

GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Course information:

Copy and paste **current** course information from [Class Search/Course Catalog](#).

College/School	College of Integrative Sciences and Arts	Department/School	Faculty of Leadership and Integrative Studies
Prefix: IDS	Number: 312	Title: Supernatural as Natural: Religion in Human Evolution	Units: 3

Course description:

Is this a cross-listed course? No If yes, please identify course(s): _____

Is this a shared course? No If so, list all academic units offering this course: _____

*Note- For courses that are crosslisted and/or shared, a letter of support from the chair/director of **each** department that offers the course is required for **each** designation requested. By submitting this letter of support, the chair/director agrees to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and will teach the course in a manner that meets the criteria for each approved designation.*

Is this a **permanent-numbered** course with topics? Yes

If **yes**, each topic requires **an individual submission**, separate from other topics.

Requested designation: Historical Awareness **Mandatory Review: Yes**

*Note- a **separate** proposal is required for each designation.*

Eligibility: Permanent numbered courses **must** have completed the university’s review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact Phyllis.Lucic@asu.edu.

Submission deadlines dates are as follow:

For Fall 2021 Effective Date: October 2, 2020

For Spring 2022 Effective Date: March 5, 2021

Area 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. It is the responsibility of the chair/director to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and adhere to the above guidelines.

Checklists for general studies designations:

Complete and attach the appropriate checklist

- [Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses \(L\)](#)
- [Mathematics core courses \(MA\)](#)
- [Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses \(CS\)](#)
- [Humanities, Arts and Design core courses \(HU\)](#)
- [Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses \(SB\)](#)
- [Natural Sciences core courses \(SQ/SG\)](#)
- [Cultural Diversity in the United States courses \(C\)](#)
- [Global Awareness courses \(G\)](#)
- [Historical Awareness courses \(H\)](#)

A complete proposal should include:

- Signed course proposal cover form
- [Criteria checklist](#) for General Studies designation being requested
- Course catalog description
- Sample syllabus for the course
- Copy of table of contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

Proposals must be submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF.

Contact information:

Name Paul Cassell E-mail Paul.cassell@asu.edu Phone 703-336-3131

Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)

Chair/Director name (Typed): Kevin Ellsworth Date: 2/18/21

Chair/Director (Signature): _____

Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for

HISTORICAL AWARENESS [H]

Rationale and Objectives

Recent trends in higher education have called for the creation and development of historical consciousness in undergraduates now and in the future. History studies the growth and development of human society from a number of perspectives such as—political, social, economic and/or cultural. From one perspective, historical awareness is a valuable aid in the analysis of present-day problems because historical forces and traditions have created modern life and lie just beneath its surface. From a second perspective, the historical past is an indispensable source of identity and of values, which facilitate social harmony and cooperative effort. Along with this observation, it should be noted that historical study can produce intercultural understanding by tracing cultural differences to their origins in the past. A third perspective on the need for historical awareness is that knowledge of history helps us to learn from the past to make better, more well-informed decisions in the present and the future.

The requirement of a course that is historical in method and content presumes that "history" designates a sequence of past events or a narrative whose intent or effect is to represent both the relationship between events and change over time. The requirement also presumes that these are human events and that history includes all that has been felt, thought, imagined, said, and done by human beings. The opportunities for nurturing historical consciousness are nearly unlimited. History is present in the languages, art, music, literatures, philosophy, religion, and the natural sciences, as well as in the social science traditionally called History.

The justifications for how the course fits each of the criteria need to be clear both in the application tables and the course materials. The Historical Awareness designation requires consistent analysis of the broader historical context of past events and persons, of cause and effect, and of change over time. Providing intermittent, anecdotal historical context of people and events usually will not suffice to meet the Historical Awareness criteria. A Historical Awareness course will instead embed systematic historical analysis in the core of the syllabus, including readings and assignments. For courses focusing on the history of a field of study, the applicant needs to show both how the field of study is affected by political, social, economic, and/or cultural conditions AND how political, social, economic, and/or cultural conditions are affected by the field of study.

Revised October 2015

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

ASU--[H] CRITERIA			
THE HISTORICAL AWARENESS [H] COURSE MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:			
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. History is a major focus of the course.	See syllabus
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. The course examines and explains human development as a sequence of events influenced by a variety of factors.	See syllabus
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. There is a disciplined systematic examination of human institutions as they change over time.	See syllabus
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. The course examines the relationship among events, ideas, and artifacts and the broad social, political and economic context.	See syllabus
		THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE:	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses that are merely organized chronologically. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses which are exclusively the history of a field of study or of a field of artistic or professional endeavor. 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses whose subject areas merely occurred in the past. 	

