



REL 6387/LAS 6938: RELIGIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

Spring 2017

Tues. 4, Thurs. 4/5

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Office Hours: TBA

Description and Objectives

This class will familiarize students with important historical developments and contemporary expressions of religion in Latin America. We will focus on three major cross-cutting themes:

- The comparative study of religious ideas and practices. For example, how can we evaluate the ethical dimensions of institutions such as human sacrifice in pre-colonial Mesoamerica from our contemporary Western position? How can we understand the syncretic processes and results of colonial religion in the face of the power dynamics associated with the conquest? And how might we sift among the ideological, religious, and intellectual frameworks seeking to explain current religious diversity and change?

- The relations between religion and social change, including the role(s) of religion in encouraging, directing, and/or suppressing efforts to alter political structures; the relations between individual transformation and wider social change; and the ways that different social groups draw on the same religious symbols and rituals toward varying social and political ends.

- The strengths and weaknesses of various theoretical and methodological approaches to religious life in Latin America. We will discuss varying ethnographic models and also examine problems related to the scarcity and ambiguity of many historical sources. Tied to this will be discussions about primary sources, including fiction, visual art, oral histories, and church documents, and also about researchers' relationships to their subjects and materials.

Policies, rules, expectations, and resources

1. *Attendance and reading*: I expect you to attend all meetings of the class, barring extraordinary circumstances, and to come prepared to discuss the reading at each and every class meeting.

2. *Handing in Assignments*: Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant's office. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.

3. *Late or Make-Up Assignments*: You may receive an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances *and* with prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down ½ grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

4. *Completion of All Assignments*: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing for any assignment or requirement.

5. *Common Courtesy*: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls during class will be asked to leave. You may take notes on a laptop computer or other device, although the instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. Repeat violations of these rules will result in dismissal from the class.

6. *Honor Code*: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see <http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html>. Any student demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in any assignment for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

7. *Accommodation for Disabilities*: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

8. *Counseling Resources* available on campus for students:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601

9. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Requirements

1. Complete all readings and be ready to discuss them on the day for which they are assigned. Attendance is mandatory. Participation will be 10% of final grade.
2. Take-home essay exam, due Wed., Feb. 8 by 4:00 pm in my mailbox in 107 Anderson Hall. 25% of final grade.
3. Review essay, due Friday, April 7, by 4:00 pm in my mailbox; 30% of final grade.
4. Final Exam. Date TBA according to university exam schedule. 35% of final grade.

Course Readings

Note: All books are on reserve at Library West. Required books will be available for 24 hr-overnight use. Recommended books will be available for 24 hr. use. Several books are also available as e-books, as noted below.

Required Books

1. Kay Almere Read, *Time and Sacrifice in the Aztec Cosmos* (Indiana, 1998; ISBN 0253334004). E-book available through UF library.
2. Kathryn Burns, *Colonial Habits: Convents and the Spiritual Economy of Cusco, Peru* (Duke University Press, 1999; ISBN 9780822322917)

3. Todd Diacon, *Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality: Brazil's Contestado Rebellion, 1912-1916* (Duke, 1991o; ISBN 0822311674)
4. Paul C. Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip, and God: The Transformation of Brazilian Candomble* (Oxford, 2002; ISBN 0195188225)
5. Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem* (University of Texas Press, 2010; ISBN 9780292728172)
6. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Orbis 1988; ISBN 9780883445426).
7. Kristin Norget, *Days of Death, Days of Life: Ritual in the Popular Culture of Oaxaca* (Columbia, 2005; ISBN 0231136897)

Schedule

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| Th 1/5 | Introduction to the class |
| Tues 1/10 | Read, <i>Time and Sacrifice</i> , Ch. 1-2 |
| Th 1/12 | Read, <i>Time and Sacrifice</i> , Ch. 3-5 |
| Tues 1/17 | Read, <i>Time and Sacrifice</i> , Ch. 6-7 |
| Th 1/19 | Burns, <i>Colonial Habits</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1-2 |
| Tu 1/24 | Burns, <i>Colonial Habits</i> , Ch. 3-5 |
| Th 1/26 | Burns, <i>Colonial Habits</i> , Ch. 6-7 and Epilogue |
| Tu 1/31 | Diacon, <i>Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality</i> , Ch. 1-3 |
| Th 2/2 | Diacon, <i>Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality</i> , Ch. 4-5 |
| Tu 2/7 | Diacon, <i>Millenarian Vision, Capitalist Reality</i> , 6-7 |
| Wed. 2/8 | * Take-home exam due by 4:00 pm in my mailbox * |
| Th 2/9 | Johnson, <i>Secrets, Gossip, and God</i> , Introduction and Ch. 1-2 |

- Tu 2/14 Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip, and God*, Ch. 3-5
- Th 2/16 Johnson, *Secrets, Gossip, and God*, Ch. 6-7 and conclusion
- Tu 2/21 Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, Introductions and Ch. 1-3
- Th 2/23 Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, Ch. 4-6
- Tu 2/28 Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, Ch. 7-10
- Th 3/2 Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, Ch. 11-13 and Conclusion
- * SPRING BREAK, March 4-11 *
- Tu 3/14 * Additional readings about progressive Catholicism *
- Th 3/16 * Additional readings on contemporary Catholic movements *
- Tu 3/21 Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala*, Introduction and Ch. 1-2
- Th 3/23 Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala*, Ch. 3-4
- Tu 3/28 Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala*, Ch. 5-6
- Th. 3/30 Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala*, Ch. 7-8 and Epilogue
- Tu. 4/4 Norget, *Days of Death, Days of Life*, Introduction and Ch. 1-2
- Th. 4/6 Norget, *Days of Death, Days of Life*, Ch. 3-4
- Friday 4/7 ** Review Essay due by 4:00 pm in my mailbox **
- Tu 4/11 Norget, *Days of Death, Days of Life*, Ch. 5-6 and Epilogue
- Th. 4/13 * Additional readings on contemporary popular religion *
- Tu 4/18 Exam Review (final exam date TBA, according to University schedule)