

INTERIM

SUMMER I

SUMMER II

REL 419

MYTH, RITUAL AND MAGIC

MONDAY-FRIDAY

9:30 – 12:30

207 Manly Hall

Core Designation: W [Writing]

Writing proficiency within this discipline is required for a passing grade in this course.

3 Credit Hours

Syllabus subject to change

Instructor

Dr. Steven Leonard Jacobs

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Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 1:00-2:00, Friday 1:00-4:00, & By Appointment

Prerequisites

1 Course in *either* Religious Studies *or* Judaic Studies *or* Permission of the Instructor

Course Description

[From UA Catalog] “Examination of the theories and methods used to study the relation between religious narrative and behavioral systems.” Specific focus of this go-round, after first examining what we in the academic study of religion mean when we use these terms—myth, ritual, and magic—will be on the three monotheistic religious traditions of Judaism Christianity, and Islam.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to write a coherent 2-page summary of each of the concepts presented in this course according to the included "Writing Rubric" and as understood by the discipline of religious studies: (a) myth, (b) ritual, and (c) magic.
2. Students will be able to write three coherent 2-page summaries accorded to the included "Writing Rubric" of each of the above three concepts as they apply to (a) Judaism, (b) Christianity, and (c) Islam.
3. Students will be able to integrate this knowledge and give evidence of their ability to do research by writing one 3-5 page paper according to the included "Research Paper Evaluation Rubric" focusing on a specific sub-group in any one of these traditions: Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist); Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant); Islam (Sunni, Shi'ia).

NOTES

1. Written assignments require coherent, logical, and carefully edited prose. Thus you will have the opportunity to demonstrate in your writing higher-level critical thinking skills, including analysis and synthesis.
2. *All* of your writing assignments will be graded and commented upon as part of the assigned grade.
3. At least one of the writing assignments will be returned before the mid-point of the course.
4. Please pay particular attention to the 2 Rubrics included in this syllabus: "Writing Rubric" and "Research Paper Evaluation Rubric". They will be used to determine the grade for your assignments and will, appropriately, be included with each assignment when returned to you.

Outline of Topics

Week 1 (Both Interim & Summer)

1. What do we mean when we in Religious Studies use the term "myth"?
2. What do we mean when we in Religious Studies use the term "ritual"?
3. What do we mean when we in Religious Studies use the term "magic"?

Week 2 (Both Interim & Summer)

1. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term myth apply to Judaism?
2. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term ritual apply to Judaism?
3. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term magic apply to Judaism?

Week 3 (Both Interim & Summer)

1. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of term myth apply to Christianity?
2. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term ritual apply to Christianity?
3. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term magic apply to Christianity?

4. Wrap-up and Conclusion (Interim Only): Applying these insights to specific students' findings.¹

Week 4 (Summer I & II Only)

1. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term myth apply to Islam?
2. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term ritual apply to Islam?
3. How does our understanding in Religious Studies of the term magic apply to Islam?
4. Wrap-up and Conclusions: Applying these insights to specific students' findings.

Exams, Assignments, and Grading Policy

20% = 2-page summary of myth, ritual, and magic in the academic study of religion

20% = 2-page summary of myth, ritual, and magic in the study of Judaism

20% = 2-page summary of myth, ritual, and magic in the study of Christianity

20% = 2-page summary of myth, ritual, and magic in the study of Islam

20% = 3-5 page study of applicability to one subset of either Judaism Christianity or Islam

Policy on Missed Work

To be determined on an individual case-by-case basis with the Instructor.

Attendance Policy

Required unless otherwise noted.

Required Texts

Davies, Owen. *Magic: A Very Short Introduction*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0199588022

Segal, Robert A. *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0198724704

Stephenson, Barry. *Ritual: A Very Short Introduction*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0199943524

Other Course Materials

Possible additional handouts supplied by the Instructor.

Extra-Credit Opportunities

2-page critical evaluation of any of the required texts for this course will achieve an additional point added to the overall Final Grade Score.

¹ Depending on the pace of learning, my hope is to also incorporate Islam into the Interim Course as well.

