



ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Courses submitted to the GSC between 2/1 and 4/30 if approved, will be effective the following Spring.

Courses submitted between 5/1 and 1/31 if approved, will be effective the following Fall.

(SUBMISSION VIA ADOBE.PDF FILES IS PREFERRED)

DATE 2-19-09

1. ACADEMIC UNIT: Religious Studies
2. COURSE PROPOSED: REL 305 Ritual, Symbol & Myth 3
3. CONTACT PERSON: Name: Pat Power Phone: 5-0642
Mail Code: 3104 E-Mail: patricia.power@asu.edu

4. ELIGIBILITY: New courses must be approved by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Subcommittee and must have a regular course number. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at 965-0739.

5. AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE. A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. (Please submit one designation per proposal)

Core Areas

Awareness Areas

- Literacy and Critical Inquiry-L [X]
Mathematical Studies-MA [] CS []
Humanities, Fine Arts and Design-HU []
Social and Behavioral Sciences-SB []
Natural Sciences-SQ [] SG []

- Global Awareness-G []
Historical Awareness-H []
Cultural Diversity in the United States-C []

6. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.
(1) Course Description
(2) Course Syllabus
(3) Criteria Checklist for the area
(4) Table of Contents from the textbook used, if available

7. In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

(see attached criteria check list and summary)

CROSS-LISTED COURSES: [X] No [] Yes; Please identify courses: _____

Is this amultisection course?: [] No [X] Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus? no _____

Joel D Gereboff
Chair/Director (Print or Type)

[Signature]
Chair/Director (Signature)

Date: 2/19/09

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

ASU - [L] CRITERIA			
TO QUALIFY FOR [L] DESIGNATION, THE COURSE DESIGN MUST PLACE A MAJOR EMPHASIS ON COMPLETING CRITICAL DISCOURSE--AS EVIDENCED BY THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRITERION 1: At least 50 percent of the grade in the course should depend upon writing, including prepared essays, speeches, or in-class essay examinations. <i>Group projects are acceptable only if each student gathers, interprets, and evaluates evidence, and prepares a summary report</i>	Syllabus: requirements and grading
1. Please describe the assignments that are considered in the computation of course grades--and indicate the proportion of the final grade that is determined by each assignment.			
2. Also:			
Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-1".			
C-1			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRITERION 2: The composition tasks involve the gathering, interpretation, and evaluation of evidence	Syllabus: requirements and grading; discussion board instructions
1. Please describe the way(s) in which this criterion is addressed in the course design			
2. Also:			
Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-2".			
C-2			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRITERION 3: The syllabus should include a minimum of two substantial writing or speaking tasks, other than or in addition to in-class essay exams	syllabus: requirements and grading
1. Please provide relatively detailed descriptions of two or more substantial writing or speaking tasks that are included in the course requirements			
2. Also:			
Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-3".			
C-3			

ASU - [L] CRITERIA			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>CRITERION 4: These substantial writing or speaking assignments should be arranged so that the students will get timely feedback from the instructor on each assignment in time to help them do better on subsequent assignments. <i>Intervention at earlier stages in the writing process is especially welcomed</i></p>	<p>Syllabus p 2 "Essays"; pp 3-4 "Schedule of due dates"</p>
<p>1. Please describe the sequence of course assignments--and the nature of the feedback the current (or most recent) course instructor provides to help students do better on subsequent assignments</p>			
<p>2. Also:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>Please circle, underline, or otherwise mark the information presented in the most recent course syllabus (or other material you have submitted) that verifies this description of the grading process--and label this information "C-4".</p> </div>			
<p>C-4</p>			

