Howell, Brian (Wheaton College) – Anthropology of Global Christianity [1/2 semester course]

Syllabus for Anthropology of Global Christianity ANTH 324

Description of the Course:
The study of religion has a long and illustrious history in anthropology. It was one of the first cultural features to capture the attention of anthropologists and remains an important area of study. This course will focus on one particular religion of interest to us (that would be Christianity) in order to understand how Christianity can be understood as the culturally informed response to the person of Christ.

We will be reading works by both Christians and non-Christians by working through three texts that focus on Christianity in specific ethnographic contexts. Through these case studies we will address questions of gender, social power, interpretation, practice and globalization in Christianity.

Objectives:

1. Student will demonstrate an understanding of anthropologically informed perspectives on Christianity.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the manifestations of Christianity in the particular ethnographic cases presented in class.
3. Students will demonstrate an ability to relate the insights gained from these perspectives to their own experience as a member of a Christian community.

Course Requirement:
Class participation will be critical to the success of this course. Students are expected to come to class having done careful reading and prepared questions they would like to have their classmates and I discuss. (See Assignments Below) Obviously, participation will require attendance, so attendance will be kept and factored into the final grade. (Students will be allowed one absence apart from

officially sanctioned Wheaton activities and extreme circumstances, after that it will affect the participation portion of the grade.)

Grading:
Participation 40%
This score will be divided between daily preparation and participation (i.e., bringing and submitting the questions/responses for the reading each day it is required and being able to contribute to discussions) and your leading of the discussion for the day you (along with your group) are responsible. Leading the discussion involves having topics prepared, questions, and general familiarity with the book.

Paper 40%
For the day they are leading the final discussion of the book, each student will submit a 1000 word (MAX) book review. See Blackboard for link to a site describing the book review format. It should include the proper citation at the top of the first page along with the elements outlined on the site.

Oral Exam 20%
Each student will schedule a 15 minute oral exam in which he/she will explain to me a quotation I will hand out on the last day of class. Students will be allowed to bring any notes or books they'd like to the exam, although in such a short amount of time, it is more important for the student to be prepared to answer my questions and interact with the me and the material. I will provide a rubric closer to the exam time.

Readings:
Cannell, Fenella, "Introduction" in The Anthropology of Christianity (Duke, 2006) (posted on Blackboard)

Walls, Andrew. The Missionary Movement in Christian History (Orbis, 1997) Keane, Webb. Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Missionary Encounter (California, 2007) Chinua, Achebe. Things Fall Apart (Anchor, 1954)

Robbins, Joel. Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society (California: 2004)

Assignments:
For each class, I want every student to bring in two questions, quotations, issues

or discussion topics (or a combination of these) related to the reading for the day. These should be typed, with the student's name on the top. I will collect these and they will be recorded for done-ness and relevance. On the last day of discussion for a book, however, no one need submit these questions.

In addition, each student will choose one of the books to write a 1000-word book review essay (MAX), due on the last day of discussion for the book. These will be divided up by thirds (one third of the class for each book). On these days, I will expect the students turning in these essays to take the lead in class discussion. I would encourage those students turning in the essay to meet ahead of time to talk through the issues you would like to bring up and questions you have about the reading. For options on the book essays, see the Important Information page on Blackboard.

Finally, each student will have an oral exam in which he or she interacts with me on a question related to global Christianity, culture and faith. Students will be allowed to bring notes into the exam and be given a list of topics and questions ahead of time to prepare. Those will be scheduled during finals week.

Statement of Academic Integrity

Integrity is of the utmost importance for academic work as well as Christian witness. Instances of plagiarism or other academic dishonesty undermine both the student's personal integrity and the integrity of the entire academic process. As such, violations of standards of plagiarism and academic honesty will not be tolerated. Any use of ideas, statistics, quotations, or other information gained directly from the work of another must be properly cited or will be considered plagiarized. If any student has a question regarding the procedures for giving credit, he or she should consult an approved style manual or seek out advice from the professor or writing center. Consequences for violations will follow those outlined in the Undergraduate Student Handbook and faculty handbook: section 3.1.16 (on the intranet.)

Reading Schedule for ANTH 324 – Anth of Global Christianity

1. Introduction to Class (10/19)
2. Cannell (10/21)
3. Walls: 1 – 3 (10/24)
4. Walls: 4 – 6 (10/26)

5. Walls: 7 – 10 (10/28)
6. Walls: 11 – 14 (10/31)
7. Walls: 15 – 19 (11/2)
8. Keane: Introduction (11/4)
9. Keane: 1 – 2 (11/7)
10. Keane: 3 – 4 (11/9)
11. Keane: 5 – 6 (11/11)
12. Keane: 7 – 8 (11/14)
13. Keane: 9 – 10 (11/16)
14. No Class (11/18)
15. Achebe: Whole Book (11/21)
16. Robbins: Introduction (11/28)
17. Robbins: 1 – 3 (11/30)
18. Robbins: 4 – 5 (12/2)
19. Robbins: 6 – 7 (12/5)
20. Robbins: 8 – Conclusion (12/7)
21. Review for Exam (12/9)
22. Final Exam week – Oral Exams