

Department of Sociology & Anthropology, BGU

Course: Anthropology of Religion

B.A. Lecture – 2nd and 3rd year. 4 credit points

Taught 2007/8, 2009/10

Lecturer: Dr. Jackie Feldman

Description:

This class will discuss questions related to the religious experience and to the functioning of religion in various cultural and social milieus. In the first semester, we will survey various approaches to the anthropology of religion, integrating other approaches from psychology, sociology or phenomenology, where necessary for our comprehension of religious phenomena.

Most of the second semester will be devoted to contemporary religious phenomena, applying several of the theories learned in the first semester. We will apply various theories to the analysis of the following phenomena: messianic movements, civil religion and its relation to traditional religion, feminist critique of religion and its scholars, religion in the colonial encounter, fundamentalisms, religiosity and secularism, and more. Several films will be shown and guest speakers invited to share their current anthropological research on religion. In the course of the second semester, we will go on a Friday excursion to Jerusalem to see sacred sites and rites and speak with religious.

Requirements:

1. Attendance in class and on the excursion(s) is mandatory. Attendance, reading of article and class participation (10%).
2. Exam at the end of the first semester on material learned to date (25%).
3. A (4-5 page) summary of a book in anthropology religion, structured around several key questions (15%). Students who do superlative work will be asked to present their paper in class for extra credit.
4. Short assignment applying approaches learned to the material of the excursion (10%).
5. Final exam – both fact-based and analytic/comparative (40%).

Readings:

General recommendations:

Brian Morris, *Anthropological Studies of Religion: An Introductory Text*, Cambridge University Press, New York.

Raymond Scupin, *Religion and Culture: An Anthropological Perspective*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, pp. 16-48.

Required texts:

R. J. Z. Werblowsky, "Religion", in *Encyclopedia Ha'ivrit*, Vol. 13, pp. 238-241, 259-274 (Hebrew).

E.E. Evans Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Culture*, Mosad Bialik, Jerusalem, pp. 35-41 (Hebrew).

Rafael Patai, *Water*, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, pp. 48-51 (Hebrew).

Samuel Hooke, "The Myth and Ritual Pattern of the Ancient Near East", in S. Hooke, *Myth and Ritual*, Oxford, 1933, pp. 1-14 in *The Myth and Ritual Theory*, Robert Segal, ed., pp. 83-92.

Rudolf Otto. *The Holy*, Carmel: Tel Aviv, 1999, pp. 10-16, 25-36 (Hebrew).

Sigmund Freud, *Culture and Religion (Future of an Illusion pp. 75-83). (Civilization and its Discontents)* pp. 39-55 (Hebrew).

Carl Jung, "The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man", in *The Portable Jung*, pp. 464-469.

Evan-Pritchard, *Theories*, pp. 60-89.

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Carol Codman, Oxford, 2001, pp. 35-46; 162-168.

Bronislaw Malinowski, "The role of magic and religion" in Lessa & Vogt (eds), *Reader in Comparative Religion*, New York, Harper & Row, pp. 37-46.

Henri Abramowicz, "Funeral in Jerusalem: Anthropological Perspectives", in *Israel: Local Anthropology*, Orit Abuhav et al., eds., Tcherikower, Tel Aviv, 1999. Pp. 553-570 (Hebrew).

Mary Douglas, "Land Animals, Pure and Impure", in Michael Lambek, ed., *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2003, pp. 194-209.

Max Weber, *On Charisma and the Construction of Institutions*, Magnes, Jerusalem, 1980, pp. 10-15, 157-182 (Hebrew).

Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System", in *Interpretations of Culture*, Keter, Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 89-122 (Hebrew).

Victor Turner, "Liminality, Communitas, Anti-structure", in *the Ritual Process*, Resling, Tel Aviv, 2005, pp. 87-116 (Hebrew).

Shlomo Desehn. "The Puzzle of Kol Nidrei: An Anthropological Investigation", in *the Intercultural Experience*, Moshe Shokeid and Shlomo Desehn eds., Tel Aviv, 1998. Pp. 66-76 (Hebrew).

