

ROWAN UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL TITLE: ~~New Course: Native Traditions~~ ~~Native Traditions~~ New Course: Native Religious Traditions

CHECK APPROPRIATE: UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE SEMESTER HOURS

SPONSOR(S): D Ash ton, J Grace

DEPARTMENT/TELEPHONE #

CHECK ONE: COURSE MINOR PROGRAM CONCENTRATION SPECIALIZATION
 ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM MAJOR PROGRAM

<p>Step #1 (Department)</p> <p><u>10/24/97</u> Approved (Date) <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved (Date)</p> <p><u>David Williams</u> Dept. Curriculum Chr.</p> <p><u>10/24/97</u> Reviewed (Date) <u>David Williams</u> Dept. Chr.</p>	<p>Step #2 (Receipt)</p> <p>SCC# <u>97-98-232</u></p> <p><u>2-5-98</u> Date Received Senate</p> <p>_____ Senate Curriculum Chr.</p>	<p>Step #3 (School)</p> <p>Reviewed Date: <u>1/27/98</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommend to Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Recommend NOT to Approve</p> <p>Forward for Open Hearing: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WITHOUT Reservations <input type="checkbox"/> WITH Reservations:</p> <p>Comments: <u>Needs consultation with Geography Dept (to come)</u> <u>Joe Galter</u> School Committee Chr.</p>
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Step #4 (Academic Dean): Recommended NOT Recommended Conditionally Recommended (See Comments)

Comments:

Dean Signature/Date _____

Step #5 (Senate Curriculum Committee): Open Hearing Date: _____ Approved by Curriculum Committee Date _____

Returned to Sponsor(s) for the following reason:

Step #6 (Senate) Date announced/voted on at Senate _____ If voted on: Approved NOT Approved

Forwarded to Executive Vice President/Provost _____

Senate Curriculum Committee chair Signature/Date: _____

PROPOSAL FOR THE COURSE "NATIVE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS"

I. Details

- A. Course Title: Native Religious Traditions
- B. Sponsors: Dianne Ashton, Philosophy/Religion
James H. Grace, Philosophy/Religion
- C. Credit Hours: 3
- D. Course Level: 300
- E. Curricular Effect: This course is intended to become an upper level General Education elective and will be required for Majors in the proposed interdisciplinary major in Philosophy and Religion. It is a Multicultural/Global course.
- F. Prerequisite: one course in Religion or Philosophy or consent of the instructor.
- G. Implementation:
 - 1. Time: Fall Semester, 1998.
 - 2. Scale: At least one section of this course will be offered every third semester, depending on student demand.
- H. Adequacy of:
 - 1. Staffing: The Philosophy and Religion Department presently has two faculty members qualified to teach this course. It is expected that other current or new staff may be interested in teaching this course subsequently.
 - 2. Library Facilities and Holdings: The Philosophy and Religion Department has over the past ten years ordered those new books that have advanced scholarly knowledge and understanding of native traditions. With these and future additions, the library's collection will suffice for the purposes of an undergraduate course on this topic.
 - 3. Space Needs: One classroom with blackboards will be needed for at least one semester every third year. Regular classroom space can be used, as well as, depending on seating needs, Library seminar rooms.

II. Rationale

The religious traditions of small scale, non literate cultures have provided scholars with unique research opportunities that challenge many preconceptions common in western civilization. Because these cultures do not have written scriptures or histories, their study requires a distinctive set of intellectual tools. Therefore, these groups do not fit conceptually into the course, Religions of the World. Nor can they fit, either thematically or conceptually, into any other religion studies course currently offered at Rowan.

In acquiring these distinctive intellectual tools, students learn general knowledge about the history of western ideas leading to the contemporary interest in multicultural understanding. Students are provided with an overview of the development of the discipline of Cultural Anthropology as they study analyses of native traditions written by scholars in that discipline. Texts for this course will be drawn from those written by Cultural Anthropologists and from contemporary writings by members of native traditions.

Thus, this course in Native Religious Traditions is

important because it offers students a unique body of knowledge in native religions and because it engages them in acquiring a set of intellectual tools and historical understandings not available in any other course offered by our department. Finally, we expect that students will be interested in this course because it intersects with popular interest in native religious traditions, especially in the areas of environmental ecology and healing.

III. Essence of the Course

A. Course Objectives:

A student who successfully completes this course should have minimally acquired the following:

1. A familiarity with the history of western ideas about native cultures.
2. An understanding and appreciation of the beliefs and world views of native traditions.
3. An awareness that religious ideas, economics, and social structures are intimately linked and that this linkage is complex.
4. Knowledge of religious beliefs and practices of specific traditions.
5. Familiarity with the discipline of cultural anthropology and some ability to evaluate its products.

B. Topical Outline/Content:

The topics that will be included in this course center around three themes:

1. The history of western conceptualizations of native religions, their origins in European religious and economic history, their continuation in American history, and their transformations in recent years. The history of the disciplines of cultural anthropology and religion studies reflect that history. These disciplines have been revolutionized by contemporary changes.
2. The cosmologies and religious rites of native cultures.
3. The relationships between religious ideas and practices and community and economic structures.

