

Course Syllabus

[Jump to Today](#) [Edit](#)

RLST/ETST 012/012H Religious Myths and Rituals

Instructor Information

Dr. Amanda Lucia

- Online Office Hours in Zoom: Tuesdays 11:30a.m. - 1:30p.m./Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. (PT)
- Contact: amanda.lucia@ucr.edu

Teaching Assistants

Kori Pacyniak

- Online Office Hours in Zoom: Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (PT)

Contact: kori.pacyniak@email.ucr.edu

Tessa Harmon

- Online Office Hours in Zoom: Thursdays 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (PT)
- Contact: atyso001@ucr.edu

Please note: Reserve messaging the Instructor and TA only for personal questions. Course-related questions should be posted in the General Course Q&A Forum.

Course Description

This fully online course provides an introduction to the meanings, origins, and functions of religion; the roles of myths, rituals, and symbols; and images of transcendence. Examines religious beliefs and expressions from diverse cultural perspectives. Utilizes materials from indigenous Native (North and South) American, African American, and/or Asian American religions. There are no prerequisites for this course.

Cross-Campus Enrollment

This course is available to any University of California student across all the UC campuses.

Course Objectives

- Articulate a general outline of the study of the intersections of religion, ethnicity, and American religions
- Demonstrate a familiarity with key concepts and enduring questions
- Demonstrate knowledge of rituals/myths as enacted by a variety of ethnic groups
- Develop critical thinking and academic writing skills

Access to Instructor and Teaching Assistants

Students may engage with the course instructor during online office hours each week using the Zoom video conferencing software. The Instructor and TA will also interact with students in the course discussion forums. The Instructor and TA can be messaged directly using the Canvas Inbox. Please reserve messaging the Instructor and TA only for personal and intellectual questions. Course-related questions should be posted in the General Course Q&A Forum.

We are fortunate to have excellent graduate students serving as Teaching Assistants for this course. Your section TA will be a valuable resource during this quarter. TAs will coordinate discussion sections, facilitate discussions on the course Canvas Learning Management Software (LMS) platform, and hold weekly office hours in which they can answer procedural and content-based questions about this course. TA office hours and contact information will be posted on the course LMS. In total, students can expect to interact with TAs for the course for approximately 7 hours per week (3 office hours, 1 hour discussion, 3 hours discussion forum engagement, email).

Course Materials

This course is fully online and uses an instance of the University of California's Office of the President's Canvas Learning Management System as the course website. In addition to the Canvas site we will use the Zoom.us web conferencing platform. These features have no associated costs, and are available to all students enrolled in the course.

There is **ONE** required text for this course that **students will need to purchase**:

Bhante Walpola Piyananda, 2008. *The Bodhi Tree Grows in L.A.: Tales of a Buddhist Monk in America*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

<<<OR>>>

Bhante Walpola Piyananda, 2001. *Saffron Days in L.A.: Tales of a Buddhist Monk in America*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

All other reading materials, lectures, films, and other course materials are available for free in this Canvas course site.

Technical Support

Please make sure to review the [Getting to Know the Canvas Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#) page in the course Resource section. For general support issues select the 'Help' icon at the bottom of the grey global navigation bar on the far left of the page.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lecture Participation and Required Readings

Students are responsible for all material presented in lectures or covered in assigned readings. Lectures will not simply repeat material in the readings, but will emphasize and elaborate on key issues as well as introducing material not covered in the text. Thus, it is important to do the readings, watch the lecture videos, and participate in the online activities. Each reading will require a 200 word response that needs to be submitted via the Canvas LMS page. In order to help students keep up with the readings, these 200 word responses are due on Wednesdays and Fridays by 11:59pm. Responses to readings will comprise a portion of your discussion section participation grade.

Discussion Sections

Students are required to participate in the weekly discussion forums in the course site. The discussion forums are monitored by Professor and TA. Students are graded on their responses to the discussion prompts. Students are highly encouraged to comment on their classmates' posts. Discussion board participation should take about 2 hours per week and will make up 25% of your final grade.

Each week, TAs will supply one set of four discussion questions. Choose ONE of those discussion questions and answer it in a 6-8 sentence paragraph. This homework assignment should be completed and submitted through the Canvas course site. Answers should be shared with your classmates to foster discussion. Students should also start conversations with fellow classmates by commenting on others' posts.

Quizzes

25% of your grade will be based on your quiz scores. You will complete ten quizzes throughout the course (two each week), which will coincide with the readings and films and will be due on Fridays at 11:59pm.

