1-1-2002

MW 725 Primal and Folk Religions

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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 when investigating a group that practices a primal or folk religion.
4. To put the student in touch with firsthand experiences (via guests or students' accounts)
   when possible. Study in regional groups to allow for area reflection on course issues.
5. To prepare the student to engage in incarnational Christian witness and evangelism to people who practice primal or folk religion, and to assess 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 development, and theological reflection.

Methodology of Course: Lecture and activities, with opportunity for students to contribute during the semester through discussion and group presentations. All students will select a particular people group or Christian community in order to investigate an aspect of primal or folk religion. Information about the case may be shared in class or used to illustrate regularly assigned response papers; but the case will be the focus of a research paper, and feature in discussions and reports of the regional group. A take-home (open-book) mid-term assignment over the book *Black Elk Speaks* will be given in place of an exam.

Requirements:

1. Submission of Response Papers (1-2 pages each) for 8 chapters or articles assigned for class discussion. [See schedule for readings in bold type, with notation of RP in the margin. Answer the question given for that reading.] These are due at class time on the dates the readings are listed. (25%)
2. Participation in a Regional Studies Group (GPs) in order to prepare class presentations on: 1) the assigned video event, and 2) the final report on major findings of the GPs. Consultation on student term project topics and bibliographies (as desired) The fourth required reading is in support of the group work or research paper. (15%)

3. Mid-Term Assignment (open-book, take-home) over Black Elk Speaks.
   [Distributed: November 7, and Due: November 19.] (20%)

4. Research Paper on any aspect of primal or folk religion within a people group or Christian community researched during the semester. In stages:
   a. Submit Topic and Bibliography (Itemize >75 pages, taken from >5 journal articles, scholarly texts, or other primary data in support of your paper). [Due: October 22] (10%)
   b. A Research Paper of 20+ pages, interpreting the issue of primal or folk religion studied, integrating information from research with theories given in the course [Critical Contextualization, for example] with suggestions for practical recommendations for Christian witness and discipleship most needed at this time. Research Papers will be due on December 4. (30%)

   Contacting the Instructor:
   Students may contact me at my office, McPheeters Room 311, or phone me there: 858-2148. If you need to reach me at my home, the number is: 858-0705.

   Required Reading

   Burnett, David

   Hiebert, Paul G., Daniel Shaw & Tite Tienou

   Niehardt, John G.

   4th Required Reading (Select ONE below or propose one to instructor)

   Ching, Julia

**Recommended Reading**


Olson, Bruce E.  1973  *Bruchko*. Carol Stream, IL: Creation House.


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

Taylor, John V.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Editor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td><em>Popular Religion in America.</em></td>
<td>Williams, Peter W.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Other Resources</strong></td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td><em>The Colossian Syncretism: The Interface between Christianity and Folk Belief at Colossae.</em></td>
<td>Arnold, Clinton</td>
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<td>1999</td>
<td><em>Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians.</em></td>
<td>Arnold, Clinton</td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td><em>The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion.</em></td>
<td>Eliade, Mircea</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td><em>Incarnational Ministry: Planting Churches in Band, Tribal, Peasant, and Urban Societies.</em></td>
<td>Hiebert, Paul G. and Eloise Hiebert Meneses</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980ff</td>
<td><em>Lausanne Occasional Papers.</em> [Known as LOP’s, these represent the documents that have been created from global consultations involving widely recognized evangelical leaders. Relevant reports are: 6, 16, 17, 18, 22.] See: <a href="http://wwwgospel.com.net/lcwe/LOP/index.htm">http://wwwgospel.com.net/lcwe/LOP/index.htm</a>.</td>
<td>Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>&quot;Missionaries and Anthropologists Cooperate in Research,&quot; <em>Practical Anthropology</em> 12(4), 158-190.</td>
<td>Loewen, Jacob A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td><em>Firm Foundations--Creation to Christ.</em> Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission. [This is a study guide with workbook on biblical texts relevant to animists.]</td>
<td>McIlwain, Trevor with Nancy Everson</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Evangelical Missionary Society, Series, No. 3). Pasadena: Wm Carey Library. This</td>
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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.

Look for additional recommended articles on e-Reserve or on the Reserve Shelf in the B.L. Fisher Library.