

## BELIEF SYSTEMS IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

ANTH 472/872  
Spring 2010

Mr. Glazier  
Bessey Hall 108

*Course overview:* A cross-cultural examination of the structure, form, and functions of religious belief. Special attention will be given to the relationships between belief systems and social, political, and economic organizations. Tribal religions, world religions, and contemporary religious movements (e. g. neo-shamanism, Wicca, and so on) will be considered.

*Course objectives:* 1) To become familiar with basic concepts and methods utilized by anthropologists in the study of religion; 2) By looking at religion in other societies and cultures, to gain a better perspective on religion within one's own society; and 3) To gain a better understanding and appreciation of the diversity of human beliefs and practices as they relate to issues of human survival.

*Evaluation:* Students will be responsible for readings, video presentations, lecture material, and class discussions. 2/3 (66.6%) of the final grade will be based on two essay examinations (a mid-term and a final). 1/3 (33.3%) will be based on an in-class presentation or term paper.

*Grading scale:* 91-100 = A; 88-90 = B+; 81-87 = B; 78-80 = C+; 71-77 = C; 68-70 = D+; 61-67 = D; 60- = F.

*Office hours:* Regular office hours are on Monday afternoons and before and after class. Of course, he will be available at other times and by appointment. Please call 308-237-4537 (answering machine) or e-mail at: "sglaz1234@charter.net"

*Required texts:* Jack David Eller *Introducing Anthropology of Religion: Culture to the Ultimate*; Stephen D. Glazier (editor) *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook*; Mary Douglas *Purity and Danger*; Richard Katz *Boiling Energy*; and "Spiritual Baptist Music of Trinidad" (compact CD format).

## COURSE OUTLINE

<i>Session Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assigned Readings</i>
<b>Monday, January 11</b>	Introduction	Birckhead in Glazier pp. 19-84.

*Recommended:* James M. Donovan "Defining Religion" (pp. 61-98) *in* Stephen D. Glazier and Charles A. Flowerday, *Selected Readings in the Anthropology of Religion* (Praeger, 2003, on reserve)

<b>Monday, January 25</b>	Approaching Religion	Eller, pp. 1-28. Glazier in Glazier pp. 1-15.
	Video: "The Holy Ghost People"	

*Recommended:* Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System (pp. 87-125) *In The Interpretation of Cultures* (on reserve)

<b>Monday, February 1</b>	Religions as Belief Systems?	Lett in Glazier pp. 139-160. Pandian in Glazier pp. 505-516. Eller, pp. 29-53; pp. 247-273.
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*Recommended :*

Edith Turner "Fear of Religious Emotion Versus The Need for Research that Encompasses the Fullest Experiences." (pp. 109-118). *In* Glazier and Flowerday, *Selected Readings in the Anthropology of Religion*.

Galina Lindquist and Simon Coleman. "Introduction" to Against Belief? Special issue. *Social Analysis* 52 (2008): 1-18.

<b>Monday, February 8</b>	Religions in Practice	Eller, pp. 109-132 Alexander in Glazier pp. 139-160. Duntley in Glazier pp. 257-275.
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*Recommended:* Roy A. Rappaport, "Truth and Order" *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 344-370 (on reserve).