C. Evaluation and Grading:

At the discretion of the instructor, students may be evaluated on the basis of examinations, journals, class participation, research projects, and other written assignments.

D. Course Evaluation:

SIRs and peer review as well as students' qualitative assessments presented at the end of the course concerning what they liked most or least about i) the course, ii) the instructor, iii) the materials used e.g., texts, audio-visuals, etc., iv) suggestions to improve the course.

E. Consultations:

The following persons have been consulted informally about the content and structure of this course: Prof. Thomas Dean and Emeritus Prof. Leonard Barret, Temple University; Prof. Karen McCarthy Brown, Drew University, Prof. Riv-Ellen Prell, University of Minnesota, Prof. Yael Zerubavel, Rutgers University.

F. Additional Information:

Selected Bibliography

- Bastide, Roger, The African Religions of Brazil: Toward a Sociology of the Interpenetration of Civilizations Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978
- Beck, Peggy V. and Walters, A.L., The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life Tsale, AZ, Navajo Community College, 1977
- Boon, James, The Anthropological Romance of Bali Oxford University Press, 1986
- Brown, Karen McCarthy, Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn University of California Press, 1991
- Durkheim, Emile, Elementary Forms of Religious Life
Conversations With Ogotemeli
- Gill, Sam D. Native American Religions: An Introduction. Wadsworth, 1982
- Lewis, I.M. Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism Baltimore, Penguin, 1971
- Long, Charles H., Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion Fortress Press, 1986
- Lowenthal, Ira P. "Ritual Performance and Religious Experience: A Service for the Gods in Southern Haiti." Journal of Anthropological Research 34 (1978)
- Mbiti, John, African Philosophy Oxford University Press, 1977
- Murphy, Joseph, Working the Spirit: Ceremonies of the African Diaspora 1996
- Turner, Victor, Forest of Symbols
- Van Gennep, Arnold, Rites of Passage university of Chicago Press, 1960
- Murphy, Yolanda and Murphy, Michael, Women of the Forest
- Walker, Sheila, "Everyday and Esoteric Reality in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble." History of Religions 30.4 (1991)

G. Catalog Description:

300 level

Prerequisite: one course in Philosophy or Religion or permission of the instructor

NATIVE RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS 3 s.h.

This course will examine the religious traditions of indigenous peoples of Africa, North America, and Australia and the ways that these religions have been understood and misunderstood by western scholars.

Sample Syllabus for an "applied focus" course in Philosophy & Religion

Course topic: Social Justice

Course objectives: An applied focus course has several objectives. One is to provide you with the opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary fashion, and in collaboration with other students and faculty. Another is to enable you to apply the theories and methods of your major to concrete personal, social, and political problems and issues. A third objective is to help you identify and pursue areas of interest to you within your major, under faculty supervision and in a stimulating and moderately structured context.

Course format: We will begin with three weeks of traditional seminar meetings, during which our topic will be introduced through relevant readings and discussions, resources for exploring the topic will be identified, individual/group research tasks will be identified and approved, and effective lines of communication established for the middle 8 weeks of the semester. During that part of the semester, you will pursue your research assignments; these may include more traditional academic research in books and periodicals, field interviews, and the development of case studies or simulations. We will reassemble for the last three weeks to present results. These will then be compiled in a joint research project, presented as a public seminar, developed as a web-page, submitted for publication, or made use of in some other way, depending on their content.

For our focus, social justice, we might choose the current changes in the welfare system as a specific focus for our research. At the theoretical end, a wide range of readings is available. Many philosophers and religious scholars and leaders have written on social justice, and in particular on wealth and poverty, advantage and disadvantage, and the meaning of work; a selection from these writings will lay a good foundation for the semester's work. It should help us to recognize what we will encounter through activities and research outside the classroom during the middle part of the course. During that part, some of you might search the congressional record, and the published opinions of politicians who have authored some of the recent changes in welfare law at both the federal and state level, looking for the philosophical and religious roots of these changes. Others might trace the history of ideas of social justice in the United States as they have affected policy regarding wealth and poverty. You should also investigate the way issues of race, gender and class are integral to the current changes (for example, by looking at the influence of The Bell Curve and similar works on these changes). And some of you might interview social workers, welfare recipients, and welfare rights advocates in the tri-state area (and elsewhere if possible) to get a realistic picture of the effects of the current changes. Some of you may choose to continue study of one or another theory of social justice. You may choose to work on your own or to work with a group. Particular research assignments will be determined, in part, by the interests and expertise you bring to this course and those you want to develop.

During the middle seven or eight weeks, we will communicate with each other about plans, questions, resources and results. We will establish an electronic bulletin board, and you will be required to post to it on a regular basis.

During the last two weeks of the course, we will reassemble to present results, and to assemble them into a final product, as well as to discuss any courses of action that you might wish to take as a result of their experiences.

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