RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN BRAZIL:
FROM EXPERIENCE TO RESEARCH PROPOSAL

ANTHROPOLOGY 471
Spring 2012

Class meetings: Mon Wed 2:15-3:35 pm
Location: 101 Hall of Languages
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Office Hours: MW 4-5

How did Africans retain their religious beliefs in the context of slavery and its aftermath? What is the role of gender symbolism in Afro-Brazilian religion? What is spirit possession, and how does it shape the lives of the possessed? How does religious belief reflect and influence racial identities? Why and how do religions heal the sick and afflicted? What role is politicized Catholicism playing in the creation of a more democratic Brazil? Why are women so attracted to evangelical Christian churches? In this course we will investigate these questions, and more. In addressing these questions, one of our main foci will be race, because race as an issue is so central in Brazilian society. A core feature of the course is a week-long experience in Brazil over spring break, during which you will personally encounter several major religious groups in Rio de Janeiro, and interact with scholars and religious leaders. In Rio you will visit a different religious site each day. This experience will directly enhance your ability to write a better research proposal, a goal to which we will devote the second half of the course.

SU class in a candomblé temple, 2009
By the end of the course, you will

- be familiar with some of the major religious traditions of Brazil;
- have cogent answers to many of the questions posed above;
- have developed an in-depth understanding of a specific issue you choose about Brazil’s religious arena;
- have developed an analytical perspective on religion that will be globally applicable;
- have developed deeper understanding of research design and method
- have developed stronger proposal-writing skills

There are 2 books required for purchase, available at Syracuse University Bookstore: Bryan McCann, *The Throes of Democracy*; and Lindsay Hale, *Hearing the Mermaid’s Song*. Otherwise, this is a Black board Course: all other readings are posted on the Blackboard site.

### Course requirements, overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component of course</th>
<th>Percent of final grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presence at two special evening meetings</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 reading responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 papers (6-8 pages each), due Feb 16 and March 7</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brazil journal</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research proposal (10-12 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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### Course requirements, detailed

1) **Attendance and participation**

I note participation in class discussions and exercises. Being in college means honing your skill in making your ideas, questions and doubts known in public. I do not expect you to be brilliant; I do expect you to be engaged and to articulate your questions and points. I do not expect you to jump into every session all the time, but I do expect regular involvement from you.

2) **Two special evening meetings (required)**

Because of the unique nature of this course there will be two (2) evening “pizza” meetings, see and discuss two very important films on **Tuesday January 31 and Tuesday, Feb 14**, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm.
3) Posted reading responses..............................................................20%

I expect you to come to class having read the assigned readings for the day, having commented on them on the Blackboard Discussion, and to have looked over the responses by your co-students (also on the Blackboard Discussion). By **10:00 pm the night before class**, I expect you to post to the Blackboard Discussion a message of about 200 words in which you do the following:

1) state one or two things you learned from the reading that you feel were significant
2) state what you liked and/or did not like about the reading
3) state a question or questions the reading has left you with

I grade postings and expect them to show you engaged in active, interesting ways with the readings. I expect you to post 10 times before we leave for Brazil. Each post is worth either 0, 1 or 2 points. You receive a “0” if you miss a post (of the ten I expect from you). You receive 1 point if your post shows you did the reading, but fails to raise challenging, interesting questions about it. You get 2 points by showing you did the reading, and also that you raise challenging, interesting questions about it.

4) Two (2) segment papers............................................................30%

At two points in the term I will distribute a topic (or topics) to write on. On the due date for the topic, you will turn in a 6-8 page paper, based on materials covered during the segment (lecture, reading, discussion, films). Paper #1 (on mediumship religion) is due as an e-mail attachment on **Thursday, February 16th by 5 pm**. Paper #2 (on Christianity) is due in class on **Wednesday, March 7th**

5) Brazil journal (due March 21).....................................................15%

While in Brazil you must write at least 2 pages each day, for a total of 15 pages. In the journal, you should record your thoughts about what you are seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling and tasting. I will look for journal entries to be detailed and thoughtful.

6) Research proposal.................................................................25%

The final 10-12 page paper is to be written in the form of a research proposal to the Ford Foundation. The proposal will carefully lay out a proposed research project that seeks to shed light on an issue having to do with the relationship between religion and social norms, values or forces, in Brazil. The topic must be selected in consultation with me. Preparing the proposal has six (6) steps, some of which are graded.