Virtual Travelogue

During the course, students must attend one extra-curricular religious event in an ethnic community and write a 2-page summary. Examples are: a celebration of the Buddha's birthday at a local Vietnamese-Buddhist temple, Holi celebrations at a Hindu temple, Dia de los Muertos celebrations in a Mexican-American street festival, a Native American pow-wow, or a church service that is ***not of your own faith***. Students must attend the event and while at the event, observe, take notes, and enjoy – try to meet people and interact with the community!

Ask for a tour, join a community meal! Students are welcome to attend in small groups with friends and can use the Canvas LMS site to coordinate. Once home, students should write their experiences in a two page paper. The first page should be clear description of the event, people, and place. The second page should relate the student's observations to the content of the course. Did you see any rituals? did you hear any myths? why were they important to the community? how did the event/ritual/myth reinforce a sense of communal identity? How is religion related to ethnicity here, in this particular place? Use the ANALYTICAL TOOLS section to read examples of how religious myths and rituals can be analyzed.

Each student will post their Virtual Travelogue and photos by pinning it to the virtual map on the Canvas LMS site. Students should use the Virtual Travelogue map and pins to explore the diversity of religious rituals, myths, and traditions available in a variety of ethnic communities. The summaries must be uploaded by **Friday of Week 4 at 11:59pm**. During Week 5, students should review the Virtual Travelogue Map and see where their classmates have traveled and what religious events they have attended. Then, by **Friday of Week 5 at 11:59pm**, students must complete Part IV of the Virtual Travelogue assignment by writing a 200 word response to the Virtual Travelogue Map. The Virtual Travelogue will comprise 10% of your final grade.

Paper Assignment

Students will write one 4-5 paged paper, which will comprise 20% of your final grade. The paper should choose one myth or ritual from our course readings explain how it relates to the lived context of a particular group of people. How does this group of people enact this ritual/myth? How does it frame their lived experience? How do they keep tradition alive? How does it impact their social standing? How does it set them apart as a group? These should be analytical papers that should posit an argument that attempts to prove a point. Religious myth and ritual should be explored and analyzed with critical theory. See the ANALYTICAL TOOLS section of the course to read examples of how various myths and rituals might be analyzed. Do not copy these examples, but feel free to apply the analytical tools to *other* religious contexts. Students should use course readings and external sources to supplement their research. Usually 3-4 sources (above and beyond journalistic and encyclopedic articles available on the Internet) effectively used will be sufficient. **PAPERS ARE DUE: FRIDAY of WEEK 8 at 11:59pm**, turned in through the Canvas LMS page.

Final Exam

20% of your grade will be based on a cumulative final exam for this course. The exam will consist of 60 multiple-choice and 4 short answer questions. Students must schedule their own final exams through the online proctoring service, ProctorU.com. This service costs about \$25 for the three hours the exam will take, and arrangements to use this service should be made during Week 2 in order to avoid additional fees. **Students may begin the final exam anytime between 8:00am on Tuesday, March 19th and 8:00pm on Thursday, March 21st.**

ProctorU

ProctorU is a live online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. ProctorU is available 24/7, however you will need to schedule your proctoring session at least 72 hours in advance to avoid any on demand scheduling fees. Creating a ProctorU account is very simple. All you will need to do is visit. <https://go.proctoru.com/registrations> (Links to an external site.).

ProctorU also provides free technical support to ensure you have the best testing situation possible. That is available at www.proctoru.com/testitout (Links to an external site.). On this page you will also be able to test your equipment, learn about what to expect during your proctoring session, and ask any questions you may have about the proctoring process with a ProctorU representative.

In order to use ProctorU you will need to have a high-speed internet connection, a webcam (internal or external), a windows or apple Operating System, and a government issued photo ID. **ProctorU recommends that you visit proctoru.com/testitout prior to your proctoring session to test your equipment.** For additional technical services needed before your exam, you can click on the button that says "connect to a live person. *If you need access to a laptop with a webcam and sound, contact the professor and one can be provided.*

Grading

Grading Scale

A+ = 98-100%

A = 92-97%

A- = 90-91%

B+ = 88-89%

B = 82-87%

B- = 80-81%

C+ = 78-79%

C = 72-77%

C- = 70-71%

D+ = 68-69%

D = 62-67%

D- = 60-61%

F = <59%

Assignments

Assignment	Percentage
Final Exam	20%
Research Paper	20%
Virtual Travelogue	10%
Quizzes (10)	25%
Discussion Session Participation	25%
Total	100%

