

RELI 307 - RITUAL
(Fall 2016 Mon/Wed 1:20-2:40 pm)
Allbritton 004

Instructor: Justine Buck Quijada

jquijada@wesleyan.edu

Department of Religion, Room 209

Office Hours: Mon 3 – 4 pm, Thurs. 1 – 4pm

Religion can be defined through beliefs or traditions or texts, but it always takes physical form through ritual. Ritual is the one universal in religion, but the question of how to understand ritual is possibly the most contested question in the study of religion. Can a ritual be read like a text? How do symbols produce effects, and how should we understand these effects? What is performative speech and how does it work? How does ritual behavior reflect and shape social relationships? This course introduces students to major approaches in studying ritual. The readings draw heavily, but not exclusively, on anthropological approaches to ritual, both classic texts and recent approaches focusing on language and embodiment. Students will be required to do practical fieldwork observations of rituals so that they can put these texts in dialogue with their research experience. The course culminates in each student producing a mini-ethnography on the ritual they have observed over the course of the semester.

Required readings:

All required books are available at Broad St. Books. All other readings are available on Moodle and in a course packet available through the university print shop.

- Arnold van Gennep, 1960, *The Rites of Passage*, University of Chicago Press, ISBN:0-226-84849-3

- Emile Durkheim, 1995, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Free Press, Karen Fields translator, ISBN: 978-0029079379

Fair Warnings

1. Laptops and other electronic devices are very distracting and thus are not allowed.
2. You are responsible for knowing and adhering to the University's Honor Code.
3. Please remain in class for the duration of the class period.

Students with Disabilities:

It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students, however, are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me in a timely manner. If you require accommodations in this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Assignments and Grading:

Assignments are due in class on the due date, in a paper copy, and by email. Please be sure to include your name, page numbers and appropriate citations with a bibliography of all works cited in the assignment. *Points will be deducted for failing to do so. Late assignments will automatically drop one grade per day late.* There is a rigorous schedule of assignments. Falling behind will cause a ripple effect. Don't do it!

Class Participation:

(10% of course grade)

You are expected to attend all classes and actively contribute to class discussion.

Participation is not measured by how much you say, but by how much you contribute to the collective process of learning, by listening to your classmates, asking questions and encouraging a fruitful discussion. Missing more than 2 classes may be grounds for withdrawal.

Cumulative Semester Project:

There are four short ethnographic assignments spread across the semester which will be synthesized into a final research paper at the end. These assignments should all be conducted at the same ritual. You may attend any ritual, held on or off campus. It does not have to be an explicitly religious ritual. It must, however, be a ritual that is held regularly so that you can return to observe more than once. If, for your own research purposes, you would like to analyze a ritual that does not meet these criteria, please see me out of class.

Assignment 1:

(10% of class grade)

Attend the ritual and describe it. Your description should be approximately 4 – 6 pages long. Include a map of the ritual space.

Assignment 2 – 1st midterm:

(20% of class grade)

Describe and analyze the ritual using at least two of the authors in the first half of the syllabus

Assignment 3:

(10% of class grade)

2 part assignment – preparation of an informed consent statement and a list of questions generated by the previous assignments. Then, interview someone involved in the ritual. The interview should take no less than 20 minutes and no more than 1 hour. The transcribed interview must be handed in.

Assignment 4 2nd midterm:

(20% of class grade)

Describe and analyze the ritual using at least two of the authors in the second half of the syllabus

Class presentation:

A short (10-15 minute) presentation to the class on the ritual you have been working on.

These presentations will be made in the last three classes. Be prepared to discuss your and other student's work. This counts towards the final essay grade.

Final Essay:

Synthesize the previous 4 assignments into one long essay which describes and analyzes your ritual. 15-20 pp. 30% of course grade.