**Meeting with me**.................................................................required

First, you must set up an appointment to see me about your project, no later than **Friday, February 24th**. If you do see me by this date, I will deduct points.
1-page proposal and 1-page bibliography..............................3 points
You must send me 2 pages, **by Friday, March 2**\textsuperscript{nd}, by 5 pm, as an e-mail attachment. This brief proposal and bibliography must a) state your topic; b) explain why you feel the topic is important; c) explain why the topic deals with both religion and society; d) states several questions you wish to investigate about your topic, and e) identify at least four key readings pertaining to your subject. These readings need to be scholarly. By “scholarly” I mean they must have been written by professional academics or academics-in-training (such as doctoral theses), and/or published in either peer-reviewed professional journals or by a University Press. Exceptions to these rules must be cleared with me. You do NOT have to have read these works by March 2nd; you DO need to have identified them as pertinent to your interests.

**Literature review.......................................................5 points**
**On Monday, April 2**, you must hand in to me a three-page review of some significant portion of the works you listed in your report of March 2. You may have added and subtracted works from that list, but you need to have read **no less than 200 pages** (of theses, articles, books, etc.). The literature review must state the issue that the literature is addressing, and identify **a weakness or a gap** (in perspective, method, concepts, etc.) that you plan to fill through your own research.

**Draft of your proposal/critique........................................required**
**On Wednesday, April 18**\textsuperscript{th} you will deliver a first draft of your proposal (10-12 pages) to an assigned partner in class. On the following **Monday, April 23**\textsuperscript{rd} class time will be devoted to mutual critiques of the proposals, on the basis of criteria that I will hand out to you.

**In-class presentation...................................................5 points**
**On April 25**\textsuperscript{th} or 30\textsuperscript{th}, you will make a 15-minute presentation on your research project, as if you were in front of a panel representing a funding foundation. The class will play the role of foundation panelists, and will ask you questions for 15 minutes. The panel will evaluate your proposal through the presentation.

**Final proposal (due by e-mail May 7 by 5 pm)....................12 points**
This is a 10-12 page paper is a research proposal you are submitting (**imaginarily**) to the Ford Foundation for $25,000 to support a year of research in Brazil. The proposal will include 1) an explanation of the background or context of your study; 2) a clear statement of the research question or problem you plan to investigate; 3) a review of pertinent literature and a clarification of how you hope to make a contribution to it; 4) an articulation of possible hunches or hypotheses you wish to investigate or test; 5) a description of the setting where you will undertake the project, and why; 6) how you will select populations & samples; 7) what data-gathering methods you will use, and why; 8) what your timetable and budget are; and 9) what audiences you hope will find your investigation significant, and why.

**Dinner and presentation of the award: May 2**\textsuperscript{nd}, free!
Part 1
The Brazilian context

Monday, Jan 23
The Brazilian Context, 1
Film: Gates film & discussion
Get started on McCann book; we will discuss it on Wednesday
No reading posts today!

Wednesday, Jan 25
The Brazilian Context, 2
Reading: Bryan McCann, *The Throes of Democracy*, whole book

Part 2
Mediumship religions:
Candomblé and Umbanda

Monday, January 30
Transformations in candomblé
Reading:
- Kasey Dolin, “Yoruban Religious Survival in Brazilian Candomblé”
- Rachel Harding, “É a Senzala: Slavery, Women, and Embodied Knowledge in Afro-Brazilian Candomblé”
- Sheila Walker, “Everyday and Esoteric Reality in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé”

Film clip: “Bahia: Africa in Brazil”

Tuesday evening, January 31: “Orfeu” 6:30-9:30 pm

Wednesday, February 1
Orixás, water, politics
Reading:
- Reports on orixás
- Claudia do Rosário, “The Ladies Of The Water: Iemanjá, Oxum, Oiá And A Living Faith”
- Keisha Khan Perry, ‘If We Didn’t Have Water’
Monday, Feb 6
Candomblé and homosexuality
Reading:
• James Sweet, “Male Homosexuality and Spiritism in the African Diaspora: The Legacies of a Link”
  o David Sparks, “Dancing the River: Fluidity of Eros and Gender in Music and Dance of African Diasporic Spiritual Traditions”
  o Peter Fry, “Male Homosexuality and Spirit Possession in Brazil”