Course Prefix	Number	Title	Designation
REL	305	Ritual, Symbol & Myth	L

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

Criteria (from checklist)	How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)	Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)
C-1: at least 50% of the student's grade should come from substantial writing assignments	At least 90% of the student grade will come from writing assignments; 30% will come from a final 12-15 page paper and 30% from a series of three critical 4-5 page essays.	Syllabus p. 2 "Requirements & Grading"
C-2: Composition assignments should involve the gathering, interpretation and evaluation of evidence	All writing assignments involve one, both or all three of the C-2 requirements. Journals are reflective but critical, discussion board prompts aim for comparison, interpretation and evaluation of evidence in light of various theoretical propositions; essays are structured around critical thinking/writing skills and the final paper involves independent research as well as interpretation and evaluation of evidence.	Syllabus p. 2 as well as sample discussion board instructions on separate sheet
C-3 Syllabus should include a minimum of two substantial writing assignments	C-1 The student will submit a final 12-15 pg paper worth 30% of the course grade and three 4-5 page critical essays worth a total of 30% of the course grade.	C-3 Syllabus, p. 2 "Requirements and Grading"
C-4 Substantial writing assignments should provide student with timely feedback	C-4 The essays can be revised and resubmitted following instructor feedback (provided they were done in good faith the first time) and the final paper is staged with proposal, revised proposal, draft and final paper	C-4 Syllabus p. 2 and pp. 3-4 "Schedule of due Dates"



Department of Religious Studies

Main Office - ECA 377
(480) 965-7145
UG Advisor: P Power
ECA 365 (480) 965-0642

Ritual, Symbol & Myth REL 305

Instructor: Pat Power
Office Location: ECA 365
Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1-3
E-mail: patricia.power@asu.edu

Day/Time: INTERNET
Location:
Schedule Line #:

TA:
Office Location:
Office Hours:
E-mail:

General Studies: L, HU
Knowledge & Skills Goals: K1, K2, K3, S1, O4
Distribution Area: Core Requirement for Majors and Minors in Religious Studies

General Studies, Knowledge and Skills Goals of the Course:

This course **introduces the academic study of religion** and **explains the concepts of ritual, symbol and myth and how they function** in the construction and maintenance of religious systems. It also examines the development and role of religious ideas, literature, practices and beliefs in various social and cultural contexts (HU). Students who complete this course should gain a general knowledge of the beliefs, practices and institutions central to a wide range of global religious traditions (K1). They will also be introduced to basic theoretical and methodological issues involved in the academic study of religion (K2). In addition, they should develop a general understanding of the role of religion and religious tradition in individual and collective life in diverse historical and cultural contexts over time (K3). The student will learn to employ interdisciplinary approaches to religion in understanding various social and cultural phenomena associated with religious studies (S1). Because this is a writing class (L) delivered via the internet, student grades will come from engaged reading that is reflected in thoughtful and careful writing in journals, discussion board forums, formal and informal essays and short answer essay-style quizzes. The practice of critical thinking and writing will provide students with the capacity for life-long learning and religious literacy. (O4)

Required Reading:

Gary E. Kessler, Studying Religion: An Introduction through Cases, 2nd edition.
Claude Lévi-Strauss, Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture, Schocken Books (1995).
Eliade, Mircea, Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism, Princeton (1991).
Turner, Victor, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure, Adeline de Gruyter (1995).
Course material that will be made available on Blackboard

Two Traditions in the Study of Religion

Robert Wuthnow

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 20, No. 1. (Mar., 1981), pp. 16-32.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8294%28198103%2920%3A1%3C16%3ATTITSO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H>

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion is currently published by Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

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Religious Symbolism and "Universal" Religion

Maurice S. Friedman

The Journal of Religion, Vol. 38, No. 4. (Oct., 1958), pp. 215-225.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-4189%28195810%2938%3A4%3C215%3ARSA%22R%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R>

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Religious Symbolism: A Plea for a Comparative Approach

Stephen J. Reno

Folklore, Vol. 88, No. 1. (1977), pp. 76-85.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0015-587X%281977%2988%3A1%3C76%3ARSAPFA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M>

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**Bridging the Gap between Understanding and Explanation Approaches to
the Study of Religion**

Steven D. Kepnes

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 25, No. 4. (Dec., 1986), pp. 504-512.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8294%28198612%2925%3A4%3C504%3ABTGBUA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-8>

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Blackboard 7

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REF: 305: RITUAL, SYMBOL, AND MYTH (2006 FALL) > UNIT 1: THE SACRED > REQUIRED READINGS: UNIT 1: THE SACRED
EDIT VIEW

