

Government Degree College Baramulla, (Autonomous)

Semester: 8th

Major

Department of Anthropology

Subject: **Anthropology**

Course Title: **Religion and Symbolism**

Credits: **4+2**

Course Type: **Major**

Course Code: **ANTC1822M**

Learning Outcomes:

- The student will learn major concepts and theories related to religion and symbolism.
- They will learn to analyze rituals, myths, symbols, and religious practices across cultures.
- They will learn the relationship between religion, symbolism, and social institutions.
- They will learn to critically evaluate the perspectives of major anthropological theorists.

Unit I: Theoretical Approaches

- Religion: Meaning, Function and Beliefs (Animism, Animatism, polytheism, Monotheism)
- Concepts of Religion: Spirit, Taboo, Ritual, Myth, Cult, Sacred and Profane,
- Anthropological Approaches: Evolutionary, Psychological, Functional, Marxist
- Symbolic and Interpretative Approaches to Religion (Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner)

Unit II: Ritual and Religious Practices

- Nature and Types of Rituals (Rites of Passage, Sacred vs Secular)
- Religious Symbolism and Meaning (Condensation, Polarization, Communication)
- Magic, Witchcraft, Sorcery, Ancestor Worship, Evil Eye and Folk Beliefs
- Shamanism, Priest, Medicine Man, and Traditional Healer

Unit III: Symbols and Society

- Symbolism and Social Structure (Kinship, Social Relations)
- Religion, Symbolism and Society
- Political Symbolism (Weber, Cohen)
- Symbols, Environment and Cultural Context

Unit IV: Major Theorists

- Edward Burnett Tylor, James George Frazer
- Émile Durkheim, Evans Pritchard
- Mary Douglas, Claude Lévi-Strauss
- Pierre Bourdieu, Raymond Firth

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Practicals: 2 Credits

- Visit to a Religious site to comprehend the religious rituals and functions and submit a detailed report
- Write a report on prevalent symbols which has significant role in social structure.
- To study folk beliefs, magic, healing practices, and ritual specialists through interviews with religious practitioners, community elders, or traditional healers and submit a detailed report.
- Conduct a study of rites of passage (Birth, Marriage, and Death) examine their religious and symbolic significance.

Books Recommended:

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. Routledge.

Douglas, M. (1970). *Natural symbols: Explorations in cosmology*. Cresset Press.

Durkheim, É. (1995). *The elementary forms of religious life* (K. E. Fields, Trans.). Free Press. (Original work published 1912)

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1937). *Witchcraft, oracles and magic among the Azande*. Clarendon Press.

Firth, R. (1973). *Symbols: Public and private*. Cornell University Press.

Frazer, J. G. (1922). *The golden bough: A study in magic and religion* (Abridged ed.). Macmillan.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1963). *Structural anthropology*. Basic Books.

Turner, V. (1967). *The forest of symbols: Aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Cornell University Press.

Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. Aldine Publishing.

Turner, V. (1974). *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: Symbolic action in human society*. Cornell University Press.

Turner, V. (1987). *The anthropology of performance*. PAJ Publications.

Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom*. John Murray.