

RITUAL, IDENTITY AND SOCIAL LIFE
130B/ANTHH155B
SPRING 2007
Hall 106

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X4962

Office hours: Mondays 2:30 – 5:00

In this course we will examine the role of ritual in constructing individual and group identities. We will explore both personal and social rituals such as style (body modifications and other that annoy parents), the significance of commemorative monuments (Warsaw Ghetto Memorial, etc), coming of age rituals (circumcision and clitoridectomy), political ceremony (Burning the flag and President Reagan's visit to Bitburg cemetery) and religion. We will examine these rituals from different disciplinary perspectives using a diverse range of sources such as short stories, newspaper reports, documentaries and short academic papers.

Requirements: Each student will write 4 essays for the course. Each essay will go through at least two draft stages. A final essay on a topic that ties all four essays will be due on final's week. Each student will be assigned to a tutorial group of five people. Tutorial groups will meet several times in the course of the semester to give and receive feedback on drafts. Attendance to these tutorials is a requirement. In addition there will be in class workshops in which we will discuss certain conventions of writing using our drafts as examples.

WEEK ONE: (Identifying and defining a PROBLEM)

Jan 22 Introduction

Jan 24: A minimal definition of ritual.

Reading: Rappaport, "The Ritual Form"

WEEK TWO: (Same PROBLEM different takes)

Jan 29: Library Visit (During class hour; meet Margaret Schaus)

Jan 31: Tutorial Groups assignment 1: (Library Project – see handout)
(Start work on first draft of first essay)

Handout

Wednesday Projects:

Working as a Tutorial Group you will use class time on Wednesday to research different definitions or uses of the term "ritual." Each group will have to come up with at least three different definitions or uses or perspectives on ritual. Each group then will also try to figure out how these definitions compare to Rapapport's definition. Please take note of the type of source you are using (religion encyclopedia, OED, etc) and try to figure this into your discussion. In class on February 5th each group will present its findings. This coming Monday when you meet with Margaret Schaus please keep this assignment in mind as she takes you through the various resources the library offers. You may also ask her how she could go about this project. The goal of the whole exercise (Monday and Wednesday) is expose you to the library resources (print, electronic and human), to provide you with basic skills to use these resources, and to expose you to the diversity of perspectives on ritual. Each group will figure out how it does the task as a team.

Topic for the First Essay.

Using Rapapport and the materials from the Tutorial Group work on Wednesday write a one-page draft essay on why you might classify any one of the following activities under "ritual" (Choose one activity) – Sport (football, basketball, etc), Thanksgiving dinner, Bart mitzvah, Holy Communion, observance of the ninth month of the Islamic year (Ramadan), Kwanzaa, ear piercing, dating, "Sweet Sixteen." Drafts are due in class on Monday February 5th.

WEEK THREE: (Elements of a research problem)

Feb 05: An elaborated definition of ritual 1.

Reading: Rappaport, “Features of Ritual”
(First draft)

Feb 07: An elaborated definition of ritual 2.

Reading: Rappaport, “Ritual as Communication.”

WEEK FOUR: (Picking an ARGUMENT)

Feb 12: Ritual in Anthropological Literature 1.

Reading: Bloch, “The Past and Present in the Present.”
(Second draft)

Feb 14: In-Class workshop) – (How to structure your argument)

Reread Bloch
(Second draft sharing)

WEEK FIVE: (CONTROVERSY and Counter-Argument)

Feb 19: Ritual in Anthropological Literature 2.

Reading: Howe, “The Social Determination of Knowledge: Maurice Bloch and Balinese Time.” (First essay and topic for second essay)

Feb 21: Workshop: (STYLE and conventions of clarity)

(Share pre-draft 1 paragraph exercises)

WEEK SIX: (Ethnography and PRIMARY DATA)

Feb 26: Ritual of Royalty: The Incwala of Swaziland 1.

Reading: Gluckman, “Rituals of Rebellion in South East Africa”
(First draft)

Feb 28: Incwala 2. Structural Functionalism (Schools of thought)

Reading: Gluckman, “Rituals of Rebellion in South East Africa”

WEEK SEVEN: (SECONDARY SOURCES)

March 05: Incwala 3. Political anthropology

Reading: Lincoln, Chapter 4.
(Second essay and topic for third essay)

March 07: Workshop: (Using other people’s work and the lure of PLAGIARISM).

(Class exercises)

WEEK EIGHT

Spring Break

WEEK NINE: (Writing as art, science and activism)

March 19: The Politics of Historical Memory: The Bitburg Controversy
Readings: Hilberg, "Bitburg as Symbol"

March 21: Rituals and Counter-Rituals:
Reading: Bole, "Bitburg: The American Scene"
Levi, "The Memory of Offense."
(First draft)

WEEK TEN: (Social tragedy and personal crisis)

March 26: Library Projects: Working as a group, find contemporary newspaper reports, magazine and journal articles, cartoons and other media to answer the following questions:

Group 1. Make a case for President Reagan's visit to Bitburg?

Group 2. Prepare a three point statement representing Jewish –American objections to the President's visit to Bitburg?

Group 3. Interpret Chancellor Kohl's speech at Bitburg for the class: what was at stake for him and Germany in this visit?

March 28: Workshop: (Opinion, advocacy and academic writing)
(Class presentations and second draft for third essay)

WEEK 11: (The political nature of moral controversies)

April 02: *Les Rites de Passage: The Ritual Making Social Subjects*
Reading: Frank Young, "The Functions of Male Initiation Ceremonies"
(Third essay and topic for the fourth essay)

April 04: Ritual and Global Morality: Politics of clitoridectomy.
(Alice Walker documentary)

WEEK 12: Moral Controversy and Cultural Relativism)

April 09: The Politics of Clitoridectomy
Readings: James, "Listening to Other Voices: Reflections around Female Genital Cutting"
(First draft) (Tutorial groups)

April 11: Workshop: Interpreting ritual

WEEK 13: (Using historical material)

April 16: Banquets and Brawls
Reading: Lincoln, Chapter 5

(Second draft)

April 18: Collective Obscenity

Reading: Lincoln, Chapter 7.

WEEK 14: (Analysis, interpretation and documentation)

April 23: Freud: Ritual as Neurosis

Reading: Freud,
(Fourth Essay)

April 25: Style: Constructing a social skin

Reading: Turner, "The Social Skin"

WEEK 15: (How to close an argument)

April 30: Workshop: (Integrating your revised essays into a final paper)

May 02: Concluding lecture and class reflections.

(Meeting individually about your final essay)