Required Readings-Unit 1 the Sacred

Berger, pp 3-28
[sacred canopy \(3.772 Mb\)](#)
 This is Peter Berger's chapter on world building, a sociological interpretation of how human beings create and sustain meaning in the world. He understands religion as world building in a sacred mode. His major points are:

1. Society is a dialectic phenomenon.
2. There are three steps in this dialectic process: externalization, objectification and internalization. Together these account for the stability of any ordered 'world' that humans inhabit.
3. The human 'world' is synonymous with culture.
4. Society is an externalized, objectified and internalized reality that human beings construct for themselves.
5. To live in a social world is to live in an ordered world (nomos). To be radically separated from the social world results in anomy or worldlessness.
6. Religion is world building in a sacred mode. (p. 25) The opposite of a sacred world (cosmos) is chaos.

Pals (Eliade) pp. 198-203
[eliade-sacred and profane from pals.pdf \(915.157 Kb\)](#)
 In this excerpt from Pals, *Eight Theories of Religion*, you will find a nice introduction to Eliade's concept of the sacred. For Eliade, the sacred is not conceptual product of human world building but a reality that is something 'other', powerful and real, "saturated with being." Thus, religious man, for Eliade, naturally wishes to participate in this reality, to be saturated with power, to "BE" as it were.

Durkheim pp 38-63
[durkheim-elementary forms.pdf \(5.69 Mb\)](#)
 This is an excerpt from the classic work, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Durkheim addresses the problem of defining religion by first defining its core. In looking for a term to describe the center of the religious life, he dismisses the 'supernatural' or 'divinity' and settles on the division between sacred and profane as he defines them. (p. 52) Sacred things are not the same as divinity, although divinity could be the sacred in some religious systems. Nor is it equivalent to the supernatural; according to Durkheim religion is an attempt to explain the everyday world; not the extraordinary events, but the ordinary ones.

For Durkheim, a religion comes into being when a critical number of sacred things share a hierarchical relationship with one another and coalesce into a unified 'symbol' system. The beliefs and rites associated with this symbolic system then constitute a religion.

OK

Course Map

Control Panel

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Detail View

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Syllabus

Preliminaries

Unit 1: The Sacred

Unit 2: Myth

Unit 3: Symbols

Unit 4: Ritual

Final Projects

Tools

Communication

Discussion Board

External Links

<https://my7.asu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab=courses&url=/bin/common/course.pl...> 2/17/2009

Course Description:

This course is designed to explore the ways in which ritual, symbol and myth work together to create and sustain religious worldviews and collective religious identity. It approaches religion as a universal phenomenon of culture, society and individual experience that has at its core a concept of the sacred around which a specific structure revolves. It will explore multiple concepts of "the sacred" and show how rituals, symbols and myths relate to the sacred in ways that provide a sustainable and meaningful world for human existence.

Requirements & Grading:

The course requires that the student complete five Learning Units, each with its assigned readings, optional or required film viewings, discussion board postings, quizzes, journals and essays.

***Learning Units:** Each Learning Unit contains instructions for the unit's assignments, reading guides, resource material, and access to the unit quizzes. All **individual writing assignments** are to be uploaded via the **digital drop box** on the Blackboard site. Use the proper format for naming your files before uploading or they may not be transferred by the system and I won't be able to identify them (Ex: **NAME_LU1**). Use this scheme consistently to avoid problems.

***Assigned Readings:** These will derive from the textbooks and additional material available in the Learning Unit folders on the Blackboard course site.

***Film viewing:** All films required for this course are available to rent through Blockbuster or a similar business. There will be a reading guide for each film that the student is asked to download and use during the viewing.

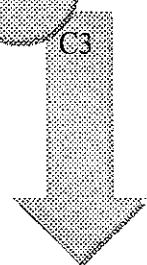
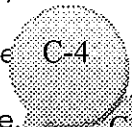
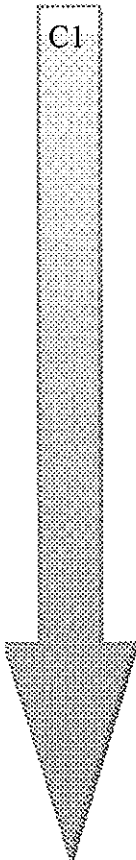
***Discussion Board Postings (15%):** These will constitute the required student attendance for the course. The requirement is to make a minimum of **two substantive posts (essay style) on two separate days for a total of 10 points per week for fifteen weeks**. The discussion board forums are the equivalent of in-class participation and lectures that would be required on-ground. This class would meet for two hours and thirty minutes a week, therefore you should plan to spend that much time reading and posting to these forums. Points are awarded for the quality of the discussion (content) and for meeting the assignment posting requirements. Consistent failure to meet the minimum weekly posting requirements will lower your grade at least one Grade Level, regardless of total points earned!

