Archeology of Religion and Ritual
Anthropology 2085
Spring 2012
Wednesday 2-5 pm

Instructors:
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Course Description:
This graduate seminar explores ritual and religious practices in archaeological contexts. Topics to be covered include anthropological perspectives on religion; origins of religion; religion and political economy; burial practices; materiality in/of ritual practice; and revitalization movements.

The course is designed for graduate students who wish to bring a cross-cultural perspective on ritual and religion to bear on their own research on archaeological data or contexts in a particular region. Undergraduates are welcome. The goal of the class is not to instill any one particular perspective but instead to provide students with a broad exposure to many of the contemporary issues in the field.

Requirements and Policies:
Students are expected to attend all seminar sessions and participate in discussion. All class discussions will be led by students in the class. Discussion leaders for particular topics will be assigned, but in order to make for a successful seminar, all students must be prepared to participate each week.

Discussion leaders should be prepared to lead the discussion with directed questions. In the event that multiple students are leading discussion together, we recommend meeting ahead of time to discuss the main issues.

In the second half of the semester, students will present their research topics during weeks that seem appropriate. These presentations will be assigned on the first day of class. The research paper and presentation are described more below.

Course Evaluation:
Weekly class participation: 25%
Discussion Leadership: 15%
Research Paper: 50%
Research Presentation: 10%
The course grade will be based on **participation** (contributing to class discussions) and **leadership** (thoughtful leading of discussions on the assigned articles and books) in addition to a **research paper**.

**Research Paper:** The research paper should cover a topic related to aspects of ritual or religion in a specific archaeological context. The paper should be of near publishable quality and approximately 15-30 pages in length. Alternatively, the student may write a research proposal. In such a case, the ideal proposal will be one that will be competitive for funding from a major research institution. This choice should be made only by those who will, in fact, be submitting a proposal to funding institutions but who do not yet have a viable proposal. Students should consider the topic of their research paper early in the term so that there is sufficient time to write it.

**Presentation:** Students will give presentations of their research or proposal topics during the second half of the term. These presentations should connect to themes that are discussed in the course.

**Annotated Bibliography:** An annotated bibliography must be created by the student for the readings done each week. Attendees are expected to use a bibliographical software package such as Endnote to create the bibliography and the annotations should be entered into a field in the software. Notes should include summary comments of the main points of the articles, questions that might be explored in class discussion, and ways that the readings are interconnected.
Required Books (Designated in BOLD throughout the reading list. These will not be available in PDF on the web site.):

Optional [The readings from these books WILL be available as PDFs on the course website]:

Topics:

Week 2: (2/1) Anthropological perspectives on religion (Approximately 136 pages total)

Discussants: ___________________________________________  ________________________________

Durkheim, Emile (1912). Selections from *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (pp. 34-49 in Lambeck). (15)

Weber, Max (1904-5). Selections from *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (pp. 50-60 in Lambeck). (10)


Week 3: (2/8) Archaeological Approaches (163 pp.)

Discussants: ________________________________


Week 4: (2/15) Religious Action: Ritual (242 pp.)

Discussants: ________________________________

  o I “The Practice of Ritual Theory” pp. 13-66 (53)
  o II “The Sense of Ritual” pp. 67-118 (51)


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**Week 5: (2/22) Materiality of Ritual (154 pp.)**

**Discussants:** __________________________________________________________

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**Week 6: (2/29) Religion, Ritual and Power (177 pp.)**

**Discussants:** __________________________________________________________

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  ○ III “Ritual and Power” pp .169-224 (55)


Week 7: (3/7) Semiotics, Signs, and Symbols (214 pp.)

Discussants: ______________________________ ________________


Week 8: (3/14) SPRING BREAK
**Week 9: (3/21) Ritual Landscapes** *(141 pp)*

**Discussants:** Yitzchak, Kyrah  
**Presentation:** Jo


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**Week 10: (3/28) Origin(s) of Religion(s)** *(181 pp)*

**Discussants:** Bridget, Max  
**Presenter:** Kyrah


**Week 11: (4/4) Ritual Production** *(163 pp.)*

**Discussants:** Nawa, Quiowei  
**Presenter:** Yitzchak


**Week 12: (4/11) Sacrifice** *(140 pages total)*

**Discussants:** Jo, Paul  
**Presenter:** Bing


Week 13: (4/18) NO CLASS – SAA CONFERENCE


Discussants: Jo, Yitzchak, Bing  
Presenter: Maria


