

Syllabus for  
**CHRM 455—Intensive Studies: Animism & Folk Religion**  
3.0 Credit Hours  
Spring 2003

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A missiological examination of the concepts of animism and folk religion with emphasis on the major thought and ethics of various expressions of animism and folk religion in light of Biblical truth.

Course Prerequisite: none

II. COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to do the following:

- A. Understand the concepts of animism and folk religions.
- B. Understand the influence of animism in human affairs.
- C. Understand the dynamics of folk religion as found within major world religions.
- D. Understand the significant similarities and differences of animism in relation to Christianity.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Identify and discuss the major elements of animism.
- B. Identify and discuss elements of folk religion within of each of today's major religion.
- C. Record one's subjective response to animism and folk religion when confronted by them through literature, film, etc.
- D. Converse intelligently and in a nonthreatening way with constituents (guest speakers) of the various major religions.
- E. Analyze each major religion for the presence of animistic elements.

IV. TEXTBOOKS

- A. Required  
Hiebert, Paul G. *Understanding Folk Religion*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.  
  
Van Rheenen, Gailyn. *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1991.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. University Policies and Procedures

1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University.
2. Double cuts will be assessed for absences immediately preceding or following holidays.
3. Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.
4. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence will be charged a late exam fee.
5. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, video, multimedia, or computer software.
6. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.

B. Department Policies and Procedures

Note: Attendance policy is enforced. Excessive absences will affect your grade. See syllabus attendance policy.

1. Completion of a Course
  - a. All assignments are due on the dates established in the course calendar, which is published in the syllabus or assigned in class. **Any assignments turned in after the scheduled due date will be penalized five percent (5%) of the original value per day including weekends, breaks, and holidays.**
  - b. **No work** is accepted after the final date of regular classes.
2. Incompletes
  - a. An incomplete is given only after the student establishes with the instructor and the department chair by written petition that his or her work is incomplete for good cause (i.e., lengthy illness, death in the family). **Incompletes are rarely granted.** Only those absences that are incurred within the time period of the extenuating circumstances prompting an incomplete will be excused. The student is still accountable for any other absences and will be penalized for them according to the attendance policy.
  - b. A Petition for Incomplete Grade with all supporting documentation must be submitted for approval at least one week prior to the end of normal classes. The submitting of a petition does not automatically ensure the granting of an incomplete. The petition must be approved by the appropriate academic committee of the Undergraduate Theology Department.
3. Examinations and Other Assignments
  - a. Early examinations **are not** allowed.
  - b. Late examinations are administered only when extenuating circumstances are present (such as a death in the family the week before exams, sudden and major illness the week of exams that is documented by a physician). In fairness to all students, some persons should not have more time to prepare for an examination than others. **The granting of a late examination request is rare.**
  - c. A Petition for Late Examination without penalty must be signed by the professor and the chair. Proper documentation must accompany the petition and must be submitted to the Undergraduate Theology Department. The student must schedule the makeup exam with the professor of the course. The exam must be taken no later than five (5) calendar days after the approval of the petition. **Grade**

**penalties may be applied as indicated by the Academic Affairs Committee.**

- d. All exams will be given as scheduled. It is the student's responsibility when purchasing airline tickets, for example, to take this schedule into consideration. **Not being present for the final examination automatically results in failure of the course.**
- e. These requirements apply to all quizzes, tests, and examinations administered by the Undergraduate Theology Department.

