

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY**

**Sociology 4074-001  
Ritual and Ceremony  
Fall 2009**

**Instructor: Prof. J. Scott Kenney  
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**Office Hours: Wed 1-2P.M. Phone:**

**Class time: MWF 2:00 - 2:50 P.M.  
A-1049**

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

Given the so-called ‘ritual turn’ in sociology in recent years, the purpose of this course is to introduce students to the sociological study of ritual. It is divided into three parts: (1) an introductory segment where we will examine the range of social phenomena that may be examined through the lens of ritual, along with tentative attempts at definition; (2) a detailed examination of various theories of ritual, both sociological and those based in other disciplines; and (3) a review of research on specific forms of ritual behavior, including, but not limited to, rites of passage, festivals, religious, family and workplace rituals, calendrical rites, rites of affliction, exchange and communion, ritual and communication, political rites, ritual and consumerism, ritual and deviance, and links between ritual and pop culture. Where relevant, the instructor will discuss his ongoing research on contemporary Freemasons in relation to the material at hand.

**2. CLASS METHOD**

The class will be conducted through lectures, readings and discussion. It will be important for students to keep up with the reading and to seek clarification of it in or out of class. As well, my lectures do not always stick to the assigned readings, and will be on the exams, so they should be attended to get the most out of this class.

As this is a seminar course, students will be expected to participate in discussion. To make this easier, I will have students form into teams. Every Friday, each student will hand in one written discussion question based on the assigned readings. These will then be collectively switched between your group and another, and, following my introductory comments on the material, you and your team will have a few minutes to choose, discuss a question among yourselves, and briefly state your position. My experience has been that lively discussion tends to follow. To ensure that all get a chance to speak, and that nobody unduly dominates the class, I will act as moderator of the discussion. At the end of class, these questions will again be handed

in to me. Your participation mark will depend on the number and quality of your questions, as well as on your actual participation in the class discussion.

### 3. TEXTS:

There will be no assigned textbook for this class. Instead, all required readings will be placed on reserve at the QEII Library.

### 4. EVALUATION:

Mid-Term Exam:	October 26	(25%)
Class Participation	Throughout	(20%)
Research Paper	November 16	(30%)
Take-home Assignment:	Nov 16-Dec 4	(25%)

#### **Mid-Term Examination (25%)**

The mid-term examination will cover both lectures and readings. It will consist of a choice of different types of questions and be written in class on **Monday, October 26**.

#### **Class Participation (20%)**

Your participation mark will depend on the number and quality of your questions, as well as on your actual participation in the class discussion.

#### **Term Paper (30%)**

A 10 page term paper will be due in class on **Monday, November 16**. Details will be distributed in class. I strongly encourage students to pursue relevant topics of interest upon consultation.

#### **Take-Home Assignment (25%)**

This assignment will be handed out on **November 16** and be due **December 4**. It will consist of a choice of essay questions in which you must demonstrate your understanding of the materials covered in class.

#### **Rules for Assignments:**

- No faxed or e-mailed assignments.
- The due dates are fixed and non-negotiable. There will be a deduction of 5% per day for all late assignments.

## **5. CLASS SCHEDULE + ASSIGNED READINGS:**

### **Sept. 9: Orientation and Introduction**

### **Sept. 11: Introduction: Defining Ritual**

Rothenbuhler: pp. 3-27

### **Sept 14: Further Definitional Issues**

Rothenbuhler: pp. 28-52

### **Sept. 16: Further Definitional Issues: Communication**

Rothenbuhler: pp. 53-69

### **Sept. 18: Beginning to weave the Ritual Tapestry**

Deegan: pp. 3-17

### **Sept 21: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual I: Early Theories**

Bell: pp. 1-8

### **Sept. 23-25: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual II: Phenomenology & Psychoanalysis**

Eliade: pp.194-201

Freud: pp. 212-217

### **Sept. 28-30: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual III: Functionalism**

Durkheim: pp. 188-193

Rappaport: pp. 427-440

Erikson: pp. 201-211

### **Sept 30-Oct. 2: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual IV: Structuralism**

Van Gennep: pp. 529-536

Turner: pp. 511-528

Douglas: pp. 159-170

### **Oct. 5-7: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual V: Culture, Symbolic Systems and Action**

Levi-Strauss: pp. 368-378

Geertz: pp. 217-229

**Oct. 9-14: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual VI: Language and Performance**

Staal: pp. 483-494

Grimes: pp. 279-293.

**Oct. 16: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual VII: Ritual and practice**

Bell: pp. 76-83.

**Oct. 19-23: Theoretical Approaches to Ritual VII: Cultural Pragmatics**

Alexander: pp. 29-90

**October 26: \*Mid-Term Exam\***

**Oct. 28: Types of Ritual I: Rites of Passage**

Bell: pp. 93-102

Van Leeuwen

**Oct 30: Types of Ritual II: Calendrical Rites**

Bell: pp. 102-108

Larson: pp. 97-106

**Nov. 2: Types of Ritual III: Rites of Exchange and Communion**

Bell: pp. 108-114

Muir: pp. 155-184

**Nov 4: Types of Ritual IV: Rites of Affliction**

Bell: pp. 115-120

Van Der Geest: pp. 135-150

**Nov 6: Types of Ritual V: Feasting, Fasting and Festivals**

Bell: pp. 120-128