

## **RELIGION AND SOCIETY IN BRAZIL: CLASS, RACE AND GENDER**

**ANTHROPOLOGY 471  
RELIGION 472  
Spring 2009**

**Class meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:45PM - 2:05PM**

**Class location: Hall of Languages 214**

**Instructor: John Burdick**

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**Office location: 400H Eggers Hall**

**Office Hours: T & Th 2-3 pm and by appointment**

How did Africans retain and reproduce 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. 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 proposal-writing skills

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 enrich your ability to think about, and propose future research on, the social and symbolic dimensions of religion.

**This is a Black board Course:** Many of the required readings are posted on the Blackboard site.

### Course requirements, overview

Attendance and participation.....	10%
Presence at three special evening meetings.....	Required
12 reading responses.....	20%
3 segment papers (4-5 pages each).....	30%
Brazil journal.....	15%
Research proposal (10 pages).....	25%

### Course requirements, detailed

#### 1) Attendance and participation.....10 points

**Three special evening meetings** Because of the unique nature of this course there will be three evening “pizza” meetings, on **February 3, February 17, and March 4**, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. On Feb 3 and Feb 17 we will see and discuss two very important films; on March 4 we will finish our practice Portuguese session, and will talk through various practical matters pertaining to our trip.

#### 2) Posted reading responses.....20 points

I expect you to come to class having read the assigned reading for the day, having commented on it on the Blackboard Discussion, and to have looked over the responses to the reading 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

**Note: When there are more than one assigned reading, you may EITHER choose to comment on only one reading; or you may comment on more than one, for example by commenting on points of overlap or difference between the readings.**

**How are these responses graded? I do not grade individual postings.** I expect you to post 12 times before we leave for Brazil. Your grade for this part will be determined as follows:

12 postings.....	A+
11 postings.....	A
10 postings.....	A-
9 postings.....	B+
8 postings.....	B
7 postings.....	B-

6 postings.....	C+
5 postings.....	C
4 postings.....	C-
3 postings.....	D
Fewer than 3.....	F

**3) Three (3) segment papers.....30 points**

At three points in the term (near the start of the segments on candomblé, umbanda, and Pentecostalism) I will distribute a topic (or topics) to write on. On the due date for the topic, you will turn in a 4-5 page paper, based on materials covered during the segment (lecture, reading, discussion, films); and any outside (perfectly cited) sources you wish.

Paper #1 (on candomblé) is due Monday, February 2nd; paper #2 (on umbanda) is due Friday, February 20, by 6 pm, as an e-mail attachment; and paper #3 (on either Pentecostalism or liberationist Catholicism) is due on Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> in the Syracuse airport, on our way to Brazil.

**Brazil journal (due Mar 18).....15 points**

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.

**4) Research proposal.....25 points**

The final 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.

**a) Meeting with me.....required**

First, you must set up an appointment to see me about your project, no later than **Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**. If you do see me by this date, I will deduct points.

**b) Brief proposal and bibliography.....3 points**

You must send me one page, **due Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>**, by 6 pm, as an e-mail attachment. This brief proposal and bibliography must a) state the questions you wish to pose about your topic, and b) identify at least four key readings pertaining to your subject. At least half of the works need to be **scholarly**. By “scholarly” I mean the works 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 February 27<sup>th</sup>; you DO need to have identified them as

pertinent to your interests. I will help you identify key works. A very good place to start is by looking up key words in the Dissertations and These Full Text database on the Library website. I will go over this in class.

**c) Literature review.....5 points**

**On Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup>**, you must hand in to me a three-page review of some significant portion of the works you listed in your report of February 27. 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.

**d) Draft of your proposal/critique.....required**

**On Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>** you will deliver a first draft of your proposal (9-12 pages) to an assigned partner in class. On the following **Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**, class time will be devoted to mutual critiques of the proposals, on the basis of criteria that I will hand out to you.

**e) In-class presentation.....5 points**

On **April 15<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, or 27<sup>th</sup>**, you will make a 10-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 10 minutes. The panel will evaluate your proposal through the presentation. The date you present will be chosen from a hat.

**f) Final proposal.....12 points**

This is a 10 page paper is a research proposal you are submitting (imaginarily) to the Ford Foundation for a year-long stint 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.

## **CLASS SESSIONS: TOPICS AND READINGS**

**Monday, Jan 12**

**Introduction to course**

### **PART 1: REVERING THE ORIXAS**

**Wednesday, Jan 14**

**Transformations in candomblé**

- Kasey Dolin, “Yoruban Religious Survival in Brazilian Candomblé”
- Rebecca 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”

**Monday, January 19**

**NO CLASS: MLK DAY**

**Wednesday, Jan 21**

**The orixás**

- Mikelle Smith Omari-Tunkara, “Yemenjá/Yemojá: Mother, Ruler, River, Ajé”

**Monday, Jan 26**

**Mediumship from two points of view**

- Parvati Jeannette Staal, “The Waters of Oxala at Ile Oxum. . .”
- Seligman, Rebecca, “From affliction to affirmation: narrative transformation and the therapeutics of Candomblé mediumship”

**Film clip:** “Iawo”

**Wednesday, Jan 28**

**Candomblé and the *movimento negro***

- Anna Pagano, “Religion and the Politics of Racial Identity”, whole thesis

**PART 2:  
CLASS, RACE AND VIOLENCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO**

**Monday, Feb 2**

**Race and Class in Rio de Janeiro**

- Burdick, “The Everyday Wounds of Color”
- Donna Goldstein, “The Aesthetics of Domination.”

