

## Shamanism and the Idea of the 'Primitive' Syllabus

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Listed as R S 352 • Shamanism & The  
Primitive 42970

(Also as ANS 340, ANT 324L, REE 345)

Meets MW 2:00-3:30PM RLP 0.118

All over the world, we find people who are called (and who call themselves) “shamans.” But what does the term really tell us about the people to whom it is applied? The word itself probably originated in the Tungusic Evenki language of North Asia, and may have already been in use for more than a millennium when it was introduced to the West after Russian forces conquered the shamanistic Khanate of Kazan in 1552. Yet in anthropology and the study of religion – let alone in popular culture – the use of the word “shaman” extends well beyond the Tungusic Siberian context from which it was borrowed. It has assumed the form and function of a universal category even as it has come to refer to people whose beliefs, practices, and even appearances are wildly varied. So, what makes a shaman a shaman? And what, moreover, constitutes “shamanism?”

This upper division course draws on anthropological scholarship and methods as well as historical and contemporary literature focusing on shamans and shamanism in Central Asia to examine such beliefs and practices as three-worlds symbolism, divination, spirit helpers, drumming, chanting, dancing, hallucinogens, trance, and soul retrieval. However, it also examines the ways in which various theories of shamanism constitute and appropriate the exotic in a variety of broadly construed religious settings – the ways in which westerners, from missionaries to social scientists, have viewed the beliefs and practices of the shaman as an “ism” analogous to a religion even when that is not necessarily the case. Students of this course will learn to identify the major theories of “shamanism” along with the inherent biases of those theories in order to better read accounts of shamans and “shamanism” (from historical to modern, anthropological to popular) against the grain and discern when collected data reveals as much about the observers as it does about the shamans they observe.

### Flags: Global Cultures & Independent Inquiry

This course carries the **Global Cultures flag**. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

This course carries the **Independent Inquiry flag**. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

**Required Texts:**

- Buyandelger, Manduhai. *Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Memory, and Gender in Contemporary Mongolia*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Znamenski, Andrei A. *The Beauty of the Primitive: Shamanism and the Western Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

**Attendance**

If you must miss class for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible and arrange with a classmate to find out what was covered in the day's class. Your progress in the class and your preparation for the writing assignments rely heavily on class discussion. Being both present and prepared are crucial to your success in the class. **You are allowed two (2) undocumented absences without attendance repercussions. Each further undocumented absence lowers your course grade by one point** (i.e., after the second absence  $100 - 1.0 =$  maximum grade of 99, etc.).

**Basis for Grading:**

- Weekly analytic précis/annotated bibliography entries (15) = 60%
- Final Project Proposal & Presentation = 5%
- Completed annotated bibliography = 20%
- Final project = 15%

**Weekly Bibliography Annotations:**

Before each class students are expected to complete assigned readings. This is absolutely integral both to the discussion format of the class and to the student's ability to complete the annotated bibliography which constitutes 85% (75% + 10%) of his or her final grade. The weekly assignments constitute 75% of the final grade, collectively but without them Each week students will prepare a one-page written précis which will serve as the basis his or her bibliographic annotation. The instructor will assign (roughly) half of the class to prepare précis for the Tuesday readings and the other half to prepare précis for the Thursday readings in order to ensure that adequate attention is devoted to each reading. In addition to preparing précis on every other reading, students will comment on the précis of 3 of their classmates using the peer review function of Canvas.

**Annotated Bibliography Assignment:**

For this assignment, students will compile the finished versions of all of the bibliographic citations and annotations they have produced over the course of the semester.

- During the first 2/3 of the semester, we will work through the two required (core) texts, producing citations and annotations as we go. Additionally, each student will comment on the citations and annotations of three of their classmates using the peer review function of Canvas.
- On alternating class days (probably Tuesdays) during the final 1/3 of the semester, students will produce citations and annotations for sources they have individually chosen in support of their specific final projects. Additionally, students will share their findings, briefly describing these sources during class and make these project-specific bibliographic annotations available to their classmates through a shared Canvas document. On Thursdays, students will continue to produce bibliographic citations and annotations chosen by the instructor in support of the final projects that the students have chosen.

