1. Essential (and helpful) Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

2. Instructor Information
Professor: Bill Selvidge
Email: bselvidge@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5492
Office Hours: by appointment

3. Catalog Description
A study of traditional, or folk, religions, practices, systems, and institutions, including animism, witchcraft, shamanism, and revitalization movements, for understanding them within their own context and worldview, and as related to the Christian mission.

4. Course Narrative & Rationale
Cross-cultural ministers (including missionaries) face many aspects of differing beliefs and practices. Among these are beliefs and practices arising from the traditions of a people. Many cross-cultural ministers have either been taught, trained, and/or educated in an Enlightenment/Modern context that has few or no categories for an unseen world of spiritual beings and forces. This results in particular difficulty when ministering in a culture in which these categories inform daily life.

This course helps the student understand the assumptions, beliefs, and practices of Christian believers who come from a traditional-religion culture, as well as the influence of traditional, particularly animistic, beliefs in all societies. It also assists determining one’s own assumptions vis-à-vis traditional religious beliefs and practices. It suggests ways that the Christian community may intentionally process with the new believer the folk religious context from which the believer comes in relationship to their new allegiances to Jesus Christ.
5. **Course Outcomes**

1. **MA/ICS Program Outcomes.**
   While the full range of objectives/outcomes of the MA in InterCultural Studies degree program is always the background against which the courses of the program are carried out, this course particularly focuses on objectives 2. and 4. (Please see the 2011-12 *NTS Catalog* page 58 for the program objectives.)

   2. Graduates will demonstrate the integration of theological convictions and cultural sensitivity in order to foster individual and social transformation.

   4. Graduates will articulate, communicate, and contextualize the essential affirmations of the Christian faith in a cross-cultural setting.

2. **Course outcomes** (Please see list of course assignments with corresponding Course Outcomes in Course Schedule in the Course Calendar below.)

   Upon successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

   1. Articulate a foundational understanding of the theoretical bases as well as the actual practice of traditional, or folk, religions.

   2. Place religious expression and practice, whether formal or folk (traditional), within an analytical framework. (Accomplished through study of Hiebert’s Framework for the Analysis of Religious Systems, and the term project).

   3. Have become familiar with the folk or traditional practices of a specific group of people in a particular context. (Accomplished through the term project.)

   4. Use the concepts studied to design ministry from a Christian perspective to minister to and among people who hold to and practice folk (traditional) religions (accomplished through the term project).

   5. Think theologically about the beliefs and practices of those who practice traditional (folk) religions, (accomplished through the reading of, and reflection on, the principle texts), and consider appropriate ways for an effective witness to Jesus Christ in ways that are theologically informed and culturally appropriate (accomplished through the term project).

6. **Required Texts and Materials**

   **BOOKS**
   


   Please especially note chapter 10 Thomas A. Noble, “The Spirit World: a Theological Approach.” This text is out of print but is listed at Amazon.com through other sellers. Also available at http://used.addall.com/ Used/ (used and out of print books). Prices generally range between $6-10 upwards.


   **Journal articles and book chapters**
   


   Korkmaz, Yakup. Research Evangelism among Folk Muslims: Calling Missionaries to Christian Cultural Anthropology. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (October 2009) 430-437
7. **Recommended Texts & Course Materials**


8. **Course Outline**

Please see the separate document “Course Schedule” for more detail regarding weekly work in the course.

**Week 1 – September 11** (the date indicates the class date)

**Topics:**
- Introductions and course overview
- Origins of Religion

**Week 2 – September 18**

**Topics:** Rituals

**Week 3 – September 25**

**Topics:** Principles of animism

**Week 4 – October 2**

**Topics:** Split-Level Christianity, Folk and formal religions

**Week 5 – October 9**

**Topic:** Framework for Analyzing Religious Systems  
Critical Contextualization

**Week 6 – October 16**

**Topics:** The Meaning of Life and Death  
Human Well-Being and Misfortune  
Guidance and the Unknown

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**Week 7 - Reading and research week is October 22-26 (class does not meet this week)**

