1-1-2006

MW 725 Primal and Folk Religions

Eunice Irwin

Follow this and additional works at: http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi

Recommended Citation
http://place.asburyseminary.edu/syllabi/1876
Course Description: A study of the interaction of Christianity with primal and folk religions’ institutions and worldviews. Emphasis is given to how people from these types of religious traditions receive the witness of the gospel and come to understand and practice the Christian faith.

Course Objectives:
This course introduces the student to the world of primal and folk religions as it relates to Christian mission. Its specific objectives are:

1. To become aware of several disciplines used in the study of primal and folk religions.
2. To outline distinctive features of the worldviews of primal and folk religions.
3. To introduce the student to the methods of library and field research used to investigate a group that practices a primal or folk religion.
4. To put the student in touch with firsthand experiences (via guests or student accounts) whenever possible.
5. To prepare the student to engage in incarnational Christian witness and evangelism to people who practice primal or folk religion, and to respond to their needs in discipling.
6. To encourage the student to do constructive critique of mission efforts done in the past or the present among people with primal or folk religion backgrounds in order to better inform mission practice, church developments, and theological reflection.
7. To provide biblical and theological reflection and response to the issues of primal and folk groups.

Methodology of the Course: Lecture and research, with opportunity for students to contribute during the semester through class discussions. All students will select a particular people group or Christian community in order to investigate an aspect of primal or folk religion. Information from the case may be shared in class or used to illustrate points in the response papers. The objective of studying the people group or issue will be to produce a paper for the course. A take-home (open book) mid-term assignment will be given in place of an exam.

Requirements:

1. Interaction Papers (1-2 pages each) for seven readings assigned for class discussion. These are due in class on the dates listed for the readings and will not be accepted after that time. See schedule for assigned readings and interaction papers. (25%)

2. Mid-Term Assignment (open book, take home) over the text by Paul Hiebert and the book by Father Michael Oleksa, Another Culture, Another World. Assignment Distributed: 10/10 Due: 10/24 (15%)
3. **Class Participation** through regular attendance, timely submission of assignments, submitting reading log, and contributing to class discussions. (15%)

4. **Research Paper** done for **this class** on any issue of primal or folk religion affecting a specific people group or Christian community (such as syncretism, conversion, or other topic). **The paper will be done in two stages, with two parts submitted.**

   a. **Research Paper’s “Problem”:** Write a 2-3 page statement of the problem of a primal or folk group that will be studied in the research paper. In addition, provide bibliography of at least 5 sources totaling a minimum 75 pages of information from scholarly journals, books, or primary research data about issue of the people group or Christian community. (Incorporate the “4th book” you chose to read for the course in support of this paper.) Summarize the problem as a question. **Due: 10/10** (20%)

   b. **Research Paper’s “Solution”:** Write a 15-20 page paper that investigates and proposes a solution to the problem of the primal or folk group. This should make use of the research materials identified and employ theory or methods consistent with the course. Summarize the solution as a plausible answer to the problem. Use standard ESJ form and style when writing the paper. **Due: 12/12** [May be submitted earlier, however.] (25%)

**Grading Scale:**

- A  = 95
- A- = 90
- B+ = 85
- B  = 82.5
- B- = 80
- C+ = 77.5
- C  = 75

**Contacting the Professor:** Students may contact me by phone at: (859) 858-2148, or by email at: eunice_irwin@asburyseminary.edu
Required Texts and Readings

1. Burnett, David  

2. Hiebert, Paul G., Daniel Shaw and Tite Tienou  

3. Oleksa, Father Michael  
   2005  *Another Culture/ Another World.* Juneau, AK: Association of Alaska School Boards.

4. Select a fourth book from the list below, or propose another to the professor for approval. Choose to read a book that is compatible with your research paper.

   Kirwin, Michael  

   Lowe, Chuck  

   Mackay, John A.  

