In this course, we will study the relationship of ecology and religion from the perspective of anthropology. The classes are about the structure of shamanism (called the religion of nature) in relation to institutionalized religions and how different ideological perspectives create different forms of action in relation to the dynamics of the ecological environment. The objective of the course is to recognize patterns of these relations of human ideology and the ecological environment.

The course has three parts: First, shamanism and animistic societies; second, priestly or theocratic societies; and the third and last section is on religion in imperial societies. The objective is to examine the variability of religion 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 a global situation of variable environments in the past and today. One question is 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 institutionalized religions.

Priestly societies have the characteristics of corresponding 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 of the course examines how such processes of imposing new models, that appear to be secular, hide “cosmological” models about nature. These cosmological models 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 the ecology of religion by looking at shamanism and priestly societies from an archaeological and anthropological perspective.

2) To understand the significance of shamanism and 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 shamanism and priestly societies and what this means in terms of the societies themselves in a material world.

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 and what it means in regards to environmental protection policies.

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

Require Textbooks:


EVALUATION: A short three paper reviews (60%) class 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 review using all the sources of the class.

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.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1. August 22. Presentation of the Class**

**PART I: shamanism and animistic societies or Natural religions.**

**Week 2. August 29. Shamanism and animism: theory.**


**Week 3. September 5. Shamanism, history and present.**


**Week 4. September 12. The Archaeology of Shamanism.**


PART II: The environmental institutionalization of religion


First review on the ecology of shamanism. 5 pages.

Week 7. October 3. Theoretical background on theocratic religions.

Readings:
University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

**Week 8. October 10. The role of the prophets and spirit possession**


**Week 9. October 17. The formation of pilgrimage places, temples and other features.**

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


*Second review on the ecology of shamanism. 5 pages.*
PART III, SOCIAL, IMPERIAL, AND OTHER RELIGIOUS ECOLOGIES TODAY


Readings on American imperialism:


Week 15. November 21. Holiday


Week 17: December 5. last day of class. Third review on the ecology of shamanism. 5 pages.