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**Week 8 – October 30**

**Focused topic:** Ancestor veneration

**Week 9 – November 6**

**Topic:** “Angels, demons, and the heavenly realm”

**Week 10 – November 13**

**Topic:** Christian understandings of the spirit world

**Week 11 – November 20**

**Topics:** Christian Responses to Folk Religions: Theological Responses and Missiological Responses

**Week 12 – November 27**

Project Presentations

**Week 13 – December 4**

Project Presentations

**Week 14 – December 11**

Final Exam – 9:00-11:00
9. Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Class readiness and participation (5%)
   I assume that you will have read all assigned chapters in the texts by the class session indicated so that you may enter into discussion during class. Additional materials will be assigned from time to time, and are also required reading.

2. Forums (20%)
   For four topics covered in this course, participate in a discussion on Moodle. There will be a starter question or topic to which you are to respond. You are to make two additional responses within the topic. At least one of the responses must be in response to what another student has said. One of the responses may be an idea (thread) that you begin. The responses to the particular topics are to be completed within the time frame in the schedule. For grading purposes, the three responses per each of the four topics are worth a possible 5%, or a total of 20% for this learning activity.
   A. **Forum #1. Understanding Animism** Starter question: In *Communicating Christ in Animistic Contexts*, Gailyn Van Rheenen notes that worldviews are largely implicit, and that missionaries must find forums and methods to make the implicit explicit. What is one of your worldview assumptions that has been implicit but has become explicit? How did this happen? All three responses to this section are to be completed by October 5.
   
   B. **Forum #2. Thinking Theologically in Animistic Contexts** Starter question: You are part of the ministry leadership team of a local church in a heavily animistic context. A person comes to faith in Christ and eagerly wants to follow as a faithful disciple of Christ. What are some first issues you would suggest to the team that the church deal with in this believer’s life? Why? All three responses to this section are to be completed by October 26.
   
   C. **Forum #3: Analyzing Animistic Practices and Powers** Starter question: An elder from the a local church comes to you because of an issue that has arisen. In a prayer meeting, several Christians while praying mentioned the names of several of their great grandparents and asked them to watch over them and guide them. In talking with the elder about this he referred to Hebrews 12:1 and explained that they were only calling on the witnesses that were surrounding them. How would you talk with this elder about this situation? All three responses to this section are to be completed by November 9.
   
   D. **Forum #4.** Identify a traditional (folk) practice from within your own culture that hinders the following of Jesus. If you are able, identify the need that this practice seems to meet. Why is this a hindrance and how can you and the church you are part of address this practice for Christians? All three responses to this section are to be completed by November 23.

3. Book review. (10%) Read and reflect on Anthony N. S. Lane, ed. *The Unseen World: Christian Reflections on Angels, Demons, and the Heavenly Realm*. Grand Rapids, Michigan USA: Baker Books, 1996 Write a thoughtful reflection of approximately 1200 words that relates how this book challenged your understanding of issues related to folk religions, increased your understanding of these issues, and/or helped prepare you for more effective ministry as a cross-cultural minister. Due date for the book review is November 1. (See the book review guidelines in the appendix of this syllabus.)

4. Course readings and assignments. (20%) Throughout the course specific assignments for reading of portions of the texts as well as journal articles will be given. The assignment, due date, and grading value will be indicated for each assignment. The completed course schedule will be available by the not later than the first day of class and will indicate all assignments for the course.

5. Project (25%) Select a country, area, or culture of the world and complete a project that equips you and your cross-cultural ministry (missionary) colleagues to minister more effectively as a Christian vis a vis the folk (traditional) religious beliefs and practices of that area. Determine as much as you can of the folk religious beliefs and practices through research in books, journals, the Internet, interviews and other means.
Analyze this folk or traditional religion in terms of Hiebert’s Framework. Seek to understand from an *emic* perspective why these practices are utilized by the people you study. How do these practices relate to faith in Jesus Christ? What issues will be faced by a new believer in Christ who has a background in these beliefs and practices? What issues will/does the communication of the gospel present, not just individually, but also on a community level? What is the role of the church in helping the believer who comes from a background of these beliefs and practices? How will the knowledge and understanding you have gained help you to be a witness to Jesus Christ among these people? Suggest some approaches to an effective Christian witness.