Optional:
  o Jonathan Garcia et al, “Local Impacts of Religious Discourses on Rights to Express Same-Sex Sexual Desires in Peri-Urban Rio de Janeiro”

Wednesday, February 8
The cosmology of umbanda
Film: “Macumba”
Reading:
  Lindsay Hale, Hearing the Mermaid’s Song, ix -110

Monday, February 13
Spirit mediumship from three points of view
Reading:
• Aline Oliveira, “Incorporating the Pomba Gira”
• Kelly Hayes, “Feitiçeiras as Donas-de-Casa”
• Joan Hagerman et al, “The Neurobiology of Trance and Mediumship in Brazil”

Tuesday, Feb 14
Special viewing and discussion of “Favela Rising”
Recommended reading (on Blackboard)
  o George Yudice, “Parlaying Culture into Social Justice”
  o Neate and Platt, “Three Survivors Stories”; “A Different Way”
  o Maribel Suarez and Leticia Casotti, “Marketing Orientation in the Third Sector”
Part 3
Christianity and Brazilian Society

Wednesday, Feb 15
Progressive Catholicism and class inequality
Reading:
  o Mev Puleo, 3 selections from *The Struggle is One*

Film: “Living Liberation Theology, Parts 1 and 2”

Monday, Feb 20
The Black Pastoral and the Afro-mass
Reading:
  o John Burdick, “Pastoral Negro: Progressive Catholicism and the Anti-Racist Struggle”
  o __________, “The Black Pastoral in a Secular World”
  o __________, Chapter from Blessed Anastacia

Wednesday, February 22
Gender tensions in Christianity
Reading:
  • Rebello Miriam Rabelo et al, “Cultivating the Senses and Giving in to the Sacred”
  • Cecilia Mariz and Machado, “Pentecostalism and Women in Brazil”
  • Lisa Steele, “A Gift from God: Adolescent Motherhood and Religion in Brazilian Favelas”

Monday, February 27
Neo-pentecostalism and domestic social power
Reading:
  o Eric Kramer, “Spectacle and the Staging of Power”
  o Martijn Oosterbaan, “Purity and the Devil”
  o Patricia Birman, “Future in the Mirror”

Film clip: “Televangelism in Brazil”
Wednesday, February 29  
Brazilian neo-pentecostalism: growing global influence?  
Reading:  
- Cristina Mora, “Marketing the ‘health and wealth’ gospel across national borders”  
- Martijn Oosterbaan, “Virtually global”  
- Paul Freston, “The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God: A Brazilian Church Finds Success in Southern Africa”

Monday, March 5  
Three religious responses to HIV/AIDS  
Reading:  
- Murray et al, “Strange bedfellows: The Catholic Church and Brazilian National AIDS Program in the response to HIV/AIDS in Brazil”  
- Jonathan Garcia, Richard G. Parker, “Resource mobilization for health advocacy: Afro-Brazilian religious organizations and HIV prevention and control”

Optional:  
- “Divine targets: youth at the centre of Catholic and Pentecostal responses to HIV and AIDS in Brazil”  
- Rios et al, “The Catholic Church, moral doctrine, and HIV prevention in Recife, Brazil: Negotiating the contradictions between religious belief and the realities of everyday life”

Wednesday, March 7  
Preparation for trip
Part 4
Flying Down to Rio

Friday, March 9 to Sunday, March 18

Part 5
Designing research proposals

Note: For this segment of the course, I will post some readings on the Blackboard site, to help guide us. While you will not be required to post responses to these, you must come to class having read them.

Monday, March 19
Debriefing

Wednesday, March 21
The basics of research design: questions, sub-questions
Journals due
Individual meetings on papers through this week and next
You need to get going on reading the bibliography you compiled before leaving for Brazil; also, add new works as you discover them.

Monday, March 26
Choosing populations, sites and samples

Wednesday, March 28
How to observe

Monday, April 2
How to interview

Wednesday, April 4
More interviewing; group interviews

Monday, April 9
Ethics in research

Wednesday, April 11
Timetables and budgets

Monday, April 16
Writing and presenting competitive research proposal
PART 6
PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, April 18
First drafts of your research proposals due; everyone picks up each others’ papers (No class)

Monday, April 23
In-class critique of proposal drafts

Wednesday, April 25
Presentations and evaluations

Monday, April 30
Presentations and evaluations

Wednesday, May 2
No class

Evening: Final dinner and award of Ford Foundation grant at Phoebe’s restaurant