<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading:</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>August</strong></td>
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| 29 | What is religion?  
Moro: Eller; Lee |
| **September** | 3 | Where did religion come from?  
Henig* |
| 5 | Religious specialists  
Moro: Turner (p. 143); M.F. Brown; Vitebsky |
| 10 | Mythology  
Magoulick* |
| 12 | Symbols  
Stevens*; Santino* |
| 17 | Ritual: definition  
Moro: Turner (p. 90); Gluckman* |
| 19 | Ritual: function  
Moro: Norget; Gmelch; Farrer* |
| 24 | **Sorrow of the Lonely**  
Ch. 1-3 |
| 26 | **Sorrow of the Lonely** |
Ch. 4-5

October  1
Sorrow of the Lonely
Ch. 6-8

3
Sorrow of the Lonely
Ch. 9-10

8
Death
Moro: Metcalf; Barber*; Rosaldo*

10
Cannibalism
Moro: Conklin; Conklin* (yes, there are two Conklin readings!)

15
MID-TERM EXAM

17
Non-human agents
Moro: Harris; K.M Brown; Freed & Freed*; Messenger*

22
Magic and its practitioners
Moro: McPherson, Hewlett et al, review Gmelch; Detweiler*;

24
In Sorcery’s Shadow
Prologue, Section 1 (Ch. 1-21)

29
In Sorcery’s Shadow
Section 2, 3 (Ch. 22-32)

31
In Sorcery’s Shadow
Section 4, 5 (Ch. 33-41)

November  5
New religious forms
Moro: Luhrmann; Wallace*; Whitmore*

7
Theater in a Crowded Fire
Introduction, Ch. 1

12
Theater in a Crowded Fire
Ch. 2

PAPER DUE

14
Theater in a Crowded Fire
Ch. 3

19
Theater in a Crowded Fire
Ch. 4, 6

21
Religion and women
Learning Objectives

* to get some idea of how religions fit into society and culture and what they mean to those whose religions they are;

* to challenge your assumptions about what you think religion is;

* to learn something about religions other than your own

Course Requirements:

This syllabus represents the basic framework of this class. However, I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE IT IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY. This would only happen if we get behind, or want to pursue a topic for more time than I have allowed for that topic. You will get plenty of warning if I do have to change the syllabus.

All of the reading listed in this syllabus is required. You are also responsible for anything which happens in class. It will make this class both more interesting and more useful for you if you will PLEASE DO THE READING. That will make it easier for you to enter discussions, which will be numerous in this class.

You must take both exams and turn in the paper in order to pass the course. There are two exams, one during the semester and the other during the final exam period. Each will cover the section of the course which precedes it; the second exam is not cumulative. Each exam is worth 35% of your grade.

FAILURE TO APPEAR AT AN EXAM WITHOUT LETTING ME KNOW IN ADVANCE, WILL GET YOU AN F ON THAT EXAM. If you must miss an exam, you will have until I hand back the graded exams to make it up. This is usually about a week. If this becomes necessary, please see me as soon as possible to arrange a time.

There is also a short paper for this course. The subject of this paper is to consider your own understanding of religion in relation to what you have read for this class. The paper topic is appended to the syllabus and is intended to be a "thought" paper which asks you to consider some of the examples of religious beliefs and ideas about which you have read in terms of your own experience with religion. It should be no shorter than...
5 pages, and no longer than 7 pages. It will be worth 30% of your grade. It is due IN CLASS on NOVEMBER 12. YOU MAY ONLY SUBMIT PAPERS BY E-MAIL IF YOU HAVE MADE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO DO SO. I am not a printing service. Last minute submissions by e-mail without such arrangements will not be accepted.

I DON’T DO EXTRA CREDIT, SO DON’T EVEN ASK! If you are having trouble with the course material, come and see me. THIS SHOULD BE DONE EARLIER RATHER THAN LATER. I am happy to help you succeed in this class, but I can’t do it if I don’t know that you need help, and there will come a point in the semester where it will be too late to do anything. So stay on top of it!

My office is Rm. 204 in 2112 G St. and you can reach me at extension is 4-6075. You can also reach me by e-mail at sjohnsto@gwu.edu. My office hours are Wednesday 2:15-4:00 and Friday 11-12:30. You can also always reach me by email (including days when I’m not on campus). I check my email frequently!

References, Blackboard readings:


Obermeyer, Carla Makhlof. 1999. Female Genital Surgeries: The Known, the Unknown, and the Unknowable, Medical Anthropology Quarterly 13(1):79-106.


Your paper for this class should be a comparison of your own experience of religion with two of the examples of religion from the readings for the class. That means two different groups of people, not similarities and differences within one group. I would like you to answer the following questions in the paper:

1. Of all of the readings for the class, which presents a religious tradition that seems the most foreign to you? What, specifically, about it makes it seem that way?

2. Of all of the readings for the class, which presents a religious tradition that seems the most familiar to you? What, specifically, about it makes it seem that way?

You may choose among most of the readings, including both the books and the articles in Lehmann and Myers. This includes articles you might not yet have read but will be reading later in the semester (i.e. you can read ahead!). The idea is to discuss one reading that is similar and one that is different, not the similarities and differences in two readings. There are only three rules about which readings you may choose:

1. You may not choose a reading about your own religious tradition as the familiar one. If you have a particular religious affiliation, it's no fair picking a reading about it and then saying that this is the one that is the most familiar! You must stay outside your own tradition, whatever it may be, for both readings.

2. You must choose a reading that was assigned for this class. If you are strongly compelled to use one of the other readings from Moro that was not assigned or something from outside the course, you may make a case to me personally, at least three weeks before the paper is due.

