1. Religion
   1. What is religion?
   2. Problems in the definition
      1. A category based on European languages and cultures which often has no equivalent in other cultures
      2. Apparent divisions between magic, religion, and science have roots in Western intellectual thought
      3. European-derived models of other religious beliefs and practices often take on assumed meanings which are quite misleading and very different from the phenomena they are intended to describe
      4. Some past definitions
         1. Tylor: “the belief in spiritual beings.” (1958:8)
         2. Horton: “An extension of the field of people’s social relationships beyond the confines of purely human society.” (1994:23)
         3. Eller p 239
         4. Geertz: … A religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions which such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 1973:90)
      5. Religion: The organized system of ideas and practices about the supernatural, along with associated beliefs, ceremonial practices and all phenomena that are seen as having a sacred or supra-empirical\* quality
         1. Supra-: above, beyond, or outside of.
         2. Empirical: based on observation or experiment
   3. The Anthropology of Religion
      1. Anthropologists are interested in how religion is actually lived by the majority of its adherents, not correct forms or what it ‘ought’ to be.
      2. Religion is like a worldview: it helps to understand how or why things are the way they are. It gives *meaning* to suffering, human existence and experience, and the natural realm
      3. Meaning is often sought in relation to birth, death, sickness, and events which are not adequately explained by other means
      4. For anthropologists, religion is a multifaceted phenomenon with overlapping spheres, rather than a single entity that can be identified and studied in isolation
      5. Religions may differ from one another on their emphasis of these domains of society and culture
      6. Types of religions
         1. Ritual
            1. Practical
            2. Dimension
         2. Philosophical
            1. Theology
            2. Theodicy
         3. Mythic
            1. Narrative
            2. Stories
         4. Experiential
            1. Emotional
            2. Psychological
         5. Ethical
            1. Legal
            2. Doctrine
         6. Organizational
            1. Social
            2. Hierarchical
         7. Material
            1. Artistic
            2. Symbolic
         8. Political and economic
   4. Religious Entities: Beings and Forces
      1. Deities – Gods & Goddesses
         1. Polytheism
            1. Belief in several gods and/or goddesses
         2. Monotheism
            1. Belief in one single god or divinity
         3. Henotheism (Olympian):
            1. The supreme deity, but others exist and are active
      2. Ancestral Spirits
         1. Free at physical death – leave the physical body. May return to a new body. May exist before birth or after death
         2. May maintain an active interest and/or involvement in society when not embodied
      3. Non-Human Spirits
      4. Impersonal Force/Power
      5. Animism
         1. Belief that all things possess a soul, spirit, or force; that all reality is animate. Plants, animal, springs, mountains, rocks, and other natural features may be occupied by spirits or forces. Impersonal forces at work in the world “Mana”, “Ebo” (Benin), “The Force
         2. Tylor said that all religions start as animism, then develop into polytheism, then ultimately to monotheism. An Evolutionary view – What do you think?
   5. Religious Specialists
      1. Priests and Priestesses
      2. Shamans
      3. Sorcerer
      4. Diviner/oracle
      5. Prophet
      6. Witch
   6. Rites of Passage
      1. Rituals which mark important transitions in life
      2. Three stages (Arnold Van Gennep):
         1. Separation
         2. Transition or “Liminality”
         3. Incorporation
      3. Victor Turner: Communitas: Group or communal “liminality”