

**Anthropology 1130**  
**Questions for Stein and Stein (1<sup>st</sup> Edition)**

Note: SS = Stein and Stein

*I. The Anthropological Perspective and Theoretical Orientation (Weeks 1-2)*

Class Introduction  
SS Chapter 1; 8

1. What does the anthropological perspective bring to the study of religion? (What are its advantages?)
2. What are human universals? Is religion a universal?
3. Distinguish cultural relativism from ethnocentrism.
4. Why is it hard to define religion?
5. Differentiate analytic definitions of religion from functional and essentialist ones. Which one do you prefer?
6. Differentiate an evolutionary approach to the study of religion from functional and psychosocial ones.
7. Distinguish gods, spirits, and souls. What is the relationship between gods and society?

*II. Pervasive Topics in the Study of Religion (Weeks 3-11)*

Ritual

- SS Chapter 4
1. What is a ritual? What is a religious ritual? What kinds of religious rituals are there?
  2. What is the relationship between ritual and myth?
  3. What is the connection between rituals and modes of production?
  4. What is a rite of passage? What happens in the transition or liminal phase?
  5. What do rituals do for people?

Mythology

- SS Chapter 2
1. What is a myth? What characteristics of myths make them different from other stories?
  2. What is the connection between myth and worldview?
  3. Do myths change over time? Why or why not? If they do, aren't they unreliable?
  4. How is the anthropological definition of myth different than the way the word myth is used in everyday practice?
  5. Read the Navajo (Navaho) creation story.
  6. Differentiate three approaches to the study of myths.
  7. What are some common types of myths?

## Symbols and Magic

- SS Chapter 3, 6

1. What is a symbol? A religious symbol?
2. What is the relationship between religion and time or space?
3. What is the connection between symbols, myths, and worldview?
4. What is magic? What is its relationship to science? Why does magic work?
5. What does magic do for people?
6. What are the rules of magic that Frazer identified?
7. What is divination and when is it used?

## Practitioners and the Use of Drugs

- SS Chapter 5

1. What is the purpose of entering another state of consciousness?
2. How are altered states of consciousness achieved? What is the role of biology in these changes?
3. What kinds of states of altered consciousness are there?
4. What kinds of religious practitioners are there? What roles do they have in societies?

## Healing and Death

- SS Chapter 7

1. What is a soul and how has it been characterized in anthropology?
2. What is meant by the afterlife? Why is the idea of a spirit world, separate from a world of the living, so common in different cultures?
3. Make note of different ideas about the soul. How are souls different from ghosts?
4. What is ancestor worship? In what kinds of societies are you likely to find ancestor worship?
5. What is a vampire?
6. Characterize three kinds of death rituals.
7. In what ways are illnesses linked to the supernatural?

## Witchcraft

- SS Chapter 9

1. Distinguish witchcraft from sorcery.
2. What is exorcism?
3. What does witchcraft do for people?
4. What is the connection between witchcraft and modes of production?

### *III. Contemporary Expressions of Religion (Weeks 12-13)*

#### Syncretism and Religious Movements – Changing Practices

- SS Chapter 10
1. How do cultures change?
  2. What is syncretism? How does it differ from religious movements?
  3. Note the characteristics of Vodou (Vodoun). What about Vodou is syncretic?
  4. What is a revitalization movement?
  5. What is a cult?
  6. Should we care that religions (and cultures) change?