Special Announcement Regarding Emergencies

The University of Alabama's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its website @ www.ua.edu. In the event of an emergency, you should consult this site for further directions. Your instructor will use Blackboard Learn (BBL) to provide additional course information.

Policy on Academic Misconduct

All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student.

The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

Disability Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 348-4285 or visit 133-B Martha Parham Hall East to register for services. Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, 133-B Martha Parham Hall East, before receiving academic adjustments.

Severe Weather Protocol

In the case of a tornado warning (tornado has been sighted or detected by radar, sirens activated), all university activities are automatically suspended, including all classes and laboratories. If you are in a building, please move immediately to the lowest level and toward the center of the building away from windows (interior classrooms, offices, or corridors) and remain there until the tornado warning has expired. Classes in session when the tornado warning is issued can resume immediately after the warning has expired at the discretion of the instructor. Classes that have not yet begun will resume 30 minutes after the tornado warning has expired provided at least half of the class period remains.

UA is a residential campus with many students living on or near campus. In general classes will remain in session until the National Weather Service issues safety warnings for the city of Tuscaloosa. Clearly, some students and faculty commute from adjacent counties. These counties may experience weather related problems not encountered in Tuscaloosa. Individuals should follow the advice of the National Weather Service for that area taking the necessary precautions to ensure personal safety. Whenever the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Agency issue a warning, people in the path of the storm (tornado or severe thunderstorm) should take immediate life saving actions.

When West Alabama is under a severe weather advisory, conditions can change rapidly. It is imperative to get to where you can receive information from the National Weather Service and to follow the instructions provided. Personal safety should dictate the actions that faculty, staff and students take. The Office of Public Relations will disseminate the latest information regarding conditions on campus in the following ways:

- Weather advisory posted on the UA homepage
- Weather advisory sent out through Connect-ED--faculty, staff and students (sign up at MyBama)
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA at 90.7 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over Alabama Public Radio (WUAL) at 91.5 FM
- Weather advisories are broadcast via WUOA/WVUA-TV, which can be viewed across Central Alabama. Also, visit wvuatv.com for up-to-the-minute weather information. A mobile Web site is also available for your convenience.

Author's Name _____

Writing Rubric
Title of Piece _____

	1 Does Not Meet	2 Partially Meets	3 Does Not Fully Meet	4 Meets	5 More Than Meets	6 Exceeds
CONTENT/IDEAS	Writing is extremely limited in communicating knowledge, with no central theme.	Writing is limited in communicating knowledge. Length is not adequate for development.	Writing does not clearly communicate knowledge. The reader is left with questions.	Writes related, quality paragraphs, with little or no details.	Writing is purposeful and focused. Piece contains some details.	Writing is confident and clearly focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant details enrich writing.
ORGANIZATION	Writing is disorganized and underdeveloped with no transitions or closure.	Writing is brief and underdeveloped with very weak transitions and closure.	Writing is confused and loosely organized. Transitions are weak and closure is ineffective.	Uses correct writing format. Incorporates a coherent closure.	Writing includes a strong beginning, middle, and end, with some transitions and good closure.	Writing includes a strong, beginning, middle, and end with clear transitions and a focused closure.
VOCABULARY/WORD CHOICE	Careless or inaccurate word choice, which obscures meaning.	Language is trite, vague or flat.	Shows some use of varied word choice.	Uses a variety of word choice to make writing interesting.	Purposeful use of word choice.	Effective and engaging use of word choice.
VOICE	Writer's voice/point of view shows no sense of audience.	Writer's voice/point of view shows little sense of audience.	Writer's voice/point of view shows that sense of audience is vague.	Writer uses voice/point of view. Writes with the understanding of a specific audience.	Writer has strong voice/point of view. Writing engages the audience.	Writes with a distinct, unique voice/point of view. Writing is skillfully adapted to the audience.
SENTENCE FLUENCY	Frequent run-ons or fragments, with no variety in sentence structure.	Many run-ons or fragments. Little variety in sentence structure.	Some run-ons or fragments. Limited variety in sentence structure.	Uses simple compound, and complex sentences.	Frequent and varied sentence structure.	Consistent variety of sentence structure throughout.
CONVENTIONS	Parts of speech show lack of agreement. Frequent errors in mechanics. Little or no evidence of spelling strategies.	Inconsistent agreement between parts of speech. Many errors in mechanics. Limited evidence of spelling strategies.	Occasional errors between parts of speech. Some errors in mechanics. Some evidence of spelling strategies.	Maintains agreement between parts of speech. Few errors in mechanics. Applies basic grade level spelling.	Consistent agreement between parts of speech. Uses correct punctuation, capitalization, etc. Consistent use of spelling strategies.	Uses consistent agreement between parts of speech. No errors in mechanics. Creative and effective use of spelling strategies.

