam.

Plagiarism. The attempt to represent the work of another as the product of one's own thought, whether the other's work is oral or written (including electronic), published or unpublished. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, quoting oral or written materials without citation on written materials or in oral presentations; submitting work produced by an on-line translation service or the translation feature of an on-line dictionary as your own.

Misrepresentation. Any act or omission with intent to deceive a teacher for academic advantage. Misrepresentation includes lying to a teacher to increase your grade; lying or misrepresenting facts when confronted with an allegation of academic honesty.

Bribery, Conspiracy, Fabrication. For details see below.

The UF Honor Code states:

"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

On all work submitted for credit the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action according to the judicial process.

For more details go to: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities must register with the Dean of Students office. Contact the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of the Disability Resources Program at:

P202 Peabody Hall

Gainesville, FL 32611-5055

Phone (352) 392-1261 (V), 392-3008 (TDD)

For stress, emotional and psychological support, please contact the Counseling Center at:

301 Peabody Hall

Phone (352) 392-1575

Or: www.counsel.ufl.edu

If you need this syllabus in an alternate format, please speak to Ben.

Syllabus for Introduction to Haitian Vodou, Fall, 2014

HAI 3930 (012A) | REL 3938 (03DD) | LAS 3930 (027A) | ANT 3930 (1383) | AFA 3930 (1383)

Instructor: Benjamin Hebblethwaite, Ph.D. **SIGN UP FOR A PRESENTATION AND
Languages, Literatures and Cultures MAKE SURE YOU WRITE IT DOWN
University of Florida, Gainesville IN YOUR OWN CALENDAR!!!!**

1

Monday, August 25 Syllabus and opening presentation
Wednesday, August 27 **Hebblethwaite**, 1-10; **Deren** 15-20 (“Introductory Note”).
(1) _____
Friday, August 29 **Hebblethwaite**, 11-23; **Deren**, 21-27 (2) _____

Monday, September 1

LABOR DAY: No class

Wednesday, September 3 **Hebblethwaite**, 24-37; **Deren**, 27-33 (3) _____
Friday, September 5 **Hebblethwaite**, 37-51 (Historical Songs); **Deren**, 34-38;
(4) _____

3

Monday, September 8 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY – NO CLASSES
Wednesday, September 10 **Hebblethwaite**, 53-71 (Jacques Roumain’s, Werner Jaegerhuber’s, and
Jean Price-Mars’s Songs); **Deren**, 38-41 (5) _____
Friday, September 12 **Hebblethwaite**, 73-86 (Milo Marcelin’s Songs); **Deren**, 41-46
(6) _____

4

Monday, September 15 **Hebblethwaite**, 86-108 (Milo Marcelin’s Songs); **Beaubrun**, 31-45
(7) _____
Wednesday, September 17 **Hebblethwaite**, 108-125 (Milo Marcelin’s Songs); **Beaubrun**, 47-60
(8) _____
Friday, September 19 **Hebblethwaite**, 127-134 (Laura Boulton’s Songs); **Deren**, 46-53;
(9) _____

5

Monday, September 22 **Hebblethwaite**, 125-145 (Laura Boulton’s Songs); **Beaubrun**, 61-81;
(10) _____
Wednesday, September 24 **Hebblethwaite**, 147-160 (J.L.’s Songs); **Deren**, 54-61;
(11) _____
Friday, September 26 **Hebblethwaite**, 161-170 (J.L.’s Songs); **Deren**, 61-71
(12) _____

6

Monday, September 29 **Hebblethwaite**, 171-184 (J.L.’s Songs); **Deren**, 71-78;
(13) _____
Wednesday, October 1 **Hebblethwaite**, 184-187 (Hebblethwaite’s Songs); **Deren**, 78-85 (also
read the notes); (14) _____
Friday, October 3 **Hebblethwaite**, 189-197; **Deren**, 86-96; (15) _____

7

Monday, October 6 **Hebblethwaite**, 198-204; **Deren**, 96-100; (16) _____
Wednesday, October 8 **Beaubrun 82-103**; (17) _____;

Friday, October 10	Beaubrun, 105-118; Deren, 100-114; (18) _____
8	
Monday, October 13	Beaubrun, 119-138; Deren, 114-130; Presentation day: (19)_____;
Wednesday, October 15	<u>Midterm Exam</u>
Friday, October 17	HOME COMING: No class
9	
Monday, October 20	Beaubrun, 139-158; Deren, 130-137 ; (20) _____
Wednesday, October 22	Beaubrun, 157-166; Deren, 137-145; (21) _____
Friday, October 24	Beaubrun, 167-187 ; Deren, 145-150; (22) _____
10	
Monday, October 27	<u>Gordon Rule Paper Outline (1 page double spaced);</u> Beaubrun, 188-198; Deren, 151-158; (23) _____
Wednesday, October 29	Deren, 158-171; (24) _____
Friday, October 31	Beaubrun, 199-214
11	
Monday, November 3	Beaubrun, 215-228; (25) _____
Wednesday, November 5	Deren, 171-187 (26) _____
Friday, November 7	Deren, 188-202 (read all notes); (27) _____
12	
Monday, November 10	Deren, 202-224; (28) _____
Wednesday, November 12	Beaubrun, 229-240; (29) _____
Friday, November 14	Beaubrun 241-252; (30) _____
13	
Monday, November 17	Gordon Rule Essay Due (2,000 words); Deren, 225-246; (31)_____
Wednesday, November 19	Beaubrun 253-259; (32) _____
Friday, November 21	Beaubrun 261-269; (33) _____
14	
Monday, November 24	Deren, 247-262; (34) _____
Wednesday, November 26	THANKSGIVING: No class
Friday, November 28	THANKSGIVING: No class
15	
Monday, December 1	<i>Special Days: TBA</i>
Wednesday, December 3	<i>Special Days: TBA</i>
Friday, December 5	<i>Special Days: TBA</i>
16	
Monday, December 8	<i>Special Days: TBA</i>
Wednesday, December 10	<u>FINAL EXAM</u>: OPEN NOTE, OPEN BOOK; 2 HOURS IN LENGTH; Submitted electronically

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.