

**Assemblies of God Theological Seminary**  
**MCS 537 (01) FOLK RELIGION**

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

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**Summer 2006**  
**May 8 - June 2**  
**7:30-9:40 a.m.**  
**Monday - Friday**

**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.
- Evaluate and critique topics and phenomena such as Spirit Possession, Shamanism, Magic, Witchcraft, Ritual, Myth, and Taboos, etc. with a view of not only understanding but comparing them to a scriptural worldview.
- Assess the role of culture and worldview within folk religions.
- Critique religious systems while ministering to their adherents in a culturally sensitive manner.
- Apply his/her understanding and knowledge in the presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in these religious systems.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the e-HRAF files for Internet research.

**TEXTBOOKS**

**Required**

Hiebert, Paul, R. Daniel Shaw & Tite Tiéno. *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  
DVD/Video Presentations  
e-HRAF files

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading of the required textbooks and assigned readings. A reading schedule will be placed on the "Y" drive two weeks before the first class meets.
2. Successful completion of the final examination.
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 May 30, 2006.
  - B. There will be a deduction of one (1) letter grade if the paper is turned in late.
  - C. A hand out detailing the requirements for the research paper will be distributed on the first day of class.
5. Evidence of plagiarism will result in the work being assigned a grade of "F" and possibly in the student failing the course.
6. It is assumed that the student will refrain from computer games, internet and email activity during the class sessions.
- 7.

## **GRADING PROCEDURE**

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| 1. Completion of all required readings | 30% |
| 2. Research Paper                      | 35% |
| 3. Final Exam                          | 35% |

All work will be given a percentage grade and translated into a corresponding letter grade.

## **AGTS Approved Grading Scale**

Publishable = A+	79% - 77% = C+
100% - 94% = A	76% - 74% = C
93% - 90% = A-	73% - 70% = C-
89% - 87% = B+	69% - 67% = D+
86% - 84% = B	66% - 64% = D
83% - 80% = B-	63% - 60% = D-

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

It is assumed that students at AGTS will endeavor to be honest and of high integrity in all matters pertaining to Seminary life. A lack of respect and integrity is evidenced by cheating, fabricating, plagiarizing, misusing facilities, removing books and other property not one's own, and disrupting classes.

Cheating is defined as "intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise." It is assumed that whatever is submitted by a student is the work of that student. Fabrication is "intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise or form." Plagiarism is "intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise." One who facilitates any of the above is equally responsible with the primary violator.

Penalties may include restitution, an "F" on an individual paper, exam, or course; loss of campus employment; disciplinary probation; removal from extracurricular activities; and suspension. (AGTS Student Handbook, p.4)

## **CHAPEL ATTENDANCE**

On May 10 and 24, class will be dismissed at 8:20 am to attend chapel.

## **HOLIDAY**

Monday, May 29 – No classes

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

A bibliography will be posted on the “Y” drive.

**SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Dr. Warren Newberry, March 2006