RESEARCH PAPER EVALUATION RUBRIC

CATEGORY	4 Excellent	3 Good	2 Satisfactory	1 Poor	Score
Organization	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.	/4
Quality of Information	Includes the answers to the questions which generated this paper, of which answers are thoroughly described throughout the course of the paper.	Includes almost all of the answers to all of the questions, which generated this paper and which are thoroughly described throughout the course of the paper.	Includes the answers to a few of the questions, of which the answers lack sufficient description.	Information has little or nothing to do with the research questions.	/4
Paragraph Construction	All paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Most paragraphs include introductory sentence, explanations or details, and concluding sentence.	Paragraphs included related information but were typically not constructed well.	Paragraphing structure was not clear and sentences were not typically related within the paragraphs.	/4
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors.	Almost no grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors	A few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.	/4
Connection	Does an excellent job of describing the structure's past and present significance.	Does a good job of describing the structure's past and present significance.	Struggles to describe either the structure's past or present day significance.	Fails to describe the past or present day significance of the structure.	/4
Resources	Six different sources are referenced at the end of the research paper.	Five different sources are referenced at the end of the research paper.	Four different sources are referenced at the end of the research paper.	Less than four different sources are referenced at the end of the research paper.	/5

TOTAL POINTS

_____/25

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

CDs & DVD

Campbell, Joseph. *Mythos: The Complete Series*. © 2007

I: The Shaping of Our Mythic Tradition

II: The Shaping of the Eastern Tradition

III: The Shaping of the Western Tradition

Davis, Kenneth C. *Don't Know Much About Mythology*. © 1980

"The Golem" (The 1920 Horror Masterpiece). © 2002

Armstrong, Karen. *A Short History of Myth*. Edinburg and New York: Canongate Publishing, 2005.

Bierlein, J. F. *Parallel Myths*. New York: Random House, 1994.

Dennis, Geoffrey W. *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic, and Mysticism*. Woodbury: Llewellyn Publications, 2007.

Ellwood, Robert S. *Introducing Religion: Religious Studies for the Twenty-first Century*. Boston: Pearson, 2014. Fourth Edition.

Grimes, Ronald L. *The Craft of Ritual Studies*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Harwood, William. *Mythology's Last Gods: Yahweh and Jesus*. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1992.

Hunt, Lynn, Jacob, Margaret C., and Mijnhardt, Wijnand, eds. *Bernard Picart and the First Global Vision of Religion*. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2010

Hunt, Lynn, Jacob, Margaret C., and Mijnhardt, Wijnand. *The Book That Changed Europe: Picart & Bernard's Religious Ceremonies of the World*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Jaspers, Karl, and Bultmann, Rudolf. *Myth & Christianity: An Inquiry into the Possibility of Religion without Myth*. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2005.

Kolakowski, Leszek. *The Presence of Myth*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.

Leeming, David. *Jealous Gods, Chosen People: The Mythology of the Middle East*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Lévi-Straus, Claude. *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture*. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.

Schwartz, Howard. *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Segal, Robert A. *Myth: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Stewart, Pamela J., and Strathern, Andrew. *Ritual: Key Concepts in Religion*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.

Trachtenberg, Joshua. *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion*.

von Worms, Abraham. *The Book of Abramelin: A New Translation*. Lake Worth: Ibis Press, 2006.

