New Course Request

Check Appropriate Boxes:
Undergraduate credit ☑
Graduate credit ☐
Professional credit ☐

1. School/Division: LIBERAL ARTS
2. Academic Subject Code: REL

3. Course Number: 167 (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)
4. Instructor: VARIOUS

5. Course Title: INTRODUCTION TO TRIBAL RELIGIONS
   Recommended Abbreviation (Optional): (Limited to 32 Characters including spaces)

6. First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year):
   FALL 2009

7. Credit Hours: Fixed at 3 or Variable from ______ to ______

8. Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes ____ No X

9. Is variable title approval being requested? Yes ____ No X

10. Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication:
    INTRODUCTION TO TRIBAL RELIGIONS IS A LOWER DIVISION COURSE DESIGNED TO ACQUAINT STUDENTS WITH TRIBAL RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD WITH A FOCUS ON THE EARLIEST RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

11. Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at 3 or Variable from ______ to ______

12. Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at 0 or Variable from ______ to ______

13. Estimated enrollment: 40 of which 0 percent are expected to be graduate students.

14. Frequency of scheduling: ONCE PER YR
Will this course be required for majors? NO

15. Justification for new course: ADDENDUM

16. Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? YES

17. Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other materials.

18. If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap is necessary, desirable, or unimportant.

19. A copy of every new course proposal must be submitted to departments, schools, or divisions in which there may be overlap of the new course with existing courses or areas of strong concern, with instructions that they send comments directly to the originating Curriculum Committee. Please append a list of departments, schools, or divisions thus consulted.

Submitted by:

Dean of Graduate School (when required)

Date 8/9/08

Approved by:

Dean

Date 12/2/08

Chancellor/Vice-President

Date

University Enrollment Services

After School/Division approval, forward the last copy (without attachments) to University Enrollment Services for initial processing, and the remaining four copies and attachments to the Campus Chancellor or Vice-President.

UPS 724

University Enrollment Services Final—White; Chancellor/Vice-President—Blue; School/Division—Yellow; Department/Division—Pink; University Enrollment Services Advance—White
Introduction to Tribal Religions

Instructor: Johnny P. Flynn, and others TBA  
Office: Cavanaugh 335  
Phone: 274-1465  
Email: jopflynn@iupui.edu

Classroom: TBA  
Meeting Times: TBA  
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

When we speak of “tribal religions” people often think only of traditions like American Indian or aboriginal religions of Australia. Pre-Christian European religions are also considered tribal religions as are pre-Islamic religions also meet the definition. Hinduism and the Shinto tradition of Japan are also part of tribal religious traditions. Even the “great religions” of the world—Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism—can trace their origins to tribal religions. Introduction to Tribal Religions is designed as a course which can be taught by other instructors whose interests include the origins of many religions of the world.

Characteristics of tribal religions are:

Tribal religions have a specific sacred geography or “homeland” that they look to in their rituals and ceremonies.

Rituals and ceremonies of tribal religions invoke that sacred geography including burial sites of the ancestors, locations of contact with the deities or creators of the religion, and places where significant components of religious beliefs were “revealed.” Those revelations are handed down from generation to generation as part a rich oral tradition told and retold in ceremony.

Believers in tribal religions are “born to” the traditions and bonded to the ancestors of the religion by blood, clan or tribal affiliation.

Tribal religions do not “proselytize” or seek converts to the religious tradition. While it is possible to “convert” to a tribal religion, usually such conversion comes out of marrying someone in the tradition or relocating to the homelands where the tradition is principally located and spending considerable time in contact with believers born to the tradition.

The theology of tribal religions is bound up in the idea that human society and “the land” are woven together and believers are inextricably bonded to the sacred geography of the tribal tradition.

Even though many tribal religions of the world have experienced dislocation and diaspora in modern times, the land of origins and the Before Time are considered sacred and invoked in ritual and ceremonies and are still an integral part of the theology and experience of the religious traditions.
Course Objectives and the Principles of Undergraduate Education

Students who take this class and complete the readings and assignments by the end of the semester can expect to:

A. Develop a working knowledge of tribal religions and their contributions to the origins of other religions of the world.

B. Be able to identify where tribal religions originated, where they are still active, and gain an understanding of the role of sacred geography in tribal religions and how the natural world is celebrated as an integral part of tribal religions through rituals and ceremonies.

C. Develop the intellectual tools necessary to objectively evaluate tribal religions as viable belief systems in the modern technological world.

Students will also be expected to develop a working knowledge of the natural environment and how tribal religions organize a "sacred taxonomy" of plants, animals, rivers, lakes, streams and other geographic features into their religious world view.

Course Requirements and Guidelines

Introduction to Tribal Religions is a course designed to be taught by multiple instructors and so each instructor will be expected to develop their own requirements. At a minimum, there will be two mid-term examinations, a final exam, and a research paper which examines a tribal tradition of the world, chosen by the student or the instructor.