This project will be presented in class as an additional resource for the class. Please tell me the folk religion you will research and in a brief paragraph indicate how you anticipate working with the topic. Submit these to me through Moodle by Oct 19 (Friday just before Reading & Research Week). I may be able to suggest areas to consider as well as identify resources to help in your research. The final written project is due by December 13 but may be submitted earlier. Submit the final project through the assignment feature of Moodle unless there are supplemental materials that are not in digital form. You are welcomed to submit a draft earlier in the semester (not later than October 31).

6. **Two examinations** and a short quiz over the term project presented in class. (25%) The mid-term is scheduled for November 6. The final exam will be on Tuesday, December 11, at 9:00. The exams will cover the portion of the text covered to that point as well as supplemental reading (indicated in the course schedule), lectures, student project presentations, and any other sources used during the process of the course. Prior to the exam the instructor will indicate which materials will be used as a basis for the exam. Please note that taking the final exam at other than the time posted by the Seminary requires a request made to the Dean’s office. Exams (Mid-term 12%, Final essay exam 10%, term projects quiz 3%, 25% total)

**Grade distribution**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>individual assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1. Class readiness and participation</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Forums</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Forum 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum 4</td>
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<td><strong>3. Book review (assignment #3)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Course assignments and readings</strong></td>
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<td>Readings</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Class presentation</td>
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<td><strong>6. Exams</strong></td>
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<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam (essay)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam (questions from the projects)</td>
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10. Distribution of Student Learning Hours

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<tr>
<td>Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Assignments and Learning Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exams &amp; Quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>137</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

11. Method for Submitting Assignments
All assignments are to be submitted electronically through Moodle.

12. Form and Style Expectations
All assignments are to be properly formatted according to Kate L. Turabian (tur-AH-be-un), *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.* 7th edition. Formatting is an integral part of good written communication and will be considered in grading, typically up to 5% of the total grade. The following are among the formatting requirements. If you have questions on formatting, please don’t hesitate to ask.

1. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, with approximately one inch margins, with pages properly numbered. (Cf. Turabian ¶ 14.6-7, p. 253 regarding pagination.)
2. Include a title page that includes the paper’s title, the course number (MSS745 Folk Religions), the instructor’s name, your name, and the date. (Cf. Turabian ¶ 14.18 on p. 256.)
3. Include a “Table of Contents,” or “Contents,” that indicates the various parts of your paper and the page number. (Cf. Turabian, Chapter 1, “Parts of the Paper.”)
4. Use either a Bibliography or Works Cited page for the resources used/cited during the course that you reference.

13. Inclusive Language
NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

14. Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams
Students are strongly encouraged to keep pace with the reading and assignments of the course. Late work will be reluctantly accepted but with penalty. If submitted within two days of the posted schedule the penalty will be 20% of the possible grade for that assignment. After two days through seven days the grade will be reduced by 50%. No assignment will be accepted past seven days beyond the due date. Exceptions are: your hospitalization or the death of a close friend or family member that requires you to leave town. No assignment will be accepted past the last day of the regular classes for the semester, December 11.

15. Additional Costs
There are no additional costs associated with this course.

16. Course Grading
The following criteria are employed in evaluation and grading:

"A" (100-90) The student engages with excellence all aspects of the course as shown by attendance, promptness (including submission of assignments), and class discussion and involvement. Written work is superior in every way – writing is clear, essentially without errors in form, grammar, syntax, word usage, spelling, etc. Content evidences careful reflection, insight, and originality.

"B" (89-80) The student’s engagement with all aspects of the course (as described in “A”) is above average. Writing is generally clear, with few errors of form grammar, syntax, spelling, word usage, etc. Content evidences careful preparation and meets the expectations of the assignment.

"C" (79-70) The student’s engagement with the course (see “A”) is average. Written assignments are adequate, but may have errors. Content is adequate, meets the minimum expectations of the assignment, but lacks insight and originality.