Caroline Bynum, "Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality", in Grimes, ed., *Readings in Ritual Studies*, pp. 71-83.

M.E. Combs-Schilling, *Sacred Performance: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice*, Columbia University Press: New York, 1989, pp. 188--220.

Rachel Wasserfall, "Menstruation as Symbol of Identity and as Resource", in *Israel? Local Anthropology*, pp. 377-391 (Hebrew).

Susan Sered, "Women's Spirituality in a Jewish Context", in *Israel: Local Anthropology*, pp. 641-654 (Hebrew).

Lynn Davidman, *Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*, University of California, Berkeley, 1991, pp. 26-33, 108-135.

Emmanuel Sivan, Gabriel Almond, A. Appleby Scott, *Modern Religious Fundamentalism: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism*. Tel Aviv, Yediot Aharanot, 2004, pp. 11-28, 261-288 (Hebrew).

Nancy T. Ammerman, "The Dynamics of Christian Fundamentalism: An Introduction", in *Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements*, Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., University of Chicago, Chicago, 1994, pp. 13-17.

Susan Harding, "Speaking is Believing", *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000, pp. 33-60, 288-289.

Marvin, Carolyn and David W. Ingle. 1999. *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-8, 63-97.

Dale Eickelman, "Islam and the Language of Modernity", *Daedalus*, 2000 129(1): 119 – 135.

Nohad Ali, "The Islamic Movement in Israel: Between Religion, Nationality and Modernity", in *The Whirlpool of Identities: A Critical Discussion of Religiosity and Secularism in Israel*, Kibbutz Me'uhad/Van Leer, Jerusalem, 2007, pp. 133-139, 155-164 (Hebrew).

Yoram Bilu and Eyal Ben-Ari, "The Saint at the Crossroads of Meanings: On the mythification of the Baba Sali", in *Myth and Memory*, David Ohana and Robert Wistrich, eds., Kibbutz Me'uhad, Tel Aviv, 1997, pp. 290-303 (Hebrew).

Alex Weingrod, "The Saints Gallop Forward: A Comparison between North Africa and Israel", in *Israel: Local Anthropology*, pp. 625-639 (Hebrew).

William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Magnes, Jerusalem, 1949, pp. 125-127, 132-135, 146-149 (Hebrew).

Malcolm Ruel, "Christians as Believers" in *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, Michael Lambek, ed, New York: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 99-113.

Charles Hirschkind, "Passional Preaching, Aural Sensibility and Islamic Revival in Cairo", in *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, Michael Lambek, ed, New York: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 537-554.

Yehuda Goodman and Yoram Bilu, "In the Five Minutes When You Pray – They Aim the Missile: Anxiety, Ultra-Orthodoxy and Israeliness in the Homilies of Rabbis on the Gulf War", in *The Whirlpool of Identities*, pp. 165-215.

Wuthnow, R. (1998), "From Dwelling to Seeking", in *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1-14.

Luhrmann, T. M. (2004). "Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity." *American Anthropologist* 106(3): 518-528.

Michal Kravel, "To See the Unseen; To Believe the Unbelievable: The Project of Messianic Faith in Habad following the Death of the Rebbe". Draft of article for *Soziologia Israelit*, 2009 (Hebrew).

Ido Tabori, "The Energy of the Shekhinah: The Meeting between the New Age and Social Science", in *Dancing in Fields of Thorns*, Kibbutz Me'uhad, Tel Aviv, 2007, pp. 7-27 (Hebrew).

Phillip Wexler, "The Spiritual Revolution Springs up from Below", *Eretz Aheret* 26 (2005): 26-29 (Hebrew).

Yonatan Garb, "The Blurring Starts Within", *Eretz Aheret* 26 (2005): 30-34.

Ido Tabori, "The Rainbow and Babylon: Dynamics of Antagonism and Continuity", in *Dancing in Fields of Thorns*, pp. 89-119.