



GOUCHER COLLEGE

Welch Center for Graduate and Professional Studies

SYLLABUS – Topics and Issues in Cultural Sustainability: Culture and Spirituality

Course Number CSP657
Credits 3
Semester Spring 2016 (Residency)
Instructor: Anna Ralph
E-mail anna.ralph@goucher.edu

Welcome to our Course!

The emerging field of cultural sustainability synthesizes concepts from a variety of existing fields, including cultural anthropology, sociology, and folklore. A thread which weaves its way through these fields, though largely unacknowledged, is the explicit or implicit spirituality of people. Spirituality, in its most basic forms, is part of the essence of every culture. It defines and perpetuates cultural values, providing structure and meaning to life.

To effectively work at sustaining cultures, it is essential, then, to understand the centrality and implications of spirituality in those cultures. In this course we will explore some of the ways spirituality is inextricably embedded in a community's worldview: in cosmology and views of nature/environment; in morality; in understandings of leadership and authority; in family life and social roles; and in artistic expression. We will consider how recognition of these connections enhances sustainability efforts and promotes community engagement. We will discover groups whose spiritual values predispose them toward sustainability and explore the work they are currently doing. Finally, we will conduct case studies of ethnographic field work to ascertain how spirituality is implicated in issues of sustainability.

Main Course Topics

1. Worldviews and cultural assumptions
2. Overview of anthropology and religion
3. Spirituality—definitions and classifications
4. Evidences of spirituality, and its cultural implications
5. Interconnections of spirituality and sustainability
6. Implications of spirituality for the work of cultural sustainability
7. Ethnographic case studies

Departmental Learning Outcomes

This course is aligned with two departmental learning outcomes, listed below. Students will meet departmental learning outcomes through successful completion of assignments and activities in core and elective courses. A list of all departmental learning outcomes can be found at:

<http://www.goucher.edu/graduate-programs/ma-in-cultural-sustainability/curriculum>

Outcome 1: Research, demonstrate and apply knowledge of cultural practices and contemporary issues pertaining to cultural sustainability which contribute to human and ecological well-being. (Final Paper used for assessment)

Outcome 2: Exhibit professional and ethical responsibility in managing partnerships that foster community self-determination and empower community efforts in cultural documentation, preservation, revitalization and social equity. (Documentation Paper used for assessment)

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Articulate some of the diverse ways and reasons that communities express their spiritualities and how these spiritualities define and perpetuate cultural values and identity.
2. Recognize how a culture's spirituality shapes and reflects its worldview and some of the challenges the student's own worldviews can present in studying the beliefs of others.
3. Evaluate how a community's spiritual expressions enhance and/or hinder the work of cultural sustainability.
4. Develop strategies for working with a community that demonstrate sensitivity to its spiritualities.
5. Examine how individuals' and organizations' spiritual beliefs might motivate them to expand their efforts toward the sustainability and wellbeing of their culture and the environment.
6. Analyze ethnographic research and articulate the connections between a community's spiritualities and its issues of sustainability.

Course Format

This course is a combination of a nine-day residency and three weeks of online follow up.

Pre-readings and Assignments

Our course in Canvas lists the readings which should be completed before coming to the residency. It also describes two brief assignments which are to be submitted ahead of time.

Face-to-face

The intensive residency portion of this course will occur on the campus of Goucher College January 8 - 16, 2016. Our time together will include a variety of presentation modes and activities, as well as two brief individual presentations by each student.

Three week online follow-up

After our time together at Goucher, we will continue to meet for three weeks through the Canvas online education system (January 17 – February 5, 2015). We will use one live Web-Ex meeting, and the discussion board, to continue our conversations. Most of the three weeks will be devoted to the completion of final projects—the ethnographic case studies.

Assignment Instructions:

Details for specific assignments appear in the course information in Canvas.

Please note, as mentioned above, that there are two brief assignments which are to be submitted **before the residency begins**.

In addition, there are two Wikis posted in the course which contain information about choosing the essay you will summarize and the ethnography you will use for your final project. The choices will be

listed and each of you will have the opportunity to sign up for one of them. **Please be sure to check these Wikis as soon as possible, especially since you will need to obtain and read a copy of the ethnography you will be using for your project.**

Required Readings

All pre-readings are listed in Canvas.

There are only three books each student needs to purchase (listed below). All of these are available through the Goucher bookstore or new/used through online vendors. (For example, Amazon sells both new and inexpensive used copies of all three.)

- Albanese, Catherine L., ed. *American Spiritualities: A Reader*. Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 2001. ISBN-10: 0253214327
- Gardner, Gary T. *Inspiring Progress: Religions' Contributions to Sustainable Development*. New York: (Worldwatch) Norton, 2006. ISBN-10: 0393328325
- Lanier, Sarah A. *Foreign to Familiar*. Hagerstown, MD: McDougal Publishing, 2010 (2000). ISBN-10: 1581580223

Each student is required to choose one additional full text from a Wiki list provided by the instructor. This ethnography will be the basis for the final course assignment—an ethnographic case study.

All other readings are provided via links in Canvas. These are comprised of a wide assortment of pertinent book chapters, scholarly journal articles, other types of articles, and websites.

Grading

Course Elements	Percent
Participation during Residency	20%
Discussion Forum and Blog postings	20%
Participation in online activities (Zoom class mtg; Disc. Forum responses)	10%
Class Presentations (3 brief)	15%
Essay Summary	5%
Final Project –Ethnographic Case Study	30%
TOTAL	100%

Grade Scale

A	93 or more points
A-	90 - 92 points
B+	87 - 89 points
B	83 - 86 points
B-	80 - 82 points
C+	77 - 79 points
C	73 - 76 points
C-	70 - 72 points
D	60 - 69 points
F	59 points and below

Course Policies

Communication:

- Faculty will be available at their Goucher email address and will respond to queries within 24-48 hours.
- Course participants are responsible for maintaining continuous involvement with faculty, fellow students and student groups. In particular, participation in all online discussions is required. Ongoing communication allows you to gain deeper insights into the content, activities and assignments in the course. Please give notice of any obstacle that prevents this.
- You are encouraged to ask questions whenever information needs clarifying.
- For questions pertaining to your assignments: send an email directly to the instructor (please do not post personal questions on the discussion board).
- For questions about assignments that may be interesting and helpful to other class members: please use the discussion board.
- For problems with technical aspects of the website: contact helpdesk@goucher.edu (you may copy the instructor).

Missed Work:

You are responsible for material covered in the course. It is your sole responsibility to obtain any materials missed.

Late Policy:

For proper graduate student learning to occur, pacing of content mastery is critical. Therefore, assignments are to be completed on time. If extreme circumstances prevent an assignment to be completed in a timely fashion, please notify me before the assignment is due so a new date can be negotiated. Only follow-ups completed by the due date can be redone. Late assignments without such notification will be docked.

Academic Integrity:

All final work products are to be the independent work of each student and stored in the electronic portfolio. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the Academic Honor Board. For a full description of the code and what constitutes a violation of the code, refer to the Goucher Handbook or online at www.goucher.edu/x1292.xml.

Disability Support:

<http://www.goucher.edu/academics/academic-support/disability-support-services>