

# Assemblies of God Theological Seminary

## MCS 537 FOLK RELIGION

### COURSE SYLLABUS

Warren B. Newberry, D.Th.  
Visiting Professor of Missions  
Time: 7:30-8:45 a.m. Tuesday & Thursday  
Email: [wnewberry@agts.edu](mailto:wnewberry@agts.edu)  
Phone: 417-268-1069

Fall 2004

### COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

An exploration of differences between formal premises and everyday practices in religions of the world, with a focus on analyzing religious systems. It will highlight primitive religion, magic, ritual theories of myth, worldview, spirits, ancestors, divination, witchcraft, shamanism, and related phenomena. Selected groups are considered to illustrate the analytical methodology.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course, the student should be able to:

- Contrast the differences of folk and formal religion.
- Categorize the roles and functions of religion in society and culture.
- Describe how folk religions develop and change.
- Summarize the key concepts and theories used in the study of folk religion.
- Critique religious systems while ministering to them in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Apply his/her understanding and knowledge in the presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these religious systems.

### TEXTBOOKS

#### Required

Hiebert, Paul, R. Daniel Shaw & Tite Tiénou. *Understanding Folk Religion*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999.

Lehmann, Arthur C. and James E. Myers (eds). *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: An Anthropological Study of the Supernatural 5<sup>th</sup> edition*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001.

#### Recommended Textbooks

Lambeck, Michael (ed). *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2002.

Bowie, Fiona. *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000.

### **BASIC OUTLINE**

Phenomenology of religion  
Folk and formal religions  
Theories and controversies  
Culture and Worldview  
Spirit Possession  
Shamanism  
Magic, and witchcraft  
Ritual, Myth, and Taboos  
Ethno-medicine and healing  
Ancestors, ghosts and souls  
Christian responses: Theological and Missiological

### **METHODOLOGY**

Lectures  
Class Discussion  
Video Presentation(s)  
e-HRAF files

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Reading of the required textbooks and assigned readings
2. Successful completion of the examinations.
3. Faithful attendance to class as required by the seminary.
4. Successful completion of the Research Paper.
  - A. The paper is due at the beginning of class on November 23, 2004.
  - B. There will be a deduction of one (1) letter grade if the paper is turned in late.
  - C. There will be a hand out detailing the requirements for the Term Paper.

### **GRADING PROCEDURE**

1. Completion of all required readings	25%
2. Research Paper	35%
3. Exams, averaged together	40%

### **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Arnold, Clinton E. *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul's Letters*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1992.
- Brennan, Paul W. *Let Sleeping Snakes Lie: Central Enga Traditional Belief and Ritual*. Adelaide: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1977.
- Burnett, David. *Unearthly Powers: A Christian Perspective on Primal and Folk Religion*.

Eastbourne, England: MARC, Monarch Publications Ltd, 1988.

E'la, Jean-Marc. *My Faith as an African*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

Flannery, W (ed). *Religious Movements in Melanesia*: Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1968.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Religious Movements In Melanesia Today*. Goroka PNG: The Melanesian Institute. Three volumes, 1983..

Glass-Coffin, Bonnie. *The Gift of Life: Female Spirituality and Healing in Northern Peru*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988.

Glazier, Stephen D. (ed). *Anthropology of Religion*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1997.

Hanks, Thomas D. *God So Loved the Third World*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1983.

Keysser, Christian. *A People Reborn*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1980.

Koyama, Kosuke. *Three Mile an Hour God*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1982.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Mount Fuji and Mount Sinai*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984.

Kraft, Charles H. *Christianity with Power: Your Worldview and Your Experience of the Supernatural*. Ann Arbor: Vine Books, 1989.

Loeliger, Carl and Garry Trompf (eds). *New Religious Movements In Melanesia*. Suva.: University of the South Pacific, 1985.

McGregor, Donald E. *The Fish and the Cross* Point Series No. 1. Goroka: Melanesian Institute, 1982.

Mantovani, Enio *An Introduction to Melanesian Religion*. Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1984.

Priest Doug Jr. *Doing Theology with the Maasai*. Pasadena. William Carey Library, 1990.

Scupin, Raymond, (ed.) *Religion and Culture: An Anthropological Focus*. New York: Prentice Hall Press, 2000.

Shaw, R. Daniel. *Kandila: Samo Ceremonialism and Interpersonal Relationships*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990.

Steyne, Philip M. *Gods of Power: A Study of the Beliefs and Practices of Animists*. Houston: Torch Publications, 1990.

Strelan, John G. *Search for Salvation: Studies in the History and Theology of Cargo Cults*. Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977.

Tippett, Alan R. *Solomon Island Christianity*. London: Lutterworth Press, 1967.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Oral Tradition and Ethnohistory; The Transmission of Information and Social Values of Early Christian Fiji 1835-1905*. Canberra: St. Mark's Library, 1980.

Trompf, Garry (ed). *The Gospel is not Western. Black Theologies from the South Pacific*. Maryknoll Orbis Books, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Melanesian Religious Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Turner, Edith. *The Spirit and the Drum*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Experiencing Ritual: A New Interpretation of African Healing*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Hands Feel It: Healing and Spirit Presence Among a Northern Alaskan People*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996.

Turner, Edith; with Victor Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978.

Turner, John. *The Primal Vision*. London: SCM Press, 1963.

Walsh, Brian J. and J. R. Middleton. *The Transforming Vision*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984.

Whiteman, Darrell. *Melanesians and Missionaries: An Ethno-Historical Study of Socio-religious Change in the Southwest Pacific*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1980.

Winkelman, Michael. *Shamanism: The Neural Ecology of Consciousness and Healing*. Bergin & Garvey, 2000.

### **SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Dr. Warren Newberry, June 2004