RELS 305.01 Indigenous Religions: Shamanism  
(Spring 2015, 2:00-3:15 M/W ECTR 219)

Dr. Lee Irwin, Religious Studies  
4-B Glebe Street, Room 201  
Religious Studies Department  
E-Mail Address: irwinl@cofc.edu (send a message!)  
Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 11:30-1:30  
(Or by appointment)

Course Description:  
This course will explore various types of shamanic practitioners in four cultural contexts: first, the Siberian peoples of Russia, with a special emphasis on the Shor mountain peoples. Secondly, we will compare Siberian shamanic traditions with a variety of other traditions, with special emphasis on the Inuit in Greenland. We will then open the horizon of our study to include a Native American example in the Muskoke tradition. We will then look at Neo-Shamanism with emphasis on Mestizo Shamans of the Upper Amazon who use ayahuasca to commune with plant spirits and to induce visions. Interspersed with the ethnographic accounts will be readings on theories of shamanism from the 16th century to the present. We will explore the contested meaning of "shaman" and "shamanism" and how these concepts have been constructed and deconstructed by writers and scholars of different disciplines. The primary questions of this course are: "What is shamanism?" and "What are the practices and beliefs of shamanism in a comparative context?" and “How has shamanism been evaluated by non-practitioners?” We will also look at various visual materials to better appreciate the non-cognitive, ritual aspects of shamanism. We will also explore the role of dreams, visions, and trance (ASC) in shamanic eco-cosmologies.

Books (Required):  

Requirements:  
Students are expected to attend all classes and participate in class discussions, failure to do so may result in a lower final grade (two missed classes permitted). Grades will be based on the following nine assignments: four one-page summaries (each worth 5% = 20%, you can turn in more of these for extra credit); two short analytic papers, 5-8 pages (15% each = 30%), two 45 minute exams (each 15% = 30%), final exam (20%), No quizzes! No excuses will be accepted for missed assignments, such as oversleeping, lost books, or being stuck out of town. Assignments and tests are due on the day they are assigned. If you have a legitimate excuse, please talk to me before the scheduled assignment. Students must make up any missed assignments (or receive an F).

Classroom Electronics:  
Students must TURN OFF all electronic devices before class starts; you are not permitted to engage in texting or reading electronic mail (etc.) while class is in session. If you have a computer for taking notes, you must ONLY take notes (no jumping to read email or surf the web). Any violation of this code will result in a deduction of points from your final grade average; repeated violations will result in a failing grade for the course.
**Honor Code:** Lying, cheating, and plagiarism (failure to cite sources used in a paper) are violations of the Honor Code. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure based on dishonesty. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission--is a form of cheating.

**Center for Student Learning** (CSL) offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies, speaking & writing skills, and course content. For more information regarding these services please visit the CSL website at [http://csl.cofc.edu](http://csl.cofc.edu) or call (843) 953-5635.

**Disabilities:** If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodation, please present a letter to me from the Center for Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. Please discuss with me any special needs you may have. For more information regarding accommodation and SNAP program, see: [http://www.cofc.edu/~cds/index.htm](http://www.cofc.edu/~cds/index.htm)

**Grading Scale:**
Numerical/letter grades: A+ = 100-97; A = 96-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-67; D = 66-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or lower.

**Reading Assignments:** Readings should be done before the class for which they are assigned. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

I. **Week One,** January 12, 14: Introduction to Shamanism of Siberia  
   A. Reading Assignment: Narby & Huxley, pp. 1-22; Jakobsen, x-xiv, 1-17.  
   Discuss One Page Summaries [Handout]

II. **Week Two,** January 19 [NO CLASS], 21: Siberian/Shor Shamanism  
   B. **Summary One Due** (Arbachakov pp. 11-42), Jan 21

III. **Week Three,** January 26, 28: Siberian/Shor Shamanism  
      Narby & Huxley, pp. 41-42, 49-63, 72-73, 90-93

IV. **Week Four,** February 2, 4: Inuit Shamanism  
   A. Readings: Jakobsen, pp. 18-44; pp. 45-84, “The Greenland Angakkoq”  
   B. **Summary Two Due** (Jakobsen pp. 45-75), Feb 4

V. **Week Five,** February 9, 11: Inuit Shamanism  
   B. Grade Assignment: **EXAM ONE** (Feb. 11, 45 mins, don’t be late!)

VI. **Week Six,** February 16, 18: Muskoke Medicine (Pass out Paper One assignment)  
   A. Readings: Narby & Huxley, pp. 64-71, 75-89, 94-96, 119-120  

VII. **Week Seven,** February 23, 25: Muskoke Shamanism  

   B. **PAPER ONE:** Due Feb 25 Siberian & Inuit Shamanism

**SPRING BREAK / NO CLASSES**
VIII. **Week Eight**, March 9, 11: Muskoke Shamanism
   B. **Summary Three Due** (Lewis pp. 39-55, 70-77), March 11

IX. **Week Nine**, March 16, 18: Muskoke Shamanism

X. **Week Ten**, March 23, 25: Upper Amazon Shamanism
   A. Grade Assignment: **EXAM TWO**, March 23 (45 mins, don’t be late!)

XI. **Week Eleven**: March 30, April 1: Mestizo Shamanism
   A. Readings: Beyer, pp. 3-62; “Shamanic Landscapes”
   Narby & Huxley pp. 216-222; 227-233; 251-256

XII. **Week Twelve**, April 6, 8: Mestizo Shamanism
   A. Readings: Beyer, pp. 63-121; “Songs, Darts, and Initiations”
   B. **Summary Four Due** (Beyer pp. 81-109), April 8

XIII. **Week Thirteen**, April 13, 15: Mestizo Shamanism (Pass our Paper Two assignment)
   A. Readings: Beyer, pp. 122-203, "Protection, Harm, and Healing”

XIV. **Week Fourteen**, April 20, 22: Mestizo Shamanism
   A. Readings: Beyer, pp. 207-278, "Ayahuasca and Psychoactive Plants”
   B. **PAPER TWO DUE**, April 22, **Upper Amazon Mestizo Shamanism**

XV. **Week Fifteen**, April 27: Neoshamanism
   A. Readings: Narby & Huxley pp. 277-279; 286-290; 298-305
   Beyer, pp. 337-355

XVI. **Week Sixteen**, Friday May 1, **FINAL EXAM**, 12:00-3:00, ECTR 219