***Quizzes (10%):** There are a total of **four timed (1 hr. 20 min.) quizzes**. Quizzes cover the readings from the textbooks as well as material in the Learning Units and on the Discussion Boards. This is a writing class; quizzes will reflect this. There is no final exam; rather a final paper will be due by the 8th of December.

***Journals (15%):** As you progress through the material for this course you will be expected to keep a written account of your reactions, questions, reflections, etc. This is to be a record of your critical engagement with your readings and not a mere summary of the material or a compendium of your notes. You will be asked to submit these journals periodically for critique and grading. They are worth 15% of your grade.

***Essays (30%):** There will be three required essays of 4-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point type. See the schedule for due dates. These essays will be returned to you with comments. You will have the ability to revise and resubmit, if necessary to earn a C or better, provided the paper was submitted in a timely fashion and reflects a good-faith effort to complete the assignment.

***Final Paper (30%):** The final paper will be worth 30% of your grade (12-15 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font) and will require you to (a) demonstrate your knowledge of the material covered, (b) demonstrate your ability to synthesize the information and apply it to a particular



case study of your choosing, and (c) to do independent research on the topics relevant to your paper. Detailed instructions are available in the "Final Paper" folder on Blackboard.

Grading: Grades will be determined by total points earned as follows:

Item	Possible	Scale	
Journals	150	901-1000	A
Quizzes	100	801- 900	B
Essays	300	701-800	C
Discussion Board	150	601-700	D
Final Paper	300	< 601	E
Total:	1,000		

Schedule of Due Dates:

(All due dates end at midnight unless otherwise noted)

First Day of Class	Aug 21
Week 1 & 2: Preliminaries	Aug 21-Sept 3
Student introductions, syllabus review	
Intro to the academic study of religion: theory & concepts	
Discussion Board 1 posts due by	Aug 26 midnight
Quiz #1	8/31
Discussion Board 2	9/2
Weeks 3, 4, 5: Learning Unit 1	9/4-9/24
Religion and the Sacred	
Discussion Board 3	9/9
Journal 1 (50 pts) due by	9/15
Discussion Board 4	9/16
Quiz #2	9/21
Essay #1	9/22
Discussion Board 5	9/23
Weeks 6, 7: Learning Unit 2	9/25-10/8
Myth: Sacred Stories	
Discussion Board 6	9/30
Journal #2	10/6
Discussion Board 7	10/7
PROPOSALS FOR FINAL PAPER DUE	10/10
Weeks 8, 9, 10: Learning Unit 3	10/9-10/29
Symbols: Sacred "sites"	
Quiz #3	10/12
Discussion Board 8	10/13
REVISED PROPOSALS DUE	10/14
Discussion Board 9	10/21
Essay # 2	10/27
Discussion Board 10	10/28
Weeks 11, 12, 13: Learning Unit 4	10/30-11/19
Ritual: Sacred action	
Discussion Board 11	11/4
Quiz #4	11/9
Journal #3	11/10

Discussion Board 12	11/11
DRAFT OF FINAL PAPER DUE	11/14
Discussion Board 13	11/18
Weeks 14, 15: Learning Unit 5	11/20-12/5
Ritual, Symbol and Myth: creating and sustaining religious identity	
Essay #3	11/21
[THANKSGIVING BREAK]	11/23-24
Discussion Board 14	11/27
Work on final paper	
Discussion Board 15 [LAST DAY OF CLASS]	12/5

FINAL PAPER

Deadline to submit paper 12/8 midnight

Final Grades posted by 12/18

Blackboard Information:

E-mail: You must have a **valid ASU email account** (e.g., name@asu.edu) and you must check it daily. If you never use your ASU email address, you must set up mail forwarding to whatever address you do use. Go to <http://www.asu.edu/emma> and follow the directions.