4. Attendance

- a. The Official Attendance Policy for the Undergraduate Theology Department is as follows for a three-semester hour class:
  - (1) If the class meets three times a week, the missing of 6 class sessions will result in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 12 class sessions will automatically result in a grade of "F."
  - (2) If a class meets twice a week, the missing of 4 class sessions will result in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 8 sessions will automatically result in a grade of "F."
  - (3) If the class meets once a week, then missing 2 class sessions will result in a grade reduction of one letter grade. Missing 4 class sessions will automatically result in a grade of "F."
- b. **The absences allowed prior to grade reduction are designed to allow for emergencies and illnesses, and are not designed for indiscriminate use.** Many students incorrectly assume that they may use these allowable absences as unexcused "cuts" from class. Administrative excuses are granted only when a student is on official University business and has received approval in advance from the University administration.
- c. Students are expected to be prompt for classes. **Two tardies will equal one absence.**

C. Course Procedures

- 1. Grade Scale:  
90+=A, 80+=B, 70+=C, 60+=D, 59-=F
- 2. Semester Grade:

Seminar Assignments	50%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	<u>25%</u>
	100%
- 3. Guidelines for Comparative Analysis
  - a. Describe the basic beliefs of a particular religion.
  - b. Compare the beliefs to Christian beliefs about the same issues.
  - c. Demonstrate the validity and truth of the Christian view.
  - d. Explain the strengths and benefits involved in the non-Christian religion under study. Point out the weaknesses of this view.
  - e. Describe a missionary/evangelistic strategy for outreach to people who espouse the non-Christian religion under consideration.
- 4. Guidelines for Midterm Paper

Same as the Comparative Analysis, except do not select Islam, Buddhism, or New Age Religions.

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

A.	<u>Calendar WEEK</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
	1	Course Introduction – Split-Level Christianity
	2	Phenomenology of Religion
	3	Analyzing Belief Systems
	4	Folk and Formal Religions
	5	The Meaning of Life and Death
	6	Human Well-Being and Misfortune
	7	Guidance and the Unknown Midterm Exam
	8	Right and Wrong
	9	The World of Sacred Signs
	10	Sacred Myths
	11	Religious Rituals
	12	Religious Leaders and Institutions
	13	Religious Movements
	14	Theological Response to Folk Religions
	15	Missiological Responses
	16	Final Exam

## VIII. ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

Smith

Name of Instructor

CHRM 455

Course No.

Intensive Studies: Animism and Folk Religion

Title of Course

Theology

Name of Department

### MISSION

The lifestyle at ORU is rooted in the word "Wholeness." ORU seeks to educate the whole person, with balanced emphasis placed on the development of mind, spirit, and body.

### GENERAL OUTCOMES

1. Spiritual Development
2. Physical Development
3. Communication
4. Analysis
5. Problem Solving
6. Valuing in Decision Making
7. Social Interaction
8. Global Perspectives
9. Effective Citizenship
10. Aesthetic Responsiveness

### MAJOR OUTCOMES

**Spiritual Development:** Provides a foundation for the development of an intentional devotional lifestyle drawing from theological-historical resources for spiritual growth and values.

Develops skills needed to express and live out the essential Christian witness in the modern world.

**Communications/Knowledge:** Develops skills needed to learn from the past, think deeply, and formulate an integrated and balanced Christian Philosophy of life with clearly defined goals, purposes and values.

**Analysis:** Provides the background necessary to identify and appreciate the crucial historical events that have shaped the theology and practice of the Church.

Develops skills needed to apply lessons from the historical experience of the Church to the modern community of faith.

**Problem Solving:** Provides the background necessary to demonstrate responsible Biblical interpretation within a theological-historical framework.

Provides a valuable tool to help them develop a personal theological rationale and identify, justifying these beliefs on Biblical historical and theological events, precepts, and precedents.

### COURSE GOALS

To assist the student in acquiring a basic understanding of the major religions of the world.

To help the student identify points of commonality and points of distinction between the major religions of the world and Christianity.

To enable the student to dialogue as a Christian with members of other religions.

To enable the student to formulate and critique mission strategies for different major religions.

### ASSESSMENT OF COURSE GOALS

#### STIMULI:

Selected readings

Class discussions

Research paper

Exams

#### CRITERIA:

Seminar Assignments 50%

Midterm Paper 25%

Final Exam 25%

Total 100%