Point System: The Canvas platform also uses a point system. Some students may feel more comfortable calculating their grades through points. The point system mirrors the percentages listed above. It is as follows:

Final Exam = 200 points

Research Paper = 200 points

Virtual Travelogue = 100 points

Quizzes 10 @ 25 points each = total 250 points

Discussion Section Participation:

10 Discussion Question answers @10 points each = total 100 points

10 Discussion Forum participation @ 5 points each = total 50 points (*this refers to your general participation in the discussion forum, responding to your classmates questions, starting conversations, etc.*)

20 Readings responses @ 5 points each = total 100 points

Other Course Policies to Know

Communication

Given that this is a large class, we have policies about communication with the professor and TA. When you have general questions about the course structure, you can post your questions to the course General Q&A discussion forum. TAs and the professor monitor this forum and will respond in a timely fashion (usually same day). General questions should be asked in the General Q&A forum so that other students who may have the same question can refer to the instructor's response. If you have more specific, involved, intellectual, or personalized questions, you can ask these of the professor or TAs via email or in office hours. All email will be answered in a timely manner (usually within 24 hours during the week). Our office hours, held via Zoom videoconference, will include an option for you to interact (chat/video-chat) with only the instructor/TA (one at a time), or as part of a group of students.

During the first three weeks of class, it is mandatory for you to check in with your TAs or the professor at least once during Office hours. Beginning in Week 4, students who have not attended one Zoom session with either the TAs or the professor will be penalized 2% of their final grade.

Plagiarism

This course operates under University of California, Riverside Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures. Academic honesty is absolutely necessary. Please refer to <http://conduct.ucr.edu> for information on this subject. Plagiarism is not tolerated at UCR and has serious consequences. Your essays and exams must be your own work and inadequate referencing may be seen as plagiarism. The consequences for plagiarism in any form range from a zero on the assignment in question to a failing grade in the course. If you have questions about correct referencing, please consult your instructor.

Course Schedule

When you see this > it indicates a homework assignment that needs to be turned in to the Canvas LMS page. When you see this ⚡ it indicates a reading that should be done in tandem with that day's lecture. Keep up with the readings, lectures, and discussion and PARTICIPATE (answer response questions, post to discussion board threads, etc.) to receive full credit.

WEEK 1 (Monday 1/7)

W1: Introduction to Religious Myth and Rituals

LECTURE: Introduction to Religious Myths & Rituals

⚡ASSIGNED READING: Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider*, (PDF excerpt)

Introduction to American Religions

LECTURE: Settler Colonialism, Manifest Destiny, and American Exceptionalism

⚡ASSIGNED READING: *Why Nations Fail*, Chapter 1 p. 7-44.

>Take Quiz 1 (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

Week 2 (Monday 1/14)

LECTURE: Disestablishment and the Free Exercise of Religion in the USA

⚡ASSIGNED READING: "Civil Religion in America" by Robert Bellah

Native American Religions

LECTURE: Early Colonization and Erasure

⚡ASSIGNED READING: *Lame Deer*, by John (Fire) Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, Introduction and Ch. 1

>Take Quiz 2 (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

>Schedule your final exam through: <https://ProctorU.com> (Links to an external site.)

Week 3 (Monday 1/21)

LECTURE: Native American Rituals: from The Ghost Dance to Peyote Religion

✦ASSIGNED READING: *Lame Deer*, by John (Fire) Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, Ch. 6, 10, and 11

✦ASSIGNMENT: Watch FILM: "Dakota 38"

✦ASSIGNED READING: *Lame Deer*, by John (Fire) Lame Deer and Richard Erdoes, Ch. 12 & 13

>Take Quiz 3 during film (turn in Friday at 11:59pm)

>Schedule your final exam through: <https://ProctorU.com> (Links to an external site.)

Week 4 (Monday 1/28)

W4: African American Religions

LECTURE: Re/creating Ritual; Re/membering Community

✦ASSIGNED READING: "Walking the Line: Pipe and Sweat Ceremonies in Prison" by Lee Irwin

LECTURE: From Drums, Ring Shouts, and Spirituals to Gospel Choirs: forms of African American religious ritual

✦ASSIGNED READING: "The African Diaspora," Ch. 1 in *Slave Religion* by Albert Raboteau

>Take Quiz 4 (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

>Virtual Travelogue pinned with photos, (due by Friday at 11:59pm)

Week 5 (Monday 2/4)

LECTURE: Everyday Rituals in Black Churches

✦ASSIGNED READING: "Televangelism" in *Between Sundays* by Marla Frederick (p. 131-160)

✦ASSIGNMENT: Watch FILM: "Black Church, Inc."