**Film clip from** “Cronicamente Inviavel”

**PAPER #1 DUE IN HARD COPY, IN CLASS**

**Tuesday evening, February 3:** “Orfeu” , HL 202, 6:30-9:30 pm

**Wednesday, Feb 4**

**Violence and gangs in the favela**

- Donna Goldstein, “State Terror, Gangs and Everyday Violence” to p 215
- Film clip:** “News from the Front of a Private War”

**PART 3:  
THE SPIRITS OF BRAZIL: UMBANDA**

**Monday, February 9**

**The history and basic cosmology of umbanda**

**Lecture:** The history of umbanda

- Diana Brown, “Caboclos and Pretos Velhos in the Umbanda Cosmos”, and “Umbanda Ritual”

**Film:** “Macumba”

**Wednesday, February 11**

**Pretos velhos**

- Lindsay Hale, “Pretos Velhos in Brazil” [in *On earth as it is in heaven*, 107-132.
- John Burdick, “The Spirit of Rebel and Docile Slaves”

**Film clip:** “Santo Forte”

**Monday, February 16**

**Pomba-gira**

- Kelly Hayes, “Pomba Gira and the Religious Imaginary”, 106-153
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Wicked Women and Femmes Fatales”

Youtube of Pomba-gira

**Tuesday, February 17, eve:** “Favela Rising”, HL 202, 6:30-9 pm

**PART 4:  
PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIANITY**

**Wednesday, February 18**

**Classical pentecostalism: issues of faith and violence**

- Selections on Protestantism by Burdick in *Looking for God and Blessed*
- Donna Goldstein, *Laughter Out of Place*, 215-225

**Film clips:** “Miracles are not Enough”; Assembly of God New Zion

<http://worldfocus.org/blog/2008/11/06/catholic-brazilians-convert-to-the-pentecostal-church/2484/>

**PAPER #2 IS DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, BY 6 PM, AS AN E-MAIL ATTACHMENT**

**Monday, February 23**

**Neo-pentecostalism: spectacle and politics**

- Eric Kramer, “Drama and Spectacle”
- Patricia Birman, “Future in the Mirror: Media, Evangelicals and Politics in Rio de Janeiro”

**Film clip:** “Televangelism in Brazil”

**Wednesday, February 25**

**Pentecostalism and women**

- Cecilia Mariz and Machado, “Pentecostalism and Women in Brazil”
- Mariz and Mafra, “Family and reproduction among Protestants in Rio de Janeiro”

**Film clip:** “Miracles are not Enough”

## **PART 5: LIBERATIONIST CATHOLICISM**

**Monday, March 2**

**Liberationist Catholicism and class struggle**

**Lecture:** Rise of the Progressive Church

**Reading:**

Mev Puleo, selections from *The Struggle is One*

**Film:** “The Journey”

**Wednesday, March 4**

**The Afro-Mass**

**Reading:**

Burdick, selections from *Blessed Anastacia*

**Film clip:** View of an Afro Mass

**Wednesday, March 4**

Special evening meeting, 6:30-9:00, Preparing for Rio, HL 101

**PAPER #3 IS DUE ON FRIDAY, MARCH 6<sup>TH</sup>, IN HARD COPY, DELIVERED BY HAND TO ME IN HANCOCK AIRPORT**

## **PART 6: FLYING DOWN TO RIO**

**Friday, March 6 to Sunday, March 15**

## **PART 7: DESIGNING RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

**Note: For this segment of the course, I will post (light) 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 16**  
No class

**Wednesday, March 18**  
**Debriefing on trip**  
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 23**  
**The basics of research design**

**Wednesday, March 25**  
**More research design; how to observe and do interviews**

**Monday, March 30**  
**More interviewing; the basics of ethical research**

**LITERATURE REVIEW DUE IN CLASS**

**Wednesday, April 1**  
**Practicalities: timetables and budgets**

**Monday, April 6**  
**The structure of a competitive research proposal**

**Wednesday, April 8**  
**First drafts of your research proposals due; everyone picks up each others' papers (No class)**

**Monday, April 13**  
**In-class critique of proposal drafts**

**PART 8:  
PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Wednesday, April 15  
Presentations and evaluations**

**Monday, April 20  
Presentations and evaluations**

**Wednesday, April 22  
Presentations and evaluations**

**Monday, April 27  
Presentations and evaluations**

Final dinner (date to be announced) and award of Ford Foundation grant at Phoebe's