

Course: YBA326 **Anthropology of Ritual**. ECTS credits: 3

Mgr. Veronika Seidlová, Ph.D.

Wednesdays, 15:30-16:50, Jinonice, 6021.

Annotation: Studies of ritual continue to be of critical interest in anthropology. This course explores anthropological approaches to ritual as a universal feature of human social life. Attention will be given to key anthropological concepts of ritual (e.g. rites of passage, liminality, anti-structure, communitas, ritual as performance). Although ritual is sometimes considered as primarily related to religion, the anthropological approach requires that ritual be situated not only in religious but also in secular contexts, such as: politics and power relations, the construction of social identities and boundaries, the reproduction and invention of 'tradition' or social memory practices, globalization, commodification etc. We will also problematize the dichotomy of sacred and secular while discussing practices of today's individualized spirituality. Special focus will be paid to the negotiation of sound dimensions of ritual practice.

Key words: ritual, practice, performance, anthropological theory

Focus group: Undergraduate students of Liberal Arts and Humanities in their 2nd or 3rd year of studies. (Certain CESS texts from anthropology included.)

Requirements: Minimum **500 words annotations of 8 assigned readings** (except the 1st week) uploaded in the moodle course page **AND 10 min powerpoint presentation** of a selected ethnographic case of a ritual performance framed / interpreted with the help of theoretical concepts from mandatory readings, uploaded in the moodle and orally presented by the student.

1st week (19.2. 2020)

Miner, Horace. 1956. **Body Ritual Among Nacirema**. In: Spradley, J. P. - McCurdy, D. (eds.) 2012. *Conformity and conflict: readings in cultural anthropology*. 14th ed. Pearson. P. 287 – 291. Spradley, James. P. 1980. Recommended: Ethnography and Culture. In: Spradley, J. P. - McCurdy, D. (eds.) 2012. *Conformity and conflict: readings in cultural anthropology*. 14th ed. Pearson. (Film: *Strange Beliefs. Edward E. Pritchard. Part I. Witchcraft among Azande*)

2nd week (26. 2.2020)

Gmelch, George. **Baseball Magic**. In: Spradley, J. P. - McCurdy, D. (eds.) 2012. *Conformity and conflict: readings in cultural anthropology*. 14th ed., p. 266 – 274.

Dubisch, Jill. **Run for the Wall: An American Pilgrimage**. In: Spradley, J. P. - McCurdy, D. (eds.) 2012. *Conformity and conflict: readings in cultural anthropology*. 14th ed., p. 275 - 286.

3rd week (4.3.2020)

Turner, Victor. 1969. **Liminality and Communitas**. In: Turner, V. *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press., p. 94-130.

4th week (11.3.2020)

Bowie, Fiona. **Ritual Theory, Rites of Passage, and Ritual Violence**. In: Bowie, Fiona. 2005. *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*. 2 edition. Malden, MA ; Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. p. 138 – 169.

5th week (18.3.2020)

Guest lecture by Radan Haluzík, Ph.D. (Center for Theoretical Study, Czech Academy of Sciences) on the politics of carnival and (pre-)war rituals in Balkans and Caucasus in 1990s.

Readings will be provided during February 2020. (Short bio:

<http://www.cts.cuni.cz/index.php?m=35&lang=en&osoba=682>)

6th week (25.3.)

Schechner, Richard. **Ritual**. In: Schechner, R. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. London – New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 52 – 88.

7th week (1.4.)

Seidlová, Veronika. 2018. „**Negotiation of Musical Remembrance within Jewish Ritual Performance in Prague’s Old-New Synagogue**“. *Journal of Urban Culture Research*, Vol. 16, s. 44 – 62.

8th week (8.4.) *No class*

9th week (15.4.)

Seidlová, Veronika. 2013. **Singing One’s Way out of Marginality? The Musical-Religious Activities of a Female Hindu Ascetic in Rishikesh, India**. In: Jurková, Z., Stellmacher, M., Skořepová, Z., Kuhnová, K., Seidlová, V. 2013. *Tóny z okrajů: Hudba a marginalita/Sounds from the Margins*. Praha: Kher. 59-71; 130-145. E-book, available free from http://www.kher.cz/eknihy_nase.php

10th week (22.4.)

Barry Stephenson. **Ritual Negotiations in Lutherland**. In: Husken, Ute – Neubert, Frank. 2011. *Negotiating Rites*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press. p. 81 – 95.

11th week (29.4.)

To be specified during February. Most likely: Ong, Aihwa. **The Production of Possession: Spirits and the Multinational Corporation in Malaysia**. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 15, No. 1, *Medical Anthropology* (Feb., 1988), pp. 28-42.

12th week (6.5.) *No class (Rector’s Day)*

13th week (15.5.) Student’s presentations and discussion

14th week (22.5.) Student’s presentations and discussion

Powerpoint presentation details: 7-10 slides including List of references. Your presentation should consist of a description of an ethnographic case (approx. 2-3 pages) of an event which can be interpreted as a ritual performance. Either you can use a case from anthropological literature or you can try to ethnographically describe an event which you have yourself attended (include photos). The event must be framed with a theoretical concept(s) from the literature provided in the course, i.e. you would add interpretations of the observed. Put references in the text and include the final list of references at the end. Please upload the presentation in the moodle **till 15/5**.