Blackboard: This course is delivered entirely via the ASU Blackboard (ASUonline) system. You should be automatically enrolled in the on-line module, and a link to the course should appear when you sign on to the **myASU** home page (**myASU/myASU courses/courses you are enrolled in/REL 305: Ritual, Symbol & Myth [2006 Fall]**).

If you do not see this link, check to **be sure you are registered for the course** before contacting me (patricia.power@asu.edu) to enroll you. You cannot self-enroll.

If you do not have an **ASUrite user ID and password**, you may self-subscribe at <http://www.asu.edu/it/tempe/cac/accounts/asurite.htm>

The system is very user friendly and I will make every effort to help you navigate it once you are connected. **For connection or compatibility issues** however, you will contact myasu-g@asu.edu or call 480.965.6500.

Attendance, Make-ups:

See Discussion Board requirements in the previous section for attendance requirements. Late Assignments will be graded accordingly. Quizzes, Journals and Discussion Board requirements are not accepted late and the work cannot be made up. There is no extra-credit work available in this course.

Withdrawals:

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ses/ses201-08.html>

Incompletes:

<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ses/ses203-09.html>

Academic Dishonesty:

The Department of Religious Studies abides by ASU's Office of Student Life: "Student Academic Integrity Policy." See: <http://www.asu.edu/studentlife/judicial/integrity.html>

2 **Final Week 2 (due 11/12)**

As you can see from reading the section in Turner on African responses to the phenomenon of twinning, one of the functions of religious ritual is to restore the world to its proper order by making right what is wrong, and to deal with the unexpected intrusion of the sacred into everyday life. How a specific culture views this manifestation of something "other" determines how it makes sense of or deals with the phenomenon.

In Turner's account of the Ndembu twinning ritual, there is the perception that the birth of twins is an abnormal and "dangerous" event (45). Out of the two most usual responses to the birth of twins, one being to destroy the twins (Bushman) and the other to sacrifice them, the Ndembu choose the latter (40). The matter requires a community-wide ritual to restore normalcy to the social order. The ritual response involves acknowledging the event as extraordinary and something that requires rectification, and then through the use of ritual symbols and objects restoring the community to good order. In this process, Turner sees an open window into the structure of Ndembu culture. The paradox that what is good in theory is bad in practice becomes the mobilizing point of a ritual that addresses the overall unity of the group, surrounding its contradictions (49).

For this week's DE activity, please fill in this chapter at least one quotation and describe how, why, and to what end this ritual is performed. The objective is an empathetic understanding of Ndembu ritual and the means by which accomplishing this is to explain the process.

What does the birth of twins and the means used to deal with this event tell you about how the Ndembu understand the world? Who causes twins? Why is it a good thing, why or why not, is it a bad thing? What do they do about it? What are some of the key symbols in their rituals? What are some of the most important behaviors in the ritual and what do they represent? In the end, what does the ritual accomplish?

Don't feel that you have to explain your entire quotation. Do the best you can in the number of words allowed, and others of you will help out by adding your thoughts.

For example, Turner writes, "Ndembu in the symbolic domain of the twinning ritual, have elected to emphasize the aspect of opposition and complementarity (50)." How would you explain what Turner means here? How does the conception of the twinning ritual support Turner's conclusion?

3 **Week 10 and 11: Twins (second part of basis due by 11/25)**

I'd like to continue working with this theme as we move from symbols into ritual with Victor Turner. You have come up with some excellent examples of twins and their symbolic significance in various myths from around the globe. I've made some comments and extended this discussion - please pick up on those entries I've made and let's keep going. If you have read chapter two of Turner as I suggested, you will notice that we are moving into a discussion of twins as they are experienced in primarily non-literate cultures (Ndembu, etc.) Twins are still symbolic of something, but does the meaning of twins as a real experience, as recorded by an anthropologist, differ from the mythic meanings you have discovered? What kinds of cultures give rise to which kind of symbolism? How are twins treated in scientific/rationalist societies? How are they treated religiously in Western cultures?

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