   Magesa, Laurenti  

   Spiro, Melford  
   1960  *Burmese Supernaturalism.*

5. Required articles (7) for Interaction Papers (See Course Schedule for dates due!)
   In the MW 725 Course Reading Packet you should find:
   * Jaime Bulatao, “Split-Level Christianity”
   * Andre Droogers, “Power and Meaning in Three Brazilian Popular Religions”
   * Jim Harries, “Good-by-Default and Evil in Africa”
   * Bill Musk, “Popular Islam: The Hunger of the Heart”
   * Michael A. Perry, “ACTS in Progress: A Diacronic Overview of Kinbanguism”
   * Osias Segura Guzman, “Evangelical Costa Rican Churches, Folk-Catholics, and Conversion: The Case Study of the Ritual Prayer of El Rezo del Nino”
   * Mathias Zahniser, “Ritual Process and Christian Discipling: Contextualizing a Buddhist Rite of Passage”
Recommended Readings and Additional Bibliography

Arnold, Clinton


Aulen, Gustaf

Bacdayan, Albert

Bamat, Tomas and Jean-Paul Wiest

Bediako, Kwame

Bradshaw, Bruce
1993  *Bridging the Gap: Evangelism, Development and Shalom*. Monrovia, CA: MARC.

Burnett, David

Ching, Julia

Costello, Damian

Donovan, Vincent J.

Dye, Wayne
Eliade, Mircea

Galileo, Segundo

Grabbe, Lester
*Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages.*

Haile, Sarah

Hiebert, Paul G. and Eloise Hiebert Meneses

Hefner, Robert, ed.

Hultkrantz, Ake

Keysser, Christian

Kraft, Marguerite G.

Loewen, Jacob A.

McAlpine, Thomas H.
1991  *Facing the Powers: What are the Options?* Monrovia, CA: MARC.

McIlwain, Trevor with Nancy Everson
1993  *Firm Foundations—Creation to Christ.* Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission. [This is a study guide with workbook on biblical texts relevant to animists.]
Newing, Edward G.

Niehardt, John G.

Olson, Bruce E.

Paden, William E.

Richardson, Don

Shetler, Joanne
1992  *And the Word Came with Power*. Portland, OR: Multnomah Press.

Rommen, Edward, ed.
1995  *Spiritual Power and Missions: Raising the Issues*. (Evangelical Missionary Society, Series, No. 3) Pasadena: William Carey Library. Entire volume is given to the topic of spiritual warfare and views of evangelical missiologists, and include:
Kraft, Charles, “‘Christian Animism’ or God-Given Authority?”, 88-136

Shorter, Aylward
1982  “Folk Christianity and Functional Christology,” *AFER* 24(3) (June): 133-137.

Starkloff, Carl

Stewart, Charles and Rosalind Shaw, eds.

Taylor, John V.

Tippett, Alan  

Turner, Harold W.  

Van Rheenan, Gailyn  

Williams, Peter W.  

Yamamori, Tetsunao and Charles R. Taber, eds  

Other Helpful Resources: Websites, etc.

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization  
1977ff  Lausanne Occasional Papers. [Popularly known as LOP’s, these represent published documents on evangelization and witness created from global consultations involving widely recognized evangelical leaders.]  
Reports relevant to MW725 include:  
No. 6 Christian Witness to Chinese People  
No. 16 Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Asia  
No. 17 Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Latin America  
No. 18 Christian Witness to People of African Traditional Religion  
No. 22 Christian Witness to the Urban Poor  
See at: http://www.lausanne.org/Brix?77=12890

Encountering Islam  
See at: http://www.encounteringislam.org
Course Schedule

Required Readings (due on dates scheduled below) are from:

- **H** = Paul Hiebert, et al., *Understanding Folk Religion*
- **B** = David Burnet, *World of the Spirits*
- **O** = Father Michael Oleksa, *Another Culture/Another World*

Required Interaction Papers (due in class on dates scheduled below) are from:

**MW725 Course Packet** (This can be purchased in the Bookstore.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9/5   | PRIMAL AND FOLK WORLDVIEWS (Folk1  Folk2)  
Syllabus and Introduction to the Course  
_Due: B 7-28_ (Do reading after class today only. On dates having required readings, you should complete these before the time class meets.) |
| 9/12  | CRITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION THEORY  
_Due: H 9-29_ (Chapter 1)  
_Due: H 31-44_ (Chapter 2)  
| 9/19  | PHENOMENA: CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS  
*Due: O (Read the entire Oleksa book!)  
Guest Lecturer: TBA  
_Due: B 28-45_  
_Due: H 45-72_ (Chapter 3) |
| 9/26  | GODS & POWERS (Magic_ “Innocent” Manipulation of World)  
_Due: H 73-92_ (Chapter 4)  
FOLK & FORMAL RELIGION  
CONTROLLING THE COSMIC FORCES  
Video: “Legacy of the Spirits” |
| 10/3  | MEANING OF LIFE AND DEATH (Soul/s, Ghosts, Ancestors)  
_Due: B 46-74_  
_Due: H 93-132_ (Chapter 5)  
ANCESTOR PRACTICES IN TAIWAN  
Video: “Taoism” |
| 10/10 | *Due: Research Paper Problem (Question and Working Bibliography)  
Class will discuss students’ proposed projects and “4th book” choices.  
Distributed: Take-Home Assignment (on Hiebert & Oleksa texts) |
10/17  POLLUTION, POWER OF RITUAL, AND DIVINING  
  Due:  B 75-121  
  Due:  H 133-174 (Chapter 6)  
  DANGEROUS SPIRITUAL POWERS:  WITCHCRAFT AND  
  SORCERY  (Magic -- “Selfish” Manipulation of World)  
  Due:  B 122-156  

10/24  GUIDANCE & UNKNOWN  (Shamans, Healers, Mediums, Mystics)  
  Due:  B 157-191  
  Due:  H 175-195 (Chapter 7)  
  Video: “Transformations II”  
  * Due:  Take-Home Assignment (on Hiebert & Oleksa texts)  

10/31  SPIRIT POSSESSION CULTS  
  Video: “Umbanda”  
  * Due:  Interaction Paper #3: Andre Droogers, “Power and Meaning in  
  Three Brazilian Popular Religions” IN Susanna Rostas and Andre  
  Droogers, eds., The Popular Use of Popular Religion in Latin America,  
  1993, 17-27.  
  Discussion: Theological and Pastoral Views of Spiritual Warfare

11/7  ENFORCING RIGHT & WRONG  (Pollution & Purity vs.  
  Sin & Salvation)  
  Due:  H 197-228 (Chapter 8)  
  * Due:  Interaction Paper #4: Jim Harries, “Good-by-Default and Evil  
  GOSPEL CONVEYED THRU FORMS  (Signs, Myths, Rituals)  
  Due:  H 229-255 (Chapter 9)  

11/14  THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL AS STORY TOLD (Myth)  
  Due:  H 257-281 (Chapter 10)  
  THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL AS ACTED STORY (Ritual)  
  Due:  H 283-322 (Chapter 11)  
  * Due:  Interaction Paper #5: Mathias Zahniser, “Ritual Process and  
  Christian Discipling: Contextualizing a Buddhist Rite of Passage”,  

11/21  Fall Reading Week  (Class will not meet.)  

11/28  GOSPEL VIEWED VIA SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS & LEADERS  
  Due:  H 323-346 (Chapter 12)  
  PROCESS OF RELIGIOUS CHANGE OVER TIME  
  Due:  B 209-225  
  * Due:  Interaction Paper #6: Michael Perry, “ACTS in Progress: A
Diachronic Overview of Kimbanguism”, *Missiology*

**RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM OF PEASANT PEOPLES**
Due: B 226-240

**NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS & THEIR TYPES**
Due: B 241-271

Due: H 347-365 (Chapter 13)

12/5

**PARADIGMS OF CONVERSION**
Due: H 369-392 (Chapters 14 & 15)


12/12

**Finals Week** (Class will meet to report and submit final papers.)
Students submit their Reading Report Log today.

* Due: **Research Paper**!!