3. You should focus on the readings with ethnographic content and avoid the more secular readings (e.g. baseball magic or yellow ribbon symbolism) and the more theoretical ones (e.g. the general discussion of revitalization movements or religious specialists). That means you should be talking about the specific beliefs and practices of a particular culture and not, for example, the general characteristics of shamanism. Otherwise, all of the ethnographic readings are fair game, including those we might not yet have gotten to in the syllabus. If you use one of the readings where there is a lot of information on the non-religious aspects of the society, (e.g. the Kaluli), make sure that you focus on the religious aspects of their culture and not the more secular ones.

So, for example, if I practice the religion of Egonarcissism, in which we worship our own reflections in bodies of water through rituals that we create no more than an hour before they are carried out, I might identify Wicca as a similar religious tradition because it also has a highly creative approach to ritual, can create ritual spontaneously, and is strongly oriented towards individual needs. By contrast, the gisaro might be foreign because it is highly structured, practiced with a group of people, and requires a response by others as an important aspect of ritual.

You are not required to use any materials outside of these readings, but if you do, PLEASE PROVIDE ME WITH THE FULL CITATION INFORMATION. Remember, the rule is that anything that isn't common knowledge (or, in this paper, one of the two articles you are analyzing) must be cited. If the information is something you learned from some religious context, then note that, e.g. "As I was taught in Sunday school..." Citation is not necessary if you are talking about class readings, as long as it’s clear what reading you are
talking about (e.g. “In Conklin’s discussion of the Wari’...”). The only exception is that, if you use a direct quote, you should note the page number. If you cite material from the Moro book, you should cite the author (e.g. Metcalf, Macpherson, etc.), not Moro. She edited the book but didn’t write the chapters, and you should give credit to the person who wrote them. Finally, for citations, you may not use footnotes. I set the page limits with good reason, and footnotes mess up my assessment of how long the paper is. Instead, if you want, you can use endnotes, i.e. ones that appear at the end of the paper.

While I want you to have as much latitude for creativity as possible, your paper should include, in no particular order, the following elements:

• You should discuss how you think about religion. This may include your own personal religious beliefs, or it could be a more general discussion of how you think religion fits into society. You may use the formal definition of religion that I gave you ONLY if it conforms to what you already thought about religion before taking this course. What I'm interested in is how your own personal experience has made you think about religion.

• If you do not have a particular religious affiliation or identity, there are several possibilities. You can talk about how you think religion works in society or, if you were raised in a particular tradition but don’t identify with it any more, you can still use it as the basis of comparison. Or, if you see the world from a scientific perspective, you can use this as the basis for comparison. The main thing is to make it work in terms of your comparisons.

• You should do a fairly close and detailed analysis of the readings you have chosen in terms of how they fit or don't fit into what you think about religion. Here, I'm interested in specifics-- what exactly is it about these two readings that makes the religions seems familiar or foreign? Is it behaviors, or ideology, or what? I expect ethnographic detail here, not generalities. I will be looking for evidence that you actually read these sources, and aren’t just coasting on class notes.

• General features shared by all religions and/or rituals aren’t what I’m looking for. For example, all rituals are repetitive, so the fact that aspects of two rituals are repeated isn’t a valid reason to identify two rituals as similar. I’m looking for something deeper here.

• Language matters. Value judgments are permissible, if used VERY carefully. I'm not interested in hearing about whether or not you consider other cultures valuable. However, if you chose a particular reading as being foreign to you because it contains elements which you have been taught are not appropriate, or are personally repugnant, or whatever, that's okay. Statements like “I was taught that eating people was not acceptable so I can’t imagine doing it” are fine; “eating people is disgusting” or “these people are so primitive” are not. In fact, you should avoid the word "primitive" altogether!

• You should have a few points of comparison for each example. Spending four pages talking about yourself and then a paragraph on each example isn't what I have in mind. You should spend about the same amount of time discussing your own ideas as you do each example.

• You should make the specific comparisons explicit. Don't just describe the two cultures' practices and then assume I know what you think is similar or not. Different people use different examples differently. For example, while it may be obvious to you why the gisaro is foreign, you need to spell it out for me. And don’t just say it’s different or similar—explain how. For example, “I was taught violence was wrong so I find the gisaro foreign” doesn’t explain why. You need to spell out what specific aspects of the gisaro you see as violent and therefore why they seem odd.

• Grammar and organization count! While I don't expect you be writing prize-winning prose, your grade will go down if there is a large number of typos, grammatical errors, lapses in logic, etc. An A paper will not look
like something you spit out after midnight the night before it was due and clearly haven’t read over since. If
English is your second language, I would strongly encourage you to either write a draft (see below) or use
the writing centre. I have all kinds of sympathy for people who are writing papers in a second language, but
ultimately it is your responsibility to see that you write in a way that I can understand.

The paper should be double-spaced, no shorter than five pages, and no longer than seven. And please
remember-- I have been using computers longer than most of you have been alive. I know all about large
typefaces and large margins. Please give me some credit for intelligence. Given the nature of the paper, it is
also perfectly acceptable to write informally and in the first person.

If you want to discuss any details about this paper with me, please come to my office hours. Also, I would
be happy to read a draft version of your paper, and make comments on it before you turn the final version in.
If you want to write a draft, please give it to me no later than ten days before the paper is due. Emailing
drafts is fine, and actually encouraged, though the final version must be printed out.

The final paper is due **November 12, in class.**

Addendum: In case it needs to be said, anything you write remains private, between you and me!