

**University of Colorado, Colorado Springs  
Center for Cognitive Archaeology**

**ANTH 4115/5115: The Evolution of Ritual and Religion**

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### **Course Objective**

The purpose of this class is to understand the evolution of two uniquely human qualities: ritual and religion. We will take a highly inter-disciplinary approach using archeology, anthropology, primatology, and cognitive science to define what ritual and religion are and to explore the role they have played in making us human.

### **Reading Material**

All reading assignments are posted on the Blackboard site for this class. Please note that there is a **Study Guide for Graduate Readings** available in the left-hand menu under **Learning**.

#### **Lecture 1:**

Katz, R. (1982). *Boiling energy: Community healing among the Kalahari !Kung*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Chapters 3 and 4, pp. 33–79)

#### **Lecture 2:**

Stringer, C., & Andrews, P. (2006). Asia: Corridor or cul-de-sac? In C. Stringer & P. Andrews (Eds.), *The complete world of human evolution* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 162–163). London: Thames & Hudson.

#### **Graduate**

Shea, J. J. (2007). The boulevard of broken dreams. In P. Mellars, K. Boyle, O. Bar-Yosef, & C. Stringer (Eds.), *Rethinking the human revolution* (pp. 219–232). Oxford: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

#### **Lecture 3:**

Rossano, M. J. (2012). The essential role of ritual in the transmission and reinforcement of social norms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138, 529–549. (Focus on p. 532, “ritualized behavior”)

Haimain, J. (1998). Non-linguistic ritualization. In J. Haimain, *Talk is cheap* (pp. 138–146). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## **Graduate**

Rossano, M. J. (2012). The essential role of ritual in the transmission and reinforcement of social norms. *Psychological Bulletin*, *138*, 529–549.

### **Lecture 4:**

Lienard, P., & Boyer, P. (2006). Whence collective rituals: A cultural selection model of ritualized behavior. *American Anthropologist*, *108*, 814–824.

### **Lecture 5:**

Rossano, M. J. (2013). Evolutionary origins of taboo. In M. J. Rossano, *Mortal Rituals*. New York: Columbia University Press.

## **Graduate**

Trevathan, W. R. (1996). The evolution of bipedalism and assisted birth. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, *10*, 287–290.

Franciscus, R. G. (2009). When did the modern human pattern of childbirth arise? New insights from an old Neandertal pelvis. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *106*, 9125–9126.

### **Lecture 6:**

Stringer, C., & Andrews, P. (2006). Tools and human behavior. In C. Stringer & P. Andrews (Eds.), *The complete world of human evolution* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 208–215). London: Thames & Hudson.

### **Lecture 7:**

Stringer, C., & Andrews, P. (2006). Africa: Homeland of *Homo sapiens*?. In C. Stringer & P. Andrews (Eds.), *The complete world of human evolution* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 158–161). London: Thames & Hudson.

### **Lecture 8:**

Rossano, M.J. (2011). Setting our own terms: How we used ritual to become human. In H. Walach, S. Schmidt, & W. B. Jonas (Eds.), *Neuroscience, consciousness and spirituality* (pp. 39–56). New York: Springer.

### **Lecture 9:**

Valdesolo, P. & DeSteno, D. (2011). Synchrony and the social tuning of compassion. *Emotion*, *11*, 262–266.

Wiltermuth, S. S., & Heath, C. (2009). Synchrony and cooperation. *Psychological Science*, *20*, 1–5.

### **Lecture 10:**

Rossano, M. J. (2007). Supernaturalizing social life: Religion and the evolution of human cooperation. *Human Nature*, *18*, 272–294.

### **Lecture 11:**

Hayden, B. (2003). Complexity emerges in the hunter-gatherer world. In B. Hayden, *Shamans, sorcerers, and saints: A prehistory of religion* (pp. 122–166). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.

#### **Graduate**

Lewis-Williams, D. (2002). Case study 1: Southern African San rock art. In D. Lewis-Williams, *The mind in the cave* (pp. 136–162). London: Thames & Hudson.

### **Lecture 12:**

Sosis, R. (2004). The adaptive value of religious ritual. *American Anthropologist*, 92, 166–172.

#### **Graduate**

Norenzayan, A., & Shariff, A. F. (2008). The origin and evolution of religious prosociality. *Science*, 322, 58–62.

### **Lecture 13:**

Rossano, M. J. (2010). Harnessing the placebo effect: Religion as a cultural adaptation. In U. Frey (Ed.), *The nature of God: Evolution and religion* (pp. 111–128). Berlin: Tectum-Verlag.

### **Lecture 14:**

Rossano, M. J. (2010). The African Interregnum II: The evolution of supernatural imagination. In M. J. Rossano, *Supernatural selection: How religion evolved* (pp. 103–126). New York: Oxford University Press.

#### **Graduate**

Rossano, M. J. (2013). God of the mountain. In M. J. Rossano, *Mortal rituals: What the Andes survivors tell us about human evolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.

### **Lecture 15:**

Shariff, A. F., Norenzayan, A., & Henrich, J. (2009). The birth of high gods: How the cultural evolution of supernatural policing agents influenced cooperative human societies, paving the way for civilization. In M. Schaller, A. Norenzayan, S. Heine, T. Yamagishi, & T. Kameda (Eds.), *Evolution, culture, and the human mind* (pp. 119–136). New York: Psychology Press.

## **Exams**

There are four multiple choice tests given during the course of the term. Test will cover the lecture and reading material for a given section. Graduate students will have extra readings marked **Graduate**, and their tests will incorporate those readings along with the other material. Each test covers either three or four lectures and will have between 40 and 50 questions.

Graduate tests will generally have 10 to 15 more questions taken from the extra readings for graduate students.

## Grading Policy, Criteria, and Scale

Grades will be based on points achieved. On each test you will be accumulating points. Each test is worth as many points as there are questions. I grade on a relative scale. This means that at the end of the semester I total up the points that each student received on all four tests. The student with the top number of points receives an "A" and sets the top of the scale. I then take 93% of that top score and all other scores that are equal to or greater than that also get an "A." I then take 85% of the top score and all students who are equal to or greater than that get a "B," and so forth (78% for Cs, 70% for Ds). There is no absolute scale; it is all relative to students' performance on tests.

After each test, the each student's score and the high score for that test will be posted on Blackboard. Write these numbers down (your score and the high score) and keep track of them throughout the semester. If you take your total score and divide it by the high total you will get a proportion which indicates where you stand relative to the rest of the class. Compare that proportion to the scale used to assign grades.

## Class Outline

Week	Lecture(s)	Topic
1	1	Healing dances of the !Kung San
2	2	Just another hominin?
3	3	What is ritual?
4	4	Uniquely human rituals
<b>Test 1</b>	<b>1-4</b>	<b>Units 1-4 and associated readings</b>
5	5	Evolution of ritual I
6	6	Evolution of ritual II
7	7	Evolution of ritual III
8	8	Evolution of ritual IV
<b>Test 2</b>	<b>5-8</b>	<b>Units 5-8 and associated readings</b>
9	9	Ritual and social complexity
10	10	Spiritual awakenings
11	11	Stone Age religion
<b>Test 3</b>	<b>9-11</b>	<b>Units 9-11 and associated readings</b>
12	12	Why supernaturalize? Building trust
13	13	Why supernaturalize? Personal health benefits
14	14	Origins of the supernatural
15	15	Religion, morality, and monotheism
<b>Test 4</b>	<b>12-15</b>	<b>Units 12-15 and associated readings</b>

## Extra Credit

Extra credit is not offered in this course.

## **Due Dates and Deadlines**

The syllabus contains the deadline for each unit and specifies the dates by which the test must be completed. For each deadline, you have until 11:59 PM on the deadline day. Remember, these are DEADLINES. You are encouraged to stay well ahead of these deadlines. The sooner you complete the work, the sooner you'll be done with the course.

You must complete each unit by the date specific in the syllabus. Once that date has passed, you can still access the material in the unit, but you can no longer take the test associated with that unit. For example, if Unit 3 must be completed by Thursday, September 16, if you don't take Test 3 by 11:59 PM on September 16, you will receive a 0 for that test.

## **Dr. Rossano's Expectations of You**

During completion of this course, you must abide by the [UCCS Student Conduct Code](#). This code specifies what is considered proper and improper student conduct, including matters such as cheating and inappropriate behavior. Students who do not abide by the code can receive sanctions ranging up to expulsion from the university.

Remember that this is a 3 credit-hour course. Please plan on spending a lot of time working on just this class. This time will include reviewing lesson plans, completing online lectures, reading from your textbook, answering practice problems, verifying your work, and completing test. I suggest that you plan to spend at least 10 hours per week on average.

Of course, the amount of time spent does not guarantee you any particular grade. Your letter grade will reflect the amount of material that you learned, as reflected in your test scores and the overall quality of your contributions to the course.

I will be respectful of you as students. I will not demean you, insult you, or embarrass you. I expect that you will be respectful and civil in the discussion boards as our students. To me this means that you will not post off-topic or rude comments.

## **Solving Technical Difficulties**

When you're having technical difficulties (pages not loading, connectivity problems, not able to view images, things not working as they should, etc.), please contact the Blackboard Helpdesk toll-free at 877.654.8309 or online at the [UCCS Blackboard Support](#) page. The Blackboard Helpdesk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Please note this service is separate from the [UCCS IT Helpdesk](#).

## **Help Understanding Course Material**

When you have questions regarding course policies, grading criteria, test administration, or course content, please email your professors for assistance or post your question to the Discussion Board.