

Tomlinson, Matt (Australian National University) - From Jesus to Jerry Falwell

From Jesus to Jerry Falwell: The Anthropology of Christianity

Anthropology 255, Spring 2005

Matt Tomlinson

Tuesdays, 6:30-9:25 PM

Riley House 206

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How is Christianity a cultural product? Has Christianity shaped different cultures to a global standard, or have different cultures shaped the religion in distinctively consequential ways? In this class, we take an anthropological approach to studying Christianity, reading ethnographic and historical accounts of congregations across different cultures. The main themes to be addressed include missionary encounters; millennialism and conflict; globalization and localization; ritual and performance; and the Bible and textuality.

Texts:

There are four books for purchase. Articles are available online at <http://library.bowdoin.edu>; all readings will be on reserve at the library and Riley House.

[**The Holy Bible** The Holy Bible The Holy Bible. You will need this as a resource for your readings, and also for class discussions.]

Boyer, Paul. 1992. *Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press.

Harris, Max. 2003. *Carnival and Other Christian Festivals*. Austin: U. Texas Press.

Knauft, Bruce. 2002. *Exchanging the Past: A Rainforest World of Before and After*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press.

Sanneh, Lamin. 2003. *Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond the West*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Grading:

Grading will be done on the following basis:

- 35%: Final paper of 12-15 pages, due on the last day of class, on a question assigned on the first day of class
- 30%: Midterm paper or presentation on an assigned subject (March 8)
- 25%: Reading response paper
- 10%: Class participation

The scale is: 93-100=A; 90-92=A-; 88-89=B+; 83-87=B; 80-82=B-; 78-79=C+; 73-77=C; 70-72=C-; 65-69=D; below 65=F

Policies:

Plagiarism in any assignment will result in automatic failure. Three points will be deducted from the final grade each day for late assignments and each absence beyond the second. The class participation grade is based not only on attendance, but also on being prepared and participating in class discussions.

Reading Schedule

JANUARY 25

Introduction to the Class

FEBRUARY 1

Christianity, Culture, Society

Robbins, "What Is a Christian?: Notes Toward an Anthropology of Christianity"
Kierkegaard, "Prelude" and "A Panegyric upon Abraham" (from *Fear and Trembling*)
Lewis, "The Rival Conceptions of God" and "The Invasion"

FEBRUARY 8

Missionary Encounters

Knauft, *Exchanging the Past*

FEBRUARY 15

Globalization/Localization

Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?*

FEBRUARY 22

Globalization/Localization

Harris, Carnival

MARCH 1

The Bible and Textuality

Engelke, "Clarity and Charisma" Various authors, "John 1:1-18: A Latin American Perspective; An African Perspective; An Asian Perspective" and "Acts 2:1-42: A Latin American Perspective; An African Perspective; An Asian Perspective," from Return to Babel

MARCH 8

Midterm presentations in class

MARCH 29

The Bible and Textuality

Brown and McDonald, "Foreword," "Manner of Death: Accident," "A Tongues-Talking, Serpent- Handling Holiness Woman," "To Speak in Tongues," and "Avoiding the Lake of Fire"

APRIL 5

Ritual and Risk

Tomlinson, "Ritual, Risk and Danger: Chain Prayers in Fiji"

Tomlinson, "The Limits of Meaning in Fijian Methodist Sermons"

APRIL 12

Chiliasm and Conflict

Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More

APRIL 19

The Devil

Manning, "The Salvation of a Drunk" Nash, "Devils, Witches, and Sudden Death"

APRIL 26

Alternative Expressions

Hardy, "Religion and Spiritual Beliefs" (pp. 114-128) and "Images of God and Prayer" (pp. 129- 153), from Loving Men

MAY 3

Guest Lecture

MAY 10

Class summary and discussion

Final papers are due today