RELIGION, MAGIC, AND MYTH  Fall 2014

CRN: 393  ANTH 211 01 HIRC 2 MWF 9-9:50AM
ATTRIBUTES:  LA and AH2

Instructor: Donald R. Hill hilldr@oneonta.edu
Office: Fitz 267   Hrs: TTh 10-11:25 AM (by apt. only)
(I communicate with students through BLACKBOARD EMAIL (SUBJECT LINE MUST READ: RELIGION). Make sure that your BLACKBOARD email goes to me and not to the whole class. It is the student’s responsibility to check BLACKBOARD CALENDAR on a daily basis.

FORMAT: lectures; discussion; class presentation and paper; video; audio.
TYPES OF EXAMS: essay questions (usually answered as short, take-home papers), class presentation, term ids, quizzes
Final: Fri 12 Dec (25% of grade): essay(s) and ids based on all topics covered. Quizzes & presentation questions (10% of grade).

READING AND LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS:
Check BLACKBOARD CONTENT and CALENDAR for reading, viewing, and listening assignments, most of which focus on vernacular, religious beliefs in the Atlantic region and the African Diaspora.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:
3. Belief and Myth (From Coromantese to Cromanti, A Myth From Carriacou)
4. Ritual, Especially Rites of Passage, (Revitalization Movements; url in LESSONS),
5. Magic and Divination (Magic in Tribal Societies)
6. Belief Systems: (The Big Drum Dance of Carriacou, Grenada)
7. Belief Systems: (The Orisha)
10. Conclusion
11. Final exam: Fri 12 Dec 8:30AM

Note: Check your BLACKBOARD email for urgent class announcements the night before and the morning of class for weather-related or other emergencies. Please arrive in class on time. Please do not leave class during the assigned period except for emergency. Exams will be given only at time assigned except for illness (no request for early exams will be allowed). Class attendance is required.

For more important emergency procedures, please familiarize yourself with the information on this web page: http://www.oneonta.edu/security/
COURSE DESCRIPTION: Religious understandings of ordinary people will be the focus of this course. Emphasis will be placed on West African and African-American (including Caribbean) religions and Protestant Christianity. An overall knowledge of basic concepts in cultural anthropology will be emphasized, especially “culture,” “holism,” “ethnography,” and “relativism.” Students are encouraged to select a topic for their paper/presentation that is different from those discussed in lecture. Paper/presentation topic may cover any religion.

COURSE OUTCOMES: To understand religion as localized belief, ritual, magic, divination, emotion, and feeling, as ordinary people might understand religion, rather than as grand religious systems (e.g., Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc.). Students will learn how to organize and creatively use the information from class sessions, BLACKBOARD, and the internet to gain an understanding of essential characteristics about vernacular religion, as mentioned in the tentative course outline below. Having an anthropological understanding of the concepts listed in the first sentence above is especially important. These course objectives (outcomes) will be assessed in exams, quizzes, and in a student presentation and papers. The exams will have essay questions (sometimes as take-home assignments) and identification of terms.

ADA (AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT) STATEMENT

Students Diagnosed with a Disability—All individuals who are diagnosed with a disability are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. As such, you may be entitled to certain accommodations within this class. If you are diagnosed with a disability, please make an appointment to meet with Student Disability Services (SDS), 209 Alumni Hall, ext. 2137. All students with the necessary supporting documentation will be provided appropriate accommodations as determined by the SDS Office. It is entirely your responsibility to contact SDS and concurrently supply me with your accommodation plan, which will inform me exactly what accommodations you are entitled to. You will only receive accommodations once you provide me with an SDS accommodation plan. Any previously recorded grades will not be changed.