"D" (below 70) The student hardly engages the course and most assignments are below average. Writing is poor, marred with frequent errors. Content evidences lack of insight or lack of understanding of assigned materials.

"F" The student fails to do satisfactory work. Work evidences haste, lack of careful preparation, lack of basic understanding of the assigned material or of the purpose of the assignment.

17. Class Attendance
Attendance at class sessions is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of the course. If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, please contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation and to work out ways to accomplish the course objectives and assignments. According to the NTS Student Handbook, if a student is absent for four or more weeks, the professor may automatically fail the student. Please note also that daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining Veterans Administration and/or Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

18. Course Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Course Outcome</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductions and course overview</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #1</strong> – observing rituals</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rituals, Symbols and meanings</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Split-level religion, Folk and formal religion</td>
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<td>10/2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Framework for analysis of religious systems</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Forum #1</strong> – understanding animism</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>10/9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mid-term exam, Critical contextualization</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Assignment #2</strong> – Term Project Topic</td>
<td>1, 3, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>Assignment #3</strong> – Review of Unseen World</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Forum #2</strong> – thinking theoretically</td>
<td>1, 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1, 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reading &amp; Research week (no class)</td>
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<td>10/30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Meaning of Life and Death, Human Well-Being and Misfortune</td>
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<td>11/6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Guidance and the Unknown, Right and Wrong</td>
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<td><strong>Forum #3</strong> - Analyzing Animistic Practices</td>
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<td>11/13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lane, <em>The Unseen World</em></td>
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<td>11/20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Theological responses to folk religions</td>
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<td><strong>Forum #4</strong> - FR in your own culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>11/27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Spiritual warfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Project reports</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment #4</strong> – term project (due 12/9)</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
19. **Plagiarism.**
Be sure to read and understand the content and implications of the Plagiarism statement in the NTS Student Handbook. All assignments in this course are made with the expectation that the work you submit is your own work. Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in a failing grade for the course. Give careful attention to the use of Internet sources. While the Internet provides easy access to a wealth of resources, as with all other resources, Internet resources must be carefully selected and properly cited and referenced.

20. **Accommodating Persons with Disabilities**
In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

21. **Computer use in class.**
The use of computers during class sessions is encouraged for assisting with class notes, for presentations involving PowerPoint or various media, and for connecting with the Internet for specific questions directly related to the topic at hand. Other uses of computers during class sessions are considered inappropriate and relate directly to student involvement in the course. If you have urgent business involving computer use that requires your attention please do so outside of the classroom.

22. **Bibliography**
In addition to the texts required for this course, the following brief bibliography contains additional sources for the study of folk (traditional) religions.


Ro, Bong Rin, ed. 1985, Christian Alternatives to Ancestor Practices. Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association.


23. Appendices

Appendix 1
Book Review Guidelines

Your book review should provide a thoughtful analysis of the book. This reflection is not a book report or simple summary. Neither is it an essay of random impressions after reading the book but, rather, is to carefully analyze the book and provide critical evaluation. The reflection should include the following.

1. A brief statement of the argument/thesis/main idea of the book. (Not more than a half page.) This is a bit more challenging when the book is composed of a number of authors who contribute separate chapters. Why did the editor choose these particular authors and what they said for this compilation?

2. An evaluation of the sources used by the author. (Half to one page.) Helpful questions are, “What sources did the author rely on to write this book?” and “Are these sources adequate for supporting the author’s argument or thesis?”

3. Several paragraphs tracing the development of the main idea throughout the book (about one page). For this part you may select three or four of the chapters that you see a especially representative of what the editor was seeking to accomplish.

4. Provide your own evaluation of the book. (One to one and a half pages.)
   - Did the book adequately demonstrate the author’s thesis?
   - How do you respond to the author’s thesis and demonstration of it?
   - How has this book challenged your understanding of issues related to folk religions, increased your understanding of these issues, and/or helped prepare you for more effective ministry as a cross-cultural minister?

