Spring 2016
The Ecology of Religion
ANG 6241 (21H1)
Lecturer: Dr. Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo

Lecture sessions: Thursday 9:35 am – 12:35 pm  Place: Tur 2341
Office:  T: B131  Phone: 392-2253
Office hours:  T 1–3 pm and by appointment.  Email: caycedo@ufl.edu

In this course we will study that relationship of ecology and religion from the perspective of anthropology. This course is about the study of the theoretical structure of religion from shamanism (called the religion of nature) to institutionalizes religions. The course is divided in three parts: First, shamanism and animistic societies, second, priestly or theocratic societies and the last section is on religion in imperial societies and its variability in terms of its practice and meaning in relation to the environment. The origins of shamanism is a concern of this course and we will attempt to understand what this means in relation to the environment. We will study the shaman as a religious practitioner and why shamans exist and in what context they are found in the past and the present. We will explore as well the significance of the shaman in relation to the development of religious movements and institutionalize religions.

Priestly societies have the characteristics that correspond to political organizations of agriculturalist peoples or food producers. This creates a new set of problems in relation to the domestication of space (territorial control of the landscape and cultivated space) as well as time (seasonality of food production). These relationships are different from the kinds of relations between humans and the environment observed in shamanistic societies.

The last part examine how such processes of imposing new models that appear to be secular, hide “cosmological” models about nature, which are deeply rooted in religious belief systems and nationalistic ideologies that also “naturalize” human beings place in nature. This process of global conservationism affects the daily lives of hunters, gatherers, food producers, and peoples with different cosmologies around the globe. This process creates a new set of problems in relation to space (territorial control of landscapes and cultivated spaces) in terms of who will benefit from their use. These relationships differ from the relationships between humans and the environment observed in shamanistic societies or priestly societies.

Course Objectives:

1) To understand the main theoretical and conceptual approaches to the study of ecology of religion by looking at shamanism, priestly societies from an archaeological and anthropological perspective.

2) To understand the significance of shamanism, theocracies in theocracies in explaining the evolution of religion and the patterns of environmental appropriation of space and continuity through time.

3) To obtain a general comparative understanding of religious practices and the environment.
4) To understand the relationship between material culture in shamanisms and priestly societies and what this means in terms of the societies themselves.

5) To understand the relationship between religion and ecology in the context of human social evolution.

6) To understand the relationship between the diverse forms of religions and political power in the past, through archaeology, as well as in the present.

7) To give an anthropological perspective on the understanding of religion, ecology and society in the anthropocene.

Textbooks:


EVALUATION: A final paper (20%), the short paper reviews class (30%) presentation of the paper (10%) and class participation (40%).

GRADE SYSTEM:
A= 90-100 
B= 80-89
C= 70-79
D= 60-69
F= Below 59

Assignments: You are expected to do the following:

1) Read the assigned material BEFORE coming to class. Many students have difficulty understanding the lectures because they do not familiarize themselves with the material prior to class. Do NOT be one of these students.

2) Participate actively in the discussion of the articles.
3) Produce a very original paper, with clear objectives and ideas.

Disclaimer: Some adjustments may be made in the schedule and class requirements during the course of the semester. All changes will be announced.

ATTENDANCE is required. Final grades will be reduced one grade level for two unjustified absences. Students who are unable to come to class on a regular basis due to special circumstances should see the instructor at the beginning of the term to discuss such circumstances. Finally, please avoid at all costs coming in or walking out of the classroom in the middle of lectures. This is most rude and disruptive.

Week 1. January 5. Presentation of the Class

Readings:


Readings:


Week 4. January 26. The Archaeology of Shamanism
Readings


**PART II**

**Week 5. February 2. The Evolutionary landscape of religion**

*Reading:*


*First review on the ecology of shamanism. 10 pages.*

**Week 6. February 9. Theoretical background on theocratic religions.**

*Readings:*


**Week 7. February 16. Theoretical background on theocratic religions.**

*Readings:*


Week 8. February 23. The role of the prophets and spirit possession
Readings:


Week 10. March 8. The formation of pilgrimage. temples and landscape.
Readings:


Oyuela-Caycedo, Augusto. 1998. Ideology, Temples, and Priests: Change and continuity in House Societies in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In Recent Advances in the Archaeology of the Northern Andes. Edited by A. Oyuela-Caycedo and Scott Raymond. The Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles


*Optional*


**Week 11. March 15. Imperial cosmologies**

*Reading:*


*Second paper review on the ecology of priestly societies. 10 pages.*

**Part III, Social, Imperial, and other religious ecologies today**

**Week 12. March 22. The Social Ecology of Religion:**

*Reading:*


**Week 13. March 29. Building a theoretical base of an ecology of religion and modern imperial societies.**

*Reading:*

Weber, Max. *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of Capitalism*. Any edition, but I recommend the one that was translated by Talcott Parson

**Week 14. April 5. Ecology of Religion in Imperial societies.**

*Readings on German Imperialism:*


*Readings on American imperialism:*

**Week 15. April 12. Global Religion Ecology**

*Readings:*


**Week 16. APRIL 19: Third Review and Power Point Presentation.**

**FINAL PAPER DUE MAY 5**