LECTURE: Black Preaching and the Civil Rights movement in the United States

✦ASSIGNED READING: *Strength to Love* by Martin Luther King Jr. (p. 1-44)

>Take Quiz 5 during film (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

> Part IV: Virtual Travelogue Map response (200 words) due by Friday at 11:59pm)

WEEK 6 (Monday 2/11)

LECTURE: Nation of Islam and Civil Rights

✪ASSIGNED READING: "Minister Malcolm X" and "Black Muslims," Chs. 13 and 14 in *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, as told by Alex Haley

LECTURE: Model Minority Myth and American Ideals of Freedom

✪ASSIGNED READING: *The Karma of Brown Folk* by Vijay Prashad, "Of Authentic Cultural Lives, p. 109-132

>Take Quiz 6 (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

Week 7 (Monday 2/18)

LECTURE: Hinduism in the US: Ritual, Myth, Culture

✪ASSIGNED READING: "American Hindus: The Ganges and the Mississippi," Ch. 3 in *A New Religious America* by Diana Eck

LECTURE: Buddhism in the US: Ritual, Myth, Culture

✪ASSIGNED READING: *The Bodhi Tree Grows in L.A.*, Ch. 1-10

>Take Quiz 7 (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

Week 8 (Monday 2/25)

LECTURE: Asian Immigration and Religion in the US

✪ASSIGNED READING: *The Bodhi Tree Grows in L.A.*, Ch. 11-20

FILM: "Divided We Fall"

✪ASSIGNED READING: "Seeking Recognition: Patriotism, Power, and Politics in Sikh American Discourse in the Immediate Aftermath of 9/11" by Jessica Falcone

>Take Quiz 8 during film (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

>Paper Assignment Due [turned into Canvas LMS page by Friday by 11:59pm]

Week 9 (Monday 3/4)

Latin American Religions

LECTURE: Introduction to Latin American Religions: Precolonial to Present

✪ASSIGNED READING: *Performing Piety* Introduction and Ch. 1 by Elaine Pena

LECTURE: Pilgrimage, Transnational Migrations and Religion

✪ASSIGNED READING: *Performing Piety* Ch. 2-3 by Elaine Pena

>Take Quiz 9 (turn in by Tuesday at 11:59pm)

Week 10 (Monday 3/11)

LECTURE: Globalization and Mexican-American Catholicism

✪ ASSIGNMENT: Watch FILM: "Our People, Our Faith...Our Lady."

ASSIGNED READING: "Miracles at the Border," Ch. 3 in *Globalizing the Sacred* by Manuel A. Vasquez and Marie Friedmann Marquardt

LECTURE: Latino Protestantism

✪ASSIGNED READING: "Borderland Praxis: The Immigrant Experience in Latino Pentecostal Churches" by Daniel Ramirez

>Take Quiz 10 during film (turn in by Friday at 11:59pm)

FINAL EXAM

Students may begin the final exam anytime between 8:00am on Tuesday, March 19th and 2:30pm on Thursday, March 21st., <https://ProctorU.com>. (Links to an external site.)

ProctorU is a live online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. ProctorU is available 24/7, however you will need to schedule your proctoring session at least 72 hours in advance to avoid any on demand scheduling fees. Creating a ProctorU account is very simple. All you will need to do is visit go.proctoru.com (Links to an external site.).

ProctorU also provides free technical support to ensure you have the best testing situation possible. That is available at www.proctoru.com/testitout (Links to an external site.). On this page you will also be able to test your equipment, learn about what to expect during your proctoring session, and ask any questions you may have about the proctoring process with a ProctorU representative.

In order to use ProctorU you will need to have a high-speed internet connection, a webcam (internal or external), a windows or apple Operating System, and a government issued photo

id. ProctorU recommends that you visit proctoru.com/testitout (Links to an external site.) prior to your proctoring session to test your equipment. For additional technical services needed before your exam, you can click on the button that says "connect to a live person."

Test Taker Walk Through Video url: <https://vimeo.com/107066503> (Links to an external site.)

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed.