

Bolyanatz, A.H. (Wheaton College) - The Anthropology of Evangelical Christianity

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

Anthropology 232 Wheaton College Spring 1999

11.15-1.05 TR Blanchard 223

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This course samples some recent social science descriptions of evangelical Christianity in this country. It is a course that will give ear to what anthropologists and other social scientists are saying—good, bad, and indifferent—about evangelical Christianity. To be specific, the course is not about evangelicalism as a set of beliefs, but more about the causes and effects of the behaviour of people who view themselves to be evangelicals. In short, the goal of the course is to confront you with what (we) evangelicals look like to many anthropologists and social scientists.

Required Readings

A collection of readings has been put on Reserve at Buswell Library for your convenience. Some of the readings are in the form of books; these are indicated by [B] after the author's name. The full bibliographic listings are provided at the end of the schedule of readings.

Course Requirements

A substantial part of this course will be run as a seminar. This means that students will be expected to contribute to discussions, and that a significant portion of your grade will be determined by your in-class contributions. There are three papers required for the class. Each is to be of some 4-6 pages in length and should be on material that was assigned reading. In order to provide some structure, I will provide deadlines for each paper. The first paper must be turned in no later than 31 March; the second no later than 21 April; and the third no

later than 6 May. The final page of the syllabus provides some guidelines for these papers.

Grades

Your contribution to in-class discussions is, as noted above, a key variable in the formulation of your course grade. Grades for the course will be computed according to the following formula:

Papers (3 @ 25% each)	75%
Discussion Contribution	25%
	100%

Format

Each class session will be devoted to a particular topic. I may spend some time in “lecture mode” before and/or after (and, well, yes; sometimes during) a discussion, but this is intended to complement, rather than usurp, the discussion. It is expected that the readings listed for a particular day will have been read before class. Topics are subject to change without notice.

Week 9	16 Mar	Topic: Course Introduction and Overview; Evangelicalism at the End of the Twentieth Century
	18 Mar	Topic: Anthropology and the Study of Religion Reading: Spiro [B]
Week 10	23 Mar	Topic: Conversion I Reading: Harding
	25 Mar	Topic: Conversion II Reading: Stromberg [B]
Week 11	30 Mar	Topic: Conversion III Reading: Heriot [B]
	31 March	First Paper Due!
	1 Apr	Topic: Conversion IV Reading: Ullman [B]
Week 12	6 Apr	Topic: Pentecostalism Reading: Horwatt

	8 Apr	Topic: Small Group Dynamics Reading: Forsyth [listed under ANTH 216]
Week 13	13 Apr	Topic: Anti-Abortion Activism Reading: Maxwell [listed under ANTH 353]
	15 Apr	Topic: Godliness Reading: Banks
Week 14	20 Apr	Topic: Human Origins I Reading: Eve & Harrold
	21 Apr	Second Paper Due!
	22 Apr	Topic: Human Origins II Reading: Scott [listed under ANTH 216]
Week 15	27 Apr	Topic: Missions & Missionaries Reading: Stearman
	29 Apr	Topic: Wrap-Up
	6 May	Third Paper Due!

Bibliographical References for Reserve Materials (Listed in Order of Appearance in Syllabus)

SPIRO, MELFORD E.

1994[1966] Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation. In Culture and Human Nature. B. Kilbourne and L. L. Langness, eds. Pp. 187- 222. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

HARDING, SUSAN F.

1987 Convicted by the Holy Spirit: The Rhetoric of Fundamental Baptist Conversion. American Ethnologist 14:167-181.

STROMBERG, PETER G.

1993 Language and Self-Transformation: A Study of Christian Conversion Narrative. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [31-54]

HERIOT, M. JEAN

1989 Blessed Assurance: Assessing Religious Beliefs Through Actions in a Carolina Baptist Church. Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, UCLA. [190-238]

ULLMAN, CHANA

1989 *The Transformed Self: The Psychology*

HORWATT, KARIN

1988 *The Shamanic Complex in the Pentecostal Church*. *Ethos* 16:128- 145.

FORSYTH, DAN W.

1988 *Tolerated Deviance and Small Group Solidarity*. *Ethos* 16:398-420.

MAXWELL, CAROL J. C. 4

1995 *Coping with Bereavement through Activism: Real Grief, Imagined Death, and Pseudo-Mourning among Pro-Life Direct Activists*. *Ethos* 23:437-452.

BANKS, CAROLINE GILES

1996 "There is No Fat in Heaven": *Religious Asceticism and the Meaning of Anorexia Nervosa*. *Ethos* 24:107-135.

EVE, RAYMOND A., and FRANCIS B. HARROLD

1991 *The Creationist Movement in Modern America*. Boston: Twayne Publishers. [1-11; 94-119; 172-193]

SCOTT, EUGENIE C.

1997 *Antievolution and Creationism in the United States*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26:263-289.

STEARMAN, ALLYN MACLEAN

1996 *Better Fed Than Dead: The Yuquí of Bolivia and the New Tribes Mission*. *Missiology* 24:213-226.

Paper-Writing Guidelines

In general, I am looking for two things in your papers:

- (1) A concise review or recapitulation of what was read; and
- (2) A critique of the material.

Under (1), you should consider and answer many, if not all, of the following questions:

- What problem(s) does the work address?
- What is explained or tested; by what methods?
- What conclusions are drawn?

Under (2), you should consider and answer many, if not all, of the following questions

- What did you like in what you read? Why? What did you not like? Why?
- What concepts do you believe are especially important? Why?
- Do you notice any red herrings, tautologies, or fallacious logic?
- From the perspective of your own discipline and/or interests, what concepts are useful and good (or not)?