Class Schedule

1. Mon. Sept 5 Introduction and discussion of assignments

Part 1: Classic Theories

2. Wed. Sept. 7

Arnold van Gennep The Rites of Passage Chap. 1,2,3 pp. 1 - 41

3. Mon. Sept. 12

Arnold van Gennep, The Rites of Passage Chap. 6, 9. 10 pp. 65-116, 166-195

4. Wed. Sept. 14

Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life pp. 1 – 44, 99-140

5. Mon. Sept.19

Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life pp. 99-140, 207-241

6. Wed. Sept 21

Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life pp. 99-140, 207-241

7. Mon. Sept. 26

Evans-Pritchard, 1976 Chapter 3: Sufferers from Misfortune seek for Witches among their Enemies pp. 33 – 55, from: *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*, Oxford, Clarendon Press (packet/moodle)

Assignment #1 DUE

8. Wed. Sept. 28

Victor Turner, 1967, Chapter 1 Symbols in Ndembu Ritual, pp.19-47, from *The Forest of Symbols*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press (packet/moodle)

9. Mon. Oct. 3

Victor Turner, [1967] Liminality and Communitas pp.326 – 339 from *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, Michael Lambek ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008 (packet/moodle)

10. Wed. Oct. 5

Geertz, Clifford. "Religion as a Cultural System." *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*. By Michael Banton. London: Tavistock Publications, 1966. 1-46. (packet/moodle)

11. Mon. Oct. 10 Talal Asad, 1993, Chapter 1 – The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category pp. 27-54, in *Genealogies of Religion*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press (packet/moodle)

12. Wed. Oct. 12 In class discussion of projects and midterms. Additional readings may be assigned.

Assignment #2 – Midterm Due

Part 2: Contemporary Approaches to Ritual

13. Mon. Oct. 17

E. V. Daniel. 2002. "The Arrogation of Being by the Blind-Spot of Religion" in *Discrimination and Toleration*. K. Hastrup & G. Ulrich, eds. Brussels: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, (packet/moodle)

14. Wed. Oct. 19

Talal Asad, 1993, Chapter. 2, Towards a Genealogy of the Concept of Ritual from Genealogies of Religion, pp. 55 - 79, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (packet/moodle)

Hand in informed consent statement and guiding questions for interview

FALL BREAK

15. Wed. Oct. 26th

Saba Mahmood, 2001 Rehearsed Spontaneity and the Conventionality of Ritual: Disciplines of "Salat". *American Ethnologist* 28:4:827-853 (packet/moodle)

16. Mon. Oct. 31 – HALLOWEEN

Cindy Dell Clark, 2005, Tricks of Festival: Children, Enculturation, and American Halloween, *Ethos*, Vol. 33, No. 2), pp. 180-205

Jack Kugelmass, 1991, Wishes Come True: Designing the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade. *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 104, No. 414, pp. 443-465 (packet/moodle)

17. Wed. Nov. 2

Selections from J. L. Austin, 1962, How to do Things with Words. Lecture 1 , 2 and 4 pp. 1-24, 39-52 Oxford: Clarendon Press (packet/moodle)

18. Mon. Nov. 7

In class movie: "An initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman" Laurell Kendall and Diana Lee (37 min). **Assignment #3 Due**

19. Wed. Nov. 9

Chapter 3 Initiating Performance: Chini's Story in Laurel Kendall, 2010 *Shamans, Nostalgias and the IMF*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press (packet/moodle)

20. Mon. Nov. 14

Webb Keane, 1997 Religious Language, *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 26, pp. 47-71 (packet/moodle)

21. Wed. Nov. 16

John McCreery, 1995. Negotiating with Demons: The Uses of Magical Language, *American Ethnologist* 22:1:144-164 (packet/moodle)

22. Mon. Nov. 21

Justine Quijada and Eric Stephen, 2015, "Performing 'Culture': Diverse Audiences at the International Shaman's Conference and Tailgan on Olkhon Island" for a special issue edited by Nikolay Tsyrempilov, *Etudes Mongoles et siberiennes, centrasiatiques et tibetaines* Issue 46 (packet/moodle)

Assignment #4 Second Midterm Due

THANKSGIVING BREAK

23. Mon. Nov. 28

Final Project Presentations

24. Wed. Nov. 30

Final Project Presentations

25. Mon. Dec. 5

Final Project Presentations

26. Wed. Dec. 7

Final Project Presentations

Final papers Due DEC. 14 @ 4pm in hard copy to my mailbox and by email