The mid-term examinations and final examination will consist of short answer identifications of relevant terms and phrases and several longer essays designed to test the student's knowledge and analysis of the subjects under study in the readings and lectures. Each mid-term examination will be weighted at twenty percent (20%), the final will be evaluated at thirty percent (30%) of the total grade, the research paper at twenty percent (20%), with class attendance and participation evaluated at ten percent of the final grade (10%).

| Mid-term examinations (2) | 40% @ 2 X 20% |
| Final examination         | 30%             |
| Research paper            | 20%             |
| Class participation and attendance | 10%          |

Total: 100%

In addition to the assignments outlined above, the instructor reserves the right to schedule examinations or additional assignments to periodically check student progress and attention
to class readings and requirements. Scores from these assignments will be weighted as part of class attendance and participation.

In addition to the scheduled examinations and additional assignments considered above, students will be required to write a well thought out and analytical paper.

Research Paper: Each student will choose a tribal tradition and write a 8-10 page paper which will at a minimum include the following sections:

A. A brief but cogent discussion of the ecological surroundings of the tribe the student has chosen to study. Examples would be a discussion of rivers, streams, springs, mountains, valleys or other natural features prominent in their world-view.

B. Choose some dimension of the religious tradition; doctrinal, social, ritual, experiential, ethical, or mythical, and analyze how it works in the religious tradition.

C. Number of believers, language(s) spoken, status of the tribal tradition in the modern era, footnotes and bibliography.

Class Attendance:

Students often ask, “How can I get a good grade?” And my response is always ‘three things; come to class, come to class, come to class.’ Attendance will be taken in this class and will count for a significant portion of your grade. Tribal religions are not “dead traditions” but vibrant and relevant traditions in the modern world. Often imbedded in the news stories of the day are articles indicating that tribal religions still play a significant role in the world. Instructors will be expected to integrate news of the world into the class curriculum and make it part of the class discussion. The only way students can understand developments in contemporary tribal religions is to come to class ready to participate in the discussion.

Class Culture and Rules

It can be said that every class becomes a ritual. Classes meet at a specific time, students prepare for the meeting time, and there are certain rules of behavior that should be followed. Here are the rules for the “ritual” of this class.

Come to class with the assigned readings completed and prepared to discuss the subject at hand including any questions you might have about the subject or the assigned readings.

Cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices should be turned off. Electronic notebooks and laptop computers can be used during class to take notes, but their use should not be intrusive or distracting to other students or the instructor.
Excused absences are allowed with a note from a doctor, coach, or other official document detailing the reason for the absence.

Announcements and updates, additional readings and course assignments will usually be available through the ONCOURSE website. However, the instructor reserves the right to give outside assignments, quizzes or other assignments as necessary to enhance student progress in the course.

The student will uphold the university policy on plagiarism which is defined as the use of other’s ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, music or pictures without properly citing the use of that work. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will be prosecuted according to the procedures outlines in the University “Student Rights and Responsibilities: publication. The simple rule is if you cheat, you fail the class. Grading scale for the class is as follows: A, 93-100; A-, 90-92; B+, 88-89; B, 83-87; B-, 80-82; C+, 78-79; C, 73-77; C-, 70-72; D, 60-67; F, 59 and below.

---

**Required Course Texts**

*The Mountain People*, Colin M. Turnbull

*Native American Religions*, Sam Gill

*The Speaking Land: Myth and Story in Aboriginal Australia*, Ronald M. Berndt

---

**Course Outline**

**Week One:** Introduction and terminology of the discipline. Dimensions of Religion. Readings: Forward and Chapter 1, Berndt. Turnbull, Chapter 1.

**Week Two:** Sacred Lands and the natural world. Berndt Chapter 2, Gill Prologue.

**Week Three:** Religions of the American Southwest, Gill, Chapter 1-2.

**Week Four:** Religions of the Outback. Berndt Chapters 3-4.

**Week Five:** Art and Music in tribal religions. Gill, chapter 3; Berndt Chapters 4-5.

**Week Six:** Art and the shapes of the land. Turnbull chapters 2-3.

**Week Seven:** Rites of Passage and initiation; Gill Chapter 4, Turnbull Chapter 4.
Week Eight: Birth, Death and the origins and destination of the soul. Turnbull Chapter 5; Berndt chapter 6.


Week Eleven: Coming of the New People. Gill Chapter 7, Berndt chapter 9.

Week Twelve: Colonialism and African religions: Turnbull, chapter 6-8.


Week Fourteen: Readings for the paper topics.

Week Fifteen: Review for final examination, Odds and Ends.

University Statement on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the use of the work of others without properly crediting the actual source of the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, entire articles, music or pictures. Using the work of other students, with or without their permission, is plagiarism if there is not indication of the original work. Plagiarism, a form of cheating, is a serious offense and will be severely punished. When plagiarism is suspected, the instructor will inform the student of the charge; the student has the right to respond to the allegations. If a student is charged with plagiarism, procedures outlined in the IUPUI "Student Rights and Responsibilities" statement will be followed. Students have the right to appeal any charge to the Academic Affairs Committee.