****

**GESM 130: RITUAL**

**Professor Anne Goldgar**

**Van Hunnick History Department**

**office: SOS 258**

**email: agoldgar@usc.edu**

**Student drop-in office hours**

Open drop-in office hours on Tuesdays from 1-3 pm in my office at -- and you can also talk to me also at other times by appointment, to be arranged by emailing me at [agoldgar@usc.edu](mailto:agoldgar@usc.edu). It may be easiest for us to speak on Zoom on these occasions. My personal Zoom room link is <https://usc.zoom.us/my/annegoldgar?pwd=NzQyblloRWxHTUhZYjVNZzYzQWtUdz09>, meeting ID 212 516 7915, password 745200. Please feel free to consult me about anything to do with the course or any other issues you might want to discuss.

**Course Description**

Ritual practices and behaviors can be found in all human societies. This means religious ritual, but it also extends to practices and beliefs beyond contact with the sacred: birthdays are rituals, giving a gift is ritual, protest is a ritual, elections are ritual. If we explore the way such rituals shape society and social interaction it can illuminate our understanding of both the past and the present. The study of ritual is the study of the power of collective action. This class examines that power, the place of the individual in it and the way that governments, economic organizations, and cultural and social settings influence it.

Looking at rituals takes us into many different disciplines which have grappled with these questions: history, anthropology, sociology, and performance theory. Together these disciplines will allow us to explore a number of thematic topics, including such areas as religious rituals, rites of passage, rituals of social interaction, rituals of gift-giving and commercial exchange, rituals of solidarity, political rituals from both governments and the governed, rituals of violence, rituals of inversion, and rituals of protest. Within each topic, you will be asked to read theoretical works (having also begun the course with a longer discussion of ritual theory) and to apply them to a variety of historical situations ranging from Aztec blood ritual to pilgrimages to honor Elvis Presley at Graceland. Focus will be on understanding both commonalities across space and time and also nuances and differences. Although the focus will in particular be on western Europe and the US, examples will also come from societies around the globe.

**Learning Objectives**

This course draws on social scientific theories from anthropology, sociology, performance studies, and religious studies and applies them to historical situations. You will be expected to master these theoretical perspectives and be able to apply them comparatively. Through both class discussion and written assignments, you will also be taught to understand the nature of evidence and how to evaluate it in different historical situations. Evidence and argument will both be discussed in looking at class readings. Because of the inherently comparative nature of this course, you will learn to understand commonalities and differences in different societies and situations through the medium of ritual practices.

**Course Notes**

This course is made up of weekly topics discussed in two sessions of one hour twenty minutes. For the most part, the class will consist of class discussion. Tuesdays will generally be more devoted to theory (whether anthropological, sociological, or historiographical) and Thurdays more to history. I expect you to have prepared beforehand by doing the readings, all of which will be available on Blackboard. There will be plenty of opportunities for discussion of research skills and writing, and I will give you full feedback on your written assignments to help you acquire new skills. This is in fact one of my goals for the class: to give you an introduction to thinking about reading, writing, and researching.

**Some useful background reading**

You don’t have to do any background reading for the class discussions other than what is assigned, but you may be interested in the following works, which also might be useful for you when you come to write your research paper.

Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974).

Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969).

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

Geoffrey Koziol, “The dangers of polemic. Is ritual still an interesting topic of historical study?” *Early Medieval History* 11 (2002), 367-88.

Roy Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)

Roy Rappaport, *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968)

***All required readings for class will be posted on Blackboard. They need to be done before each class. There will be readings for every class.***

**Communication policies and expectations for the course**

If you have a question about this course, please read the syllabus, but if you don’t find the answer you need here, please feel free to contact me by email or in my office hours. I will reply to email within 24 hours except on the weekend or holidays. Please use your USC email rather than a private account, so your email doesn’t go into my spam folder, and please be clear in your subject line what you need.

My expectations for you are that you want to read and learn, and that you want to talk about what you’ve read. The point of having a seminar is to talk to each other, and I hope we will enjoy discussing the material as a group. No one needs to be afraid to talk!

We are back to in-person teaching, and I expect you to attend every class in person unless you have a reasonable excuse which you have arranged with me; if you have to miss a class, I expect you to email me about it.

You will need to do all the required assignments on time, and again, if your work needs to be late, I expect you to ask for an extension and provide me with a good reason. I might need to deduct points if you don’t communicate with me about your need for an extension or if you can’t provide me with a reasonable excuse.