**Final Project Proposal:**

The final project proposal, which counts for 15% of the student's final grade, consists of an abstract outlining your proposed project and a tentative bibliography of primary and peer-reviewed scholarly sources. The abstract should include detailed focus and logic statements (Swaffar-Arens précis model) and an assessment/implication statement outlining your hypothesis and its potential significance to the broader study of shamanism(s) and related topics.

### **Final Project:**

The final project, which accounts for 15% of the student's final grade, consists of a five-slide, professional-quality PowerPoint presentation to be submitted (as opposed to presented) at the end of the semester. The topic of each student's final project is determined individually based on the student's research interests should follow logically from the student's particular annotated bibliography.

### **Class Discussion:**

I foster a classroom atmosphere in which everyone is treated respectfully. Classroom discussion of the material is an important part of the learning process and it is important for you to feel safe and relaxed so that you can speak up in front of the class without any anxiety, even if you are not certain that your contribution is correct. Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything in the classroom that prevents you from speaking in class.

### **Questions? Comments? Concerns?**

I value your feedback. If you enjoy your class, let me know. If there are any aspects of the class that you do not feel comfortable with, please inform me.

### **Additional course offerings from the Department of Religious Studies**

- ➔ If you would like information about majoring or minoring in Religious Studies, see Cyndi Goodson, Undergraduate Advisor for Religious Studies (BUR 531; [cyndigoodson@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:cyndigoodson@austin.utexas.edu))
- ➔ or visit the department's webpage <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/rs/index.php>

### **Use of e-mail for official correspondence to students**

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

The class will be using its Canvas site, accessible to each of you at <https://canvas.utexas.edu/> or through your UT Direct account. E-mail reminders and updates will be sent through Canvas. The instructor and TA answers university e-mail during business hours (M-F 8am-5pm). Do not expect a response after hours, immediately before class time or on weekends.

### **Documented disability statement**

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD. *Details of a student's disability are confidential. Faculty do not ask questions related to a student's condition or diagnosis when receiving an official accommodation letter.*

- Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).
- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).
- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: [http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for\\_cstudents.php](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php)

### **Behavior concerns advice line (BCAL)**

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

### Emergency evacuation policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless instructed to do so by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

#### **University of Texas Honor Code**

*The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.*

- (1) Each student in this course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work, unless the instructor explicitly allows collaboration.
- (2) You are encouraged to study together and to discuss information and concepts covered in lecture and the sections with other students. You can give "consulting" help to or receive "consulting" help from such students.
- (3) Should copying occur, both the student who copied work from another student and the student who gave material to be copied will both automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.
- (4) During examinations, you must do your own work. Talking or discussion is not permitted during the examinations, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examinations will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.

### Semester Schedule

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>
Week 1	MLK Day - no class	Introduction to the course
Week 2	January 28 "Enlightenment and Romantic writers Look at Shamans" p. 3 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>	January 30 "From Siberia to North America: Regionalists, Anthropologists, and Exiled Ethnographers" p. 39 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>
Week 3	February 04 "Neurotics to Tribal Psychoanalysts: Shamans through the Eyes of Psychology" p. 79 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>	February 6 "Power Plants: Psychedelic Culture Meets Tribal Spirituality" p. 121 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>
Week 4	February 11 "Shamanism Goes Global: Mircea Eliade and Carlos Castaneda" p. 165 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>	February 13 "Anthropology, Castaneda's Healing Fiction, and Neo-Shamanism Print Culture" p. 205 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>
Week 5	February 18 "Toward the Ancient Future: Shamanism in the Modern West" p. 233 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>	February 20 "Sources of Inspiration: From Native Americana to European Pagan Folklore" p. 273 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>
Week 6	February 25 "Back to Siberia: Adventures of the Metaphor in Its Motherland" p. 321 <i>The Beauty of the Primitive</i>	February 27 "Introduction: The Return of the Suppressed," p. 1 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>
Week 7	March 04 Ch. 1 "Mobile Histories," p. 39 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>	March 06 Ch. 2 "Technologies of Forgetting, State Socialism, and Potential Memories" p. 67 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>
Week 8	March 11 Ch. 3 "Genealogies of Misfortune," p. 99 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>	March 13 Ch. 4 "Thriving and Silenced Stories," p.131 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>
March 18-22 SPRING BREAK • FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE BY END OF BREAK		

Shamanism & the Idea of the 'Primitive'  
Dr. Jason Roberts & Dr. Craig Campbell

Week 9	March 25 Ch. 5 "Ironies of Gender Neutrality" p. 169 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>	March 27 Ch. 6 "Persuasion and Power," p. 203 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>
Week 10	April 01 Ch. 7 "Incomplete Lives," p. 233 <i>Tragic Spirits</i>	April 03 Readings for Dr. Campbell's presentation (TBA)
Week 11	April 08 Student-selected readings (TBD) students present annotations of their specific readings to class for discussion	April 10 Reading from: Znamenski, Andrei A. <i>Shamanism and Christianity: Native Encounters with Russian Orthodox Missions in Siberia and Alaska, 1820-1917</i> . Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1999.
Week 12	April 15 Student-selected readings (TBD) students present annotations of their specific readings to class for discussion	April 17 Reading from: Balzer, Marjorie M. <i>Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia</i> . S.I.: Routledge, 2017.
Week 13	April 22 Student-selected readings (TBD) students present annotations of their specific readings to class for discussion	April 24 Instructor-selected readings (TBD) pending students' choice of projects
Week 14	April 29 Student-selected readings (TBD) students present annotations of their specific readings to class for discussion	May 01 Instructor-selected readings (TBD) pending students' choice of projects
Week 15 <b>Last Week</b>	May 06 Student-selected readings (TBD) students present annotations of their specific readings to class for discussion	May 08 Instructor-selected readings (TBD) pending students' choice of projects.
FINAL PROJECT DUE BY THE END OF UNIVERSITY-SCHEDULED EXAM TIME		

### Additional Reading Suggestions:

You may choose some of your individual readings from these sources, and you are encouraged to add to the list!

- Baldick, Julian. *Animal and Shaman: Ancient Religions of Central Asia*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2012.
- Balzer, Marjorie M. *Shamanic Worlds: Rituals and Lore of Siberia and Central Asia*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Balzer, Marjorie M. *Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia and Central Asia*. S.I.: Routledge, 2017.
- Czaplicka, Marie A. *Shamanism in Siberia*. Whitefish, MT.: Kessinger Publishing, 1914 (reprint 2010). [public domain]
- Diószegi, Vilmos, and Mihály Hoppál. *Shamanism: Selected Writings*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1998.
- Fowles, Severin M. *An Archaeology of Doings: Secularism and the Study of Pueblo Religion*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2013.
- Greenwood, Susan. *The Anthropology of Magic*. Oxford: Berg, 2010.
- Harvey, Graham. *Shamanism: A Reader*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Jacobson-Tepfer, Esther. *The Hunter, the Stag, and the Mother of Animals: Image, Monument, and Landscape in Ancient North Asia*. Oxford; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Jakobsen, Merete D. *Shamanism: Traditional and Contemporary Approaches to the Mastery of Spirits and Healing*. New York: Berghahn, 1999.
- Lewis, Ioan M. *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Van, Deusen K. *Singing Story, Healing Drum: Shamans and Storytellers of Turkic Siberia*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.
- Znamenski, Andrei A. *Shamanism and Christianity: Native Encounters with Russian Orthodox Missions in Siberia and Alaska, 1820-1917*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1999.