A sample book review is posted in Course Resources on Moodle. Please note that this is an example from a book which is different from the book you will review, but it should give an idea of the format you will need to follow.

The reflection is to be typed and double-spaced. Include your name, the name of the course, and the date. Include page numbers. Submit your reflection through the Assignment function of Moodle.

Finally, be sure to use correct formatting according to Kate L. Turabian*. 2007. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. 7th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Earlier editions may be used. However, the seventh edition contains helpful guidance on citing electronic resources. (* pronounced “tur AH bee an”)

At any time you have questions please contact me. (Please do so early enough to give me time to respond and for you to have time to complete the reflection prior to the due date.)

Appendix 2
Comparison of editions of Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion


The chapters assigned from this book are listed below along with page numbers from previous editions. These page numbers are based on the most recent edition, the 8th edition. Page numbers for the 6th edition are in (parentheses), 5th edition are in [brackets]). XX = indicates not in that version.

Part 1, The Anthropological Study of Religion 1-5 (1-5) [1-5]
Harris, Why We Became Religious . . . 16-19 (15-18) [16-19]
Lee, Religious Perspectives in Anthropology 20-27 (19-25) [20-26]
Stipe, Anthropologists Versus Missionaries: The Influence of Presuppositions 28-33 (38-43) [XX]
Gmelch, Baseball Magic 320-327 (294-300) [293-299]
Worsley, Cargo Cults 371-375 (372-376) [359-363]

Part 2, Myth, Symbolism, and Taboo 42-45 (52-55) [35-38]
Leonard and McClure, The Study of Mythology 46-57 (XX) [XX]
Wolf, The Virgin of Guadeloupe: a Mexican National Symbol 67-71 (XX) [XX]
Douglas, Taboo 72-76 (XX) [XX]
Daugherty, Serpent-Handling as Sacrament 77-82 (77-82) [369-374]

Part 3, Ritual 83-86 (92-95) [35-38]
Miner, Body Ritual Among the Nacirema 135-138 (140-143) [82-85]

Part 4, Shaman, Priests, and Prophets 139-141 (144-146) [86-88]
Turner, Religious Specialists 142-149 (147-154) [89-96]
Vitebsky, Shamanism 150-157 (XX) [XX]

Part 5, Altered States of Consciousness and the Religious Use of Drugs 184-187 (179-18) [120-122]
Greenfield, Hypnosis and Trance Induction in the Surgeries of Brazilian Spiritist Healer-Mediums 196-206 (XX) [XX]
Hutson, The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures 220-235 (XX) [XX]

Part 6
Fadiman, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down 269-275 (XX) [XX]

Part 7, Witchcraft, Sorcery, Divination, and Magic 276-282 (252-257) [204-207 and 249-252]
Brain, An Anthropological Perspective on the Witchcraze 283-289 (258-264) [208-214]
Evans-Pritchard, Consulting the Poison Oracle Among the Azande 308-313 (282-287) [XX]
Gmelch, Baseball Magic 320-327, (294-300) [293-299]

Part 8, Ghosts, Souls, and Ancestors: Power of the Dead 328-331 (301-304) [300-303]
Barber, The Real Vampire 332-337 (311-316) [318-323]
Brown, Vodou 338-344 (Voodoo 317-322) [324-329]
Metcalfe, Death Be Not Strange 345-348 (323-326) [340-343]

Part 9 Old and New Religions: The Changing Spiritual Landscape 356-359 (341-344) [344-347]
Wallace, Revitalization Movements 360-365 (361-366) [348-353]
Worsley, Cargo Cults 371-375 (372-376) [359-363]

Part 10 Religion as Global Culture: Migration, Media, and Other Transnational Forces 408-411 (403-406) [XX]
Juergensmeyer, Religious Terror and Global War 435-443 (XX) [XX]
Dalton, Mazur, and Siems, Homer the Heretic and Charlie Church: Parody, Piety, and Pluralism in The Simpsons 444-454 (477-486) [XX]

Sharp, Steel Axes for Stone Age Australians XX (44-51) [27-34]
Fritscher, Straight from the Witch’s Mouth (handout)
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