We are living in difficult times, so if you are having problems, please talk to me about them so that I can try to help. You don’t have to do this on your own: my job is to help you. So please don’t be shy about discussing any issues you have – and remember you also have a departmental adviser who can help you too. See later in the syllabus for resources available to you.

**Covid policies**

Unfortunately, despite our being back in the classroom, Covid is still with us. In this course, we will be following the recommendations of USC and of the various government entities that oversee Covid policies. These rules may of course change during the course of the semester, so the policies relating to the class may change too. My priority is making sure you get the best education, while keeping you, and everyone else, healthy and safe. There might be times you (and even I) will need to stay home. If this is the case, there are ways we can make sure you can keep up with the course. And just be aware that students are expected to comply with all aspects of USC’s Covid policy. Failure to do so may result in removal from the class and referral to Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

*Here are some guidelines for the situation at the beginning of term*:

Masks are at present recommended but not required. Please respect the choices made by me and by classmates. I expect to be wearing a mask. If you are in some way vulnerable and need those around you to mask, please let me know so I can ask the class to do so.

If you test positive for COVID, you need to stay at home.

If you need to stay home, contact me in advance if possible and we can either live stream the class via Zoom, have you watch a recording, or write a short response on the readings. You can access the course Zoom link via Blackboard.

If I need to stay home for the same reasons, class will be on Zoom, unless my symptoms are severe. An email will be sent in advance and you can join via the Zoom Blackboard link. If you need a place to watch the course on campus, you can come to the classroom and watch there.

**Assignments**

The assignments in this course will focus both on the content of the course and also on skills. The requirements are as follows (more detail will be given in class):

a) **Response paper 1: reading for argument.** For this assignment, please examine an article from the syllabus by EITHER Scribner, Doss, Cavazza, or Woodward (thus from weeks 3 and 4). In a 3-page paper, summarize the author’s argument and make an argument of your own about whether you think the work is or is not convincing and why. **Due Sept. 19th at 11:59 pm.**

*Please double space your papers and use Word format. If you choose to use Google Docs to write your paper, please save it as a Word file (.doc or .docx) before sending it to me. Please submit papers by emailing them to me. There is no submission page on Blackboard.*

b) A **midterm exam** on the first half of the course will be on **October 11th** during class.

c) A second 3-page response paper to any one of the historical readings in weeks 5, 6, 7, or 9 (that is: either Corfield, Arnold, Hemphill, Davis, Heal, Cressy, Greenberg, Spierenburg, or Gowing) in which you talk about how the author uses ideas about ritual to prove his/her historical point. This will be due on **Oct. 31st at 11:59 pm.**

d) A statement of planned research for your final paper (see instructions below under e) of 150 words and a one-page bibliography will be due on **Nov. 11th at 11:59 pm**. We will discuss some research techniques prior to this. The purpose of this assignment is for you to have thought about what you might write about for the final paper and write a few lines about what kind of research questions you might ask, and to give some idea of sources you could use for the paper. I will be available for discussions about this before the proposal is due.

e) An 8-page paper in which you take a ritual occasion outside those we look at within this course (but which can fall within the categories we’ve studied) and analyze it from the point of view of both theory and historical evidence. This will be due on **Dec. 5th at 11:59 pm.**

f) A **final exam** (**date will be known later in the semester).**

**Weighting of Assignments**

Response papers 1 and 2: each 5%, thus 10% in total

Statement of research and proposed bibliography: 5%

8-page paper: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Final: 35%

Class participation: 10%. *Class participation consists in coming to class and taking part in the discussion. The class is more fun for you and for everyone else if you contribute to the discussion, so please don’t be shy!*

**Grading Scale**

The following grading scale will be used in this class:

93 -100 = A                                                        73 – 76 = C

90 – 92 = A-                                                       70 – 72 = C-

87 – 89 = B+                                                      66 – 69 = D+

83 – 86 = B                                                        63 – 66 = D

80 – 82 = B-                                                       60 – 62 = D-

77 – 79 = C+                                                      60 and below = F

**Submission of Assignments**

Please submit your assignments by emailing them to me by the due date and time. Please double-space your papers to make them easier for me to grade. Please use Microsoft Word format to send me the papers, even if you write them in Google Docs (they can be saved in that format). Thanks!

