

JAMESTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
State University of New York

INSTITUTIONAL COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: Anthropology of the Supernatural

Course Abbreviation and Number: REL 1530

Credit Hours: 3

Course Type: Lecture

Course Description: Students will examine cultural expressions of belief in the supernatural, focusing specifically on people's ideas about magic, witchcraft, and religion. This course takes a wide-ranging and cross-cultural approach to studying religious beliefs and behaviors. Although this class focuses on the "indigenous" religions of Africa, Asia, Australia, the Pacific, and the Americas; elements of the "world religions" such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are also discussed. Students will have the opportunity to contrast other people's beliefs and practices with their own and develop a deeper understanding of the role of religion in the human experience. **Eligibility:** ENG 1510 without supports or **Corequisite:** ENG 1510 with supports

General Education Requirements Met

SUNY

Social Sciences

JCC

Cultural Understanding

Global Perspectives

Scientific Reasoning

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

1. Engage in classroom exercises and discussions about religions as ethical systems, and the emerging trends in religious extremism
 2. Complete a fieldwork project about a religious service or activity
 3. Demonstrate understanding of cultural similarities and differences and how cultural norms shape each person's experience of the world. [JCC Gen Ed – Cultural Understanding]
 4. Demonstrate awareness of global issues and the impact of individual and collective decisions on life around the world. [JCC Gen Ed – Global Perspectives]
 5. Describe major concepts and theories of at least one discipline in the social sciences. [SUNY Gen Ed – Social Sciences]
 6. Demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena. [SUNY Gen Ed – Social Sciences]
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Topics Covered:

- The Anthropological Approach to Religion
 - The Scientific Method (strengths and weaknesses in studying religion)
 - Different Theories of Religion (positivism, agnosticism, relativism)
 - Rise of Religions: Archaeological Evidence
 - Religious Specialists (shamans, priests, and mediums)
 - Myths and Symbols
 - Rituals
 - Ghosts and Souls
 - Ancestors and Totems
 - Gender and Religion
 - Religion and the Impact of Colonialism and Globalization
 - Religious Movements and Social Change
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Information for Students

- Expectations of Students
 - [Civility Statement](#)
 - [Student Responsibility Statement](#)
 - [Academic Integrity Statement](#)

- [Accessibility Services](#)
Students who require accommodations to complete the requirements and expectations of this course because of a disability must make their accommodation requests to the Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- [Get Help: JCC & Community Resources](#)
- [Emergency Closing Procedures](#)
- Course grade is determined by the instructor based on a combination of factors, including but not limited to, homework, quizzes, exams, projects, and participation. Final course grade can be translated into a grade point value according to the following:

A=4.0	B+=3.5	B=3	C+=2.5	C=2	D+=1.5	D=1	F=0
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- Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, VA appointments) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these to the instructor.

Effective Date: Fall 2024