Historical Awareness [H]

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Course Prefix	Number	Title	General Studies Designation
IDS	312	Supernatural as Natural: Religion in human evolution	H

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)
History is a major focus of the course	The purpose of this class is to investigate the gradual emergence of religion in the deep human (and pre-human) past, demonstrating the co-evolutionary cultural and biological roots that enabled it, and the material culture left behind by it. How religion has changed over the last 12 millenia in interaction with other dimensions of culture will be explored as well.	While I'm finding it somewhat arbitrary to highlight different sections as exclusively being about one criteria vs another, I will at least try to highlight some ideas distinctly. Yellow highlights in syllabus.
The course examines and explains human development as a sequence of events influenced by a variety of factors	Hominins participating in Oldowan stone toolmaking culture (~2.6 - 1.7mya) benefited from hundreds of thousands of years of gene-culture co-evolution in what was plausibly the first culture built on symbolic reference. This setting represents a strong candidate for the source of specific cognitive and social innovations leading to religion's eventual emergence. These innovations included ubiquitous ritual practices, the capacity to use symbol systems to refer to non-present entities, a propensity to speculate about hidden causes, and strange states of individual/group consciousness and emotions.	See gray highlights
There is a disciplined systematic examination of human institutions as they change over time	This is the central theme of this class - how religion first emerged (and from what), how it developed, and how it came to be disambiguated from other dimensions of human culture	Blue

Historical Awareness [H]

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<p>The course examines the relationship among events, ideas, and artifacts and the broad social, political, and economic context.</p>	<p>This class will focus on religion's overarching role in establishing prehistoric societies, how it's primary mechanisms of cultural memory diffusion differ from other forms (particularly technical/scientific forms), and finally, how secularization has helped reshape the contours of religion in the last few hundred years.</p>	<p>Green</p>
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Course Catalog Description for IDS 312:

“Applies integrative and interdisciplinary tools, methods, knowledge and skills to examine ideas, issues and institutions as they change over time.”

IDS 312: Supernatural as Natural - Religion in human evolution

Course catalog description

What is religion? Why is it such an important and universal feature of human culture? In this interdisciplinary class integrating insights from multiple fields, we will examine and evaluate the material culture of prehistoric religion, its interpretation, and current theories of religion and human origins. How has human evolution created the conditions for religious experience and forms of social organization? What role might religion have played in early *Homo sapiens* development? Class content should help us understand why religion seems to be tied to what is fundamental to our humanity, and gain a perspective for evaluating the 'place' of religion in modern human life.

Assignments

1. Students will write twelve 500-600 word reflection papers (about two pages) on the readings as a whole or any part thereof addressing the question 'what does the content of this/these readings suggest about religion and its origin, development, or role in human history?' Six of these must be turned in by Spring Break.
2. One 7-minute oral presentation on a cutting-edge study dealing with neuroscience/cognitive science and religion.
3. One 8-page book summary of one of the asterisked books listed in the syllabus.
4. A 12 to 15-page paper that will allow the student to investigate further any theme we have developed in the course, requiring outside research. Whatever theme is chosen, connect it to a narrative of religion's origins and development in human/hominin prehistory. Conclude the paper by connecting your theme to the question, 'what does it mean to have a *human* way of being-in-the-world?'

Grades

Relative worth of assignments:

Attendance/Reflection Papers/Discussion contribution – 70%

Book report - 10%

Final Paper – 20%

The final paper will be graded with reference to style (clarity, spelling, grammar, transitions, citations) – 1/3; structure (thesis statement, development, examples, conclusion) – 1/3; content (addresses question, intellectual competence and creativity, satisfies length) – 1/3.

Course Outline

Jan 14: Class expectations and syllabus

Unit 1 - Religion and the evidence of material culture

This unit will introduce the two themes that will be weaved together as we create an account of the development and presence of religion in human prehistory. The first theme is the record of

human/hominin material culture prior to written language, linked to the record of the spread of hominins/Homo Sapiens on the earth. The second theme is anthropological/sociological descriptions of early religion.

Jan 16: Prehistoric Cave Art: *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*

Jan 21: Outline of an anthropological account of religion's origins

Assignment:
Hayden – Ch. 2

Unit 2 – What is religion?