Watts, Alan W. *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.

KABBALAH

THE JEWISH MYSTICAL TRADITION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

3 Minute Discourses on Kabbalah by Leading Jewish Scholars. Northvale and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 2001.

Abelson, J. *Jewish Mysticism: An Introduction to the Kabbalah.* New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1913/1981.

Benyosef, Simcha H. *Living the Kabbalah: A Guide to the Sabbath and Festivals in the Teachings of Rabbi Rafael Moshe Luria.* New York: Continuum, 1999.

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan & Lavinia. *Jewish & Christian Mysticism: An Introduction.* New York: Continuum, 1994.

Cooper, David A. *God Is a Verb: Kabbalah and the Practice of Mystical Judaism.* New York: Riverhead Books, 1997.

Dan, Joseph. *Gershom Scholem and the Mystical Dimension of Jewish History.* New York and London: New York University Press, 1988.

Dan, Joseph. *Jewish Mysticism.* Northvale and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 1998.

I: Late Antiquity

II: The Middle Ages

III: The Modern Period

IV: General Characteristics and Comparative Studies

Davis, Avram, & Mascetti, Manuela Dunn. *Judaic Mysticism.* New York: Hyperion, 1997.

Dobin, Joel C. *Kabbalistic Astrology: The Sacred Tradition of the Hebrew Sages.* Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1999.

Feldman, Ron H. *Fundamentals of Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah.* Freedom: The Crossing Press, 1999.

Green, Arthur, ed. *Jewish Spirituality*. New York: Crossroad, 1986.

I: From the Bible through the Middle Ages.

II: From the Sixteenth Century Revival to the Present.

Hanson, Kenneth. *Kabbalah: Three Thousand Years of Mystic Tradition*. Tulsa and San Francisco: Council Oaks Books, 1998.

Leet, Leonora. *The Secret Doctrine of the Kabbalah: Recovering the Key to Hebraic Sacred Science*. Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1999.

Matt, Daniel. *The Essential Kabbalah*. New York: QPBC, 1995.

Samuel, Gabriella. *The Kabbalah Handbook: A Concise Encyclopedia of Terms and concepts in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2007.

Scholem, Gershom. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.

JEWISH RITES OF PASSAGE A LA VAN GENNEP

Goldberg, Harvey E. *Jewish Passages: Cycles of Jewish Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Goldberg, Harvey E., ed. *The Life of Judaism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Goldberg, Harvey E., ed. *Rites of Passage: How Today's Jews Celebrate, Commemorate, and Commiserate*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2010.

Marcus, Ivan G. *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2004.

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WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1

In an integrated essay of 2-3 pages, zero in on your understandings of (1) myth, (2) ritual, and (3) magic regarding their definitions, characteristics, genres, functions, etc., addressing also the question of their interrelationship.

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WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2

In an integrated essay of 2-3 pages, zero in your understandings of (1) myth, (2) ritual, and (3) magic as they apply specifically to Judaism. Do not forget to include (4) mysticism in your essay as well as the question of the interrelationship of all four topics.

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WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3

In an integrated essay of 3-4 pages, zero in on your understanding of (1) myth, (2) ritual, and (3) magic as they apply specifically to Christianity. Do not forget to include (4) mysticism in your essay as well as the question of the interrelationship of all four topics.

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WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4

In an integrative essay of 3-4 pages, zero in on your understanding of (1) myth, (2) ritual, and (3) magic as they apply specifically to Islam. Do not forget to include (4) mysticism in your essay as well as the question of the interrelationship of all four topics.

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WRITING ASSIGNMENT #5

You are to select a “sub-set” of one of one of the monotheistic religious traditions (Judaism—Orthodox-/Hasidic or non-Hasidic, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist), Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant) or Islam (Sunni, Shi’a, Alawite) and “dig deeper” regarding the influences and interconnections between myth, ritual, and magic on your selected group. This paper is to be 3-5 pages, double-spaced. Please do not forget to include your own conclusions-/thoughts/reflections about what you have discovered/learned.