**Questions?**

Please feel free to ask me questions about anything to do with this syllabus, or anything else, at any point.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**Schedule of classes and readings**

**Week 1 Introduction**

Aug. 23 Introduction to the course and to each other.

Aug. 25 Before class, watch the 2012 Olympics opening ceremony (London): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4As0e4de-rI> . Warning: it’s long! You can skip the processions from 1 hour 35 mins to around 3:00 (thus saving 90 minutes of your time), but do look at the processions of a few countries. We will discuss in class ways this can be perceived as a ritual.

**Week 2 Ritual theory**

Aug. 30 Edward Muir, “The Lure and Danger of Ritual,” in Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed., introduction

Catherine Bell, “Characteristics of Ritual-Like Activities,” in Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997) 138-169

Sept. 1 Don Handelman, *Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (1998), chaps. 1 and 2

**Week 3 Religious ritual**

Sept. 6 Émile Durkheim, definition of religion in *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912)

Inga Clendinnen, “Ritual: The World Transformed, the World Revealed,” in Clendinnen, *Aztecs* (2014) pp. 333-372

Sept. 8 Robert Scribner, “Ritual and Reformation,” in Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (1987) 103-122

Erika Doss, "Rock and Roll Pilgrims: Reflections on Ritual, Religiosity, and Race at Graceland," in Peter Jan Margry, ed., *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred* (2008), pp. 123-142.

**Week 4 Rites of passage**

Sept. 13 Victor Turner, “Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage,” in Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (1970), pp. 93-110.

Silvano Cavazza, “Double Death: Resurrection and Baptism in a Seventeenth-Century Rite,” in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, eds., *History from Crime* (1994), pp. 1-26.

Please watch a video of the 2021 inauguration oath: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2Np_9_c05E>

and the following clip of the 2008 oath of office: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1Yff-_9MZs>

If you want to watch the whole inauguration from last year, that could be interesting.

Sept. 15 Baylis J. Camp and Orit Kent, “‘What a Mighty Power We Can Be’: Individual and Collective Identity in African American and White Fraternal Initiation Rituals,” *Social Science History* 28 no. 3 (2004) pp. 439-83

Jennifer Woodward, “Funeral Rituals in the French Renaissance,” *Renaissance Studies* 9 no. 4 (1995) 385-94

**Response paper 1 due on Monday September 19 at 11:59 pm.**

**Week 5 Rituals of interaction**

Sept. 20 Erving Goffman, “On Face-Work,” in Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967).

Deborah Schiffrin, “Handwork as Ceremony: The Case of the Handshake,” *Semiotica* 12 no. 3 (1974) 189-201

Sept. 22 Penelope Corfield, “Dress for Deference and Dissent: Hats and the Decline of Hat-Honour,” *Costume* 23 (1989) 64-79

David Arnold, “Salutation and Subversion: Gestural Politics in Nineteenth-Century India,” *Past and Present Supplement* 4 (2009), 191-211

C. Dallett Hemphill, “Manners and Class in the Revolutionary Era: A Transatlantic Comparison,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 63 no. 2 (2006) 345-72

**Week 6** **Rituals of exchange**

Sept. 27 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift* (1925; 1967 edition), 1-45

Sept. 29 Natalie Zemon Davis, “Beyond the Market: Books as Gifts in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 33 (1983) 69-88

Felicity Heal, “Food Gifts, the Household, and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England,” *Past and Present* 199 (2008) 41-70

**Week 7** **Rituals of time**

Oct. 4 Peter Burke, “Reflections on the Cultural History of Time,” *Viator* 35 (2004), pp. 617-626

Jacques Le Goff, “Church Time and Merchant Time in the Middle Ages,” *Social Science Information* 9 no. 4 (1970) 151-167.

David Cressy, “The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Modern England,” *Journal of British Studies* 29 no. 1 (Jan. 1990) 31-52.

*Note: if you need to miss class for Yom Kippur, it’s not a problem, but please let me know.*

Oct. 7 **Review session for midterm exam**

**Week 8** **Midterm week**

Oct. 11 Midterm: taken in class.