Here, anthropological accounts of religion will be drawn upon to get clearer on what is meant by the term. Functional and systems theoretical accounts of religion as the product of cultural evolution will be introduced.

Jan 23: Comparing Voodoo and Deadheads

Assignment:
Lowenthal – *Voodoo*
Sutton and Hartley on 'Deadhead religion'

Jan 28: What is religion?

Assignment:
Rappaport - Ch.'s 1-2

Jan 30: What is religion?

Assignment:
Rappaport - Ch. 4; 8.6; 9.3; 10.2; 12intro; 13.8; pp. 429-431

Feb 4: Discussion – what is religion?

Unit 3 – Human Origins and Religion

This is where we will investigate archeological data about the origins and spread of Homo Sapiens in and out of Africa, and the evidence for homo cultural expression that is present in the archeological record from ~800k years ago to ~10k years ago.

Feb 6: Human origins – the genetic trail: *The Journey of Man*

Assignment:
d'Errico – *Early evidence of San material culture*
Rasmussen – *Two dispersals*

Feb 11: Human Origins

Assignment:

Human Origins online from Wikipedia (scan for what is interesting/important)
d'Errico – *Le Rouge et Le Noir*
Marean – *When the Sea Saved Humanity*

Feb 13: Human origins and Religion

Assignment:
Hayden – Ch. 4

Feb 18: Evidence concerning religion, evolution, and humanity

Assignment:
Hayden – Ch. 5

Feb 20: Evidence concerning religion, evolution, and humanity

Assignment:
Becoming Human - Ch.'s 2, 5, 7

Feb 25: Evidence concerning religion, evolution, and humanity

Assignment:
Becoming Human – Ch.'s 10, 13
Gobleki Tepe from National Geographic

Unit 4 – The Shamanism connection

Here, the most important anthropological theory on the presence of religious expression in prehistoric cave art will be presented. Theories about how caves and cave art were utilized by early humans to promote and constrain 'religious experience' and keep a record of such experiences will be presented.

Feb 27: Solving the puzzle

Assignment:
Clottes & Lewis-Williams – *The Shamans of Prehistory*

Mar 4: Shamanism - Magical Death and the Yanomamo people

Assignment:
Hayden – Ch. 3

Mar 6: Discussion

Unit 5 – Religious Experience

Anthropological and cognitive science approaches to religious experience will be investigated, along with psychological and therapeutic insights.

Mar 18: Religious experiences and their role

Assignment:

Van De Port – *Circling around the really real*
Mayer – *Extraordinary Knowing*

Mar 20: Drugs/'Belief States'

Assignment:

Nichols & Chemel – *The neuropharmacology of religious experience*

McClenon – *Shamanic healing*

Reflection topic: "These four readings reflect on the nature and importance of 'religious experience' for religion. How important is it for religion that religious experience in some way be real? What are some of the options for how religious experience could be considered 'real'?"

Unit 6 – How is language, reference, and depth tied to religion?

This section will investigate the impact of human 'brain-culture coevolution' on the production of minds that are able to refer to non-present entities, speculate on non-physical causes, seek to explain experiences through theoretical entities, and develop a 'social psychology' relevant to religion.

Mar 25: Symbolic reference and language

Assignment:

Deacon – *Language*

Deacon – *The Symbolic Species*

Deacon and Cashman – *The role of symbolic capacity in the origins of religion*

Mar 27: Brain and culture co-evolution

Assignment:

Donald – *A Mind so Rare*

Reflection topic: "If religion has been strongly influenced by the 'mimetic' phase of human cognition, what would we expect it to look like and/or be about? If religion has been strongly influenced by the 'mythic' phase of human cognition, what would we expect it to look like and/or be about? If religion has been strongly influenced by the 'theoretic' phase of human cognition, what would we expect it to look like and/or be about? What do your answers suggest about the history of religion?"

Apr 1: Depth and value

Assignment:

Turner – *Double-scope stories*

Brooks – *The deepest self*

Becoming Human, Ch. 16

Unit 7 – A natural history of ritual

Behavioral ecology will be drawn upon to examine ritual in non-human species, and ritual's origins and role in producing strongly constrained group emotional experiences and social organization in humans developed.

Apr 3: Ritual

Assignment:

Watanabe & Smuts – *Explaining religion without explaining it away*

Reflection topic: “What are the key concepts that characterize ritual greetings in savannah baboons? What is the significance of this practice? What might it suggest about the origins of religion?”

