

## **The Prehistory of Religion: Shamans, Sorcerers and Saints**

Archaeology 226

Section: E100

Term: 2004 Spring

Instructor: Dr Brian Hayden

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Evening course

Burnaby campus

### Discussion Topics: Course description:

Religious phenomena have always been important in human cultures in terms of oral history, in terms of personal experiences, and even in terms of major architectural achievements or social institutions. They constitute important forces in the emergence of early states, yet their ultimate validity is widely questioned in contemporary Industrial Society. Why are religion and the supernatural so important for all human societies? Can belief be viewed as adaptive? And if so, is religion still adaptive for people? When did religion emerge and how did it change? These are the basic questions that this course will deal with.

A comparative cultural approach will be used. The inquiry will begin in the Paleolithic and trace developmental stages through the Neolithic, the early civilizations, and into the present. Religions will be treated in a comparative fashion. No specific religion will be singled out as being more valid than any others. The emphasis will be on tribal and traditional religions, thus comparatively recent religions such as Christianity will only be touched on briefly.

Grading: Grades for the course will be assigned on the basis of a mid-term exam (40%), a term paper (40%), and exercises (20%).

Required Texts: Hayden, Brian. 2003. Shamans, Sorcerers and Saints. Smithsonian Institute Press: Washington, D.C.

Recommended Texts: Eliade, Mircea. 1959. The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich: New York.

Materials/Supplies: none

Prerequisite/Corequisite: Any lower division archaeology or anthropology course. (prerequisite)

Notes: Deferred grades will be given ONLY on the basis of authenticated medical disability.

This course may be applied toward the Certificate in Liberal Arts (Set 6).

This outline is derived from a course outline repository database that was maintained by SFU Student Services and the University's IT Services Department. The database was retired in

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2014 and the data migrated to SFU Archives in 2015.