Oct. 13 FALL RECESS: NO CLASS

**Week 9** **Rituals of honor and dishonor**

Oct. 18 Julian Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” in J.G. Peristiany, ed., *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*

Oct. 20 Kenneth Greenberg, “The Nose, the Lie, and the Duel in the Antebellum South,” *American Historical Review* 95 no. 1 (1990) 57-74

Pieter Spierenburg, “Knife-Fighting and Popular Codes of Honor in Early Modern Amsterdam,” in Spierenburg, ed., *Men and Violence: Gender, Honor, and Ritual* *in Modern Europe and America* (1998) 103-27

Laura Gowing, “Honour, Status, and the Popular Culture of Dishonour,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996) 225-234

**Week 10 Rituals of solidarity**

Oct. 24 Marci D. Cottingham, “Interaction Ritual Theory and Sports Fans: Emotions, Symbols, and Solidarity,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* 29 (2012) 168-185

Oct. 26 Angela McShane, “Material Culture and ‘Political Drinking’ in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past and Present* 222 (2014) 247-276.

Albert Pionke, “‘I do swear’: Oath-Taking among the Elite Public in Victorian England,” *Victorian Studies* 49 no. 4 (2007) 611-633.

**Response paper 2 due on Monday Oct. 31 at 11:59 pm.**

**Week 11 Political rituals**

Nov. 1 David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, pp. 57-77, 102-124

Nov. 43 Tillman Allert, *The Hitler Salute*, 1-69

Petr Roubal, “Politics of Gymnastics: Mass Gymnastic Displays under Communism in Central and Eastern Europe,” *Body and Society* 9 no. 2 (2003) 1-25

**Week 12 Rituals of commemoration**

Nov. 8 Barbara A. Misztal, “Durkheim on Collective Memory,” *Journal of Classical Sociology* 3 no. 2 (2003) 123-143

Amitai Etzioni, "Toward a Theory of Public Ritual," *Sociological Theory* 18 no. 1 (2000) 44-59

Anthony D. Smith, "The Rites of Nations," in Rachel Tsang and Eric Taylor Woods, eds., *The Cultural Politics of Nationalism and Nation-Building* (London: Routledge, 2014), 22-37.

Nov. 10 Mabel Berezin, "The Festival State: Celebration and Commemoration in Fascist Italy," *Journal of Modern European History* 4 no. 1 (2006) 60-74.

Barry Schwartz, "Collective Memory and Abortive Commemoration: Presidents' Day and the American Holiday Calendar," *Social Research* (2008) 75-90.

**Statement of research topic for final paper and brief proposed bibliography due on Friday Nov. 11th at 11:59 pm.**

**Week 13 Rituals of subversion and protest**

Nov. 15 Max Gluckman, *Rituals of Rebellion* (pamphlet)

Susanne Schröter, “Rituals of Rebellion – Rebellion as Ritual: A Theory Reconsidered,” *Toronto Studies in Religion* (2003) 41-57

Nov. 17 Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 50 (1971) 41-75

Andy Wood, “Collective Violence, Social Drama, and Rituals of Rebellion in Late Medieval and Early Modern England,” in Stuart Carroll, ed., *Cultures of Violence*

**Week 14 Rituals of violence**

Nov. 23 Katherine Royer, “The Body in Parts: Reading the Execution Ritual in Late Medieval England,” *Historical Reflections/Réfléxions historiques* 29 no. 2 (2003) 319-339

Andrew S. Buckser, “Lynching as Ritual in the American South,” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 37 (1992) 11-28

William Ian Miller, “Choosing the Avenger: Some Aspects of the Bloodfeud in Medieval Iceland and England,” *Law and History Review* 1 no. 2 (1983) 159-204

Nov. 25 **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

**Week 15 Rituals of diplomacy and peacemaking**

Nov. 29 Max Gluckman, “The Peace in the Feud,” *Past and Present* 8 (1955) 1-14.

Zohar Kampf and Nava Löwenheim, “Rituals of Apology in the Global Arena,” *Security Dialogue* 43 no. 1 (2012) 43-60

Christine Shaw, "Peacemaking Rituals in Fifteenth-Century Siena," *Renaissance Studies* 20 no. 2 (2006) 225-239

Dec. 1 **NO CLASS so you can work on your paper. I will be in the classroom in case you want to ask me anything.**

**Final paper due on Dec. 5th at 11:59 pm.**

**There will also be a final exam, whose date will not be known until later in the semester.**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu/), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu/)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*

[campussupport.usc.edu](https://campussupport.usc.edu/)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu/)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu/)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*

[ombuds.usc.edu](https://ombuds.usc.edu/)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.