Apr 8: Ritual’s evolution

Winkelman & Baker – *The evolution of ritual behaviors*

McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time*

Wiltermuth & Heath – *Synchrony and cooperation*

Bachner-Melman et al. – *Gene polymorphisms are associated with creative dance*

Apr 10: Ritual’s fulfillment

Assignment:

Graham and Haidt – *Beyond beliefs*

DS Wilson – *Darwin’s Cathedral*

Reflection topic: “The 6 articles assigned this week are a gold-mine for thinking about the origins of religion. Construct a plausible history of how what we now call 'religion' emerged out of great ape ritual. What were the key turning points and additions? Did religion 'take on a life of its own'? If so, in what way?”

Unit 9: Evolutionary psychology and religion

The growing field of the ‘evolutionary psychology of religion’ will be investigated for insights into the source of religion’s impact on human interaction.

Apr 15: Religion as a virus

Assignments:

Blackmore – *The Power of memes*

Dawkins – *Viruses of the mind*

Cullen – “Religion” from *Contagious Ideas*

Apr 17: The evolutionary psychology of religion

Assignment:

Dennett – *Breaking the Spell*

Reflection topic: “Give a brief summary of 'sweet tooth,' 'symbiont,' 'money,' 'sexual selection,' and 'pearl' theories of religion. Which seem(s) to be most important in Dennett’s account in the rest of the reading, and why? What ideas that we have covered this semester seem to be left out?”

Apr 22: Religion, the brain, and genetics

Assignment:

Class does research on the latest published articles concerning neuroscience and religion, genetics and religion; each student gives a 7 minute presentation on the article, summarizing its main points, noting how they quantified and defined 'religion', and suggesting where its importance might lay.

Apr 24: Religion, the brain, and genetics, con't

Assignment:

Presentations continue

Unit 10: Conclusion

In this section, the teacher will present his own theory as to religions development and change over time, up to and including the present. Broad themes will be explored concerning how religion first emerged as an overarching organizer of human socio-cultural development, how different aspects of human cultural life became distinguished from each other and from religion over time, and how changes in some aspects of culture (political reorganization, the rise of science) impacted religion.

Apr 29: Religion's bio-cultural co-evolution in prehistorical time

Assignment:

Look over syllabus carefully; trace the readings and topics of the course in your mind as a whole. Compare what you wrote the first day of class (which will be given back to you) to what you think now about what religion is. Write a one-two page reflection paper on where you think the most important moments were in developing your own thinking on the topic what does it mean to be human and/or what is religion. What readings, topics, or ideas seemed most important to you?

May 1: Religion's cultural evolution in historical time

Assignment:

Look over syllabus carefully; trace the readings and topics of the course in your mind as a whole. Write a one-two page reflection paper on where you think the most important moments were in developing your own thinking on the topic what does it mean to be human and/or what is religion. What readings, topics, or ideas seemed most important to you?

[Book reports due]

Final paper due; A 12 to 15-page paper that will allow the student to investigate further any theme we have developed in the course, requiring outside research. Whatever theme is chosen, connect it to a narrative of religion's origins and development in human/hominin prehistory. Conclude the paper by connecting your theme to the question, 'what does it mean to have a *human* way of being-in-the-world?'

Required texts

All students must purchase the following books (see table of contents, next):

- Hayden, Brian. 2003. *Shamans, Sorcerers and Saints*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books. 1588341682
- Rappaport, Roy A. 1999. *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 0521296900
- Renfrew, Colin, and Iain Morley, eds. 2009. *Becoming Human*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 0521734665

Texts available through Blackboard/for book reports (*)

Additional sources will be posted on Blackboard. They will be taken from the following books/articles:

- Bachner-Melman et al. 2005. AVPR1a and SLC6A4 Gene Polymorphisms Are Associated with Creative Dance Performance. *PLoS Genetics* 1 (3):e42.
- Blackmore, Susan. 2000. "The Power of Memes." *Scientific American* 283 (4): 52-61.
- *Boehm, Christopher. 1999. *Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- *Chase, Philip G. 2006. *The Emergence of Culture*. New York: Springer.
- Clottes, Jean, and Lewis-Williams, David. 1998. *The Shamans of Prehistory*. New York: Harry Abrams.
- Cullen, Ben. 2000. *Contagious Ideas: On Evolution, Culture, Archaeology, and Cultural Virus Theory*. Edited by James Steele, Richard Cullen, and Christopher Chippindale. London: Oxbow Books.
- D' Errico, Francesco. 2008. "Le Rouge et Le Noir: Implications of Early Pigment Use in Africa, the Near East and Europe for the Origin of Cultural Modernity." *South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series* 10: 168–74.
- D' Errico, Francesco et al. 2012. "Early Evidence of San Material Culture Represented by Organic Artifacts from Border Cave, South Africa." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109 (33): 13214–19.
- Dawkins, Richard. 1993. "Viruses of the Mind." In *Dennett and His Critics*, ed. Dahlbom, Bo, 13–27. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- *Deacon, Terrence. 1997. *The Symbolic Species*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Deacon, Terrence. 2003. Language. In *The Encyclopedia of Science and Religion, Vol 2*, edited by J. W. van Huyssteen. New York: Thomson/Gale.
- Deacon, Terrence, and Tyrone Cashman. 2009. "The Role of Symbolic Capacity in the Origins of Religion." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 3 (4): 490–517.
- *Dennett, Daniel. 2006. *Breaking the Spell*. New York: Viking.
- *Donald, Merlin. 2002. *A Mind So Rare*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co.
- Graham, Jesse and Jonathan Haidt. 2010. "Beyond Beliefs." *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14(1):140-150.
- *Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. New York: Pantheon.
- Hartley, Jennifer. 2000. 'We Were Given This Dance'. In *Deadhead Social Science*, edited by R. Adams and R. Sardiello. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

- Lowenthal, Ira P. 1978. "Ritual Performance and Religious Experience." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 34 (3):392-414.
- Marean, Curtis. 2010. "When the Sea Saved Humanity." *Scientific American*, August.
- *Mayer, Elizabeth. 2007. *Extraordinary Knowing*. New York: Bantam Books.
- McClenon, James. 1997. "Shamanic Healing, Human Evolution, and the Origin of Religion." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36 (3):345-354.
- *McNamara, Patrick. 2009. *The Neuroscience of Religious Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McNeill, William. 1995. *Keeping Together in Time*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- *Mithen, Steven. 1998. *The Prehistory of the Mind*. London: Phoenix.
- Nichols, D.E. and Chemel, B.R. 2006. The Neuropharmacology of Religious Experience. In *Where God and Science Meet, Vol 1*, edited by Patrick McNamara. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- *Norenzayan, Ara. 2013. *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict*. 1st edition. Princeton University Press.
- Rasmussen, Morten et al. 2011. "An Aboriginal Australian Genome Reveals Separate Human Dispersals into Asia." *Science* 334 (6052): 94–98.
- *Searle, John R. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: Free Press.
- Sutton, Shan. 2000. The Deadhead Community. In *Deadhead Social Science*, edited by R. Adams and R. Sardiello. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- *Tomasello, Michael. 2014. *A Natural History of Human Thinking*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- *Turner, Jonathan, Alexandra Maryanski, Anders Klostergaard Petersen, and Armin W. Geertz. 2017. *The Emergence and Evolution of Religion*. New York: Routledge.
- Turner, Mark. 2003. Double-Scope Stories. In *Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences*, edited by David Herman. Stanford: Center for the Study of Language and Information.
- *Turner, Mark. 2014. *The Origin of Ideas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van De Port, M. 2005. "Circling Around the Really Real." *Ethos* 33 (2): 149-79.
- Watanabe, John M., and Barbara B. Smuts. 1999. "Explaining Religion without Explaining it Away." *American Anthropologist* 101 (1):98-112.
- Wikipedia contributors. 2012. Human evolution. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*.
- *Wilson, DS. 2002. *Darwin's Cathedral*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wiltermuth, Scott S., and Chip Heath. 2009. "Synchrony and Cooperation." *Psychological Science* 20 (1):1-5.
- Winkelman, Michael, and John R. Baker. 2010. *Supernatural as Natural*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

In addition, we will be viewing the following movies, which will be available online or at Hayden library:

- Herzog, Werner. 2011. *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*: MPI Home Video.
- Wells, Spencer. 2003. *The Journey of Man*. PBS Home Video.



BECOMING HUMAN

*Innovation in Prehistoric Material
and Spiritual Culture*

Edited by
Colin Renfrew and Iain Morley

CAMBRIDGE

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A PREHISTORY OF RELIGION

SHAMANS

SORCERERS

AND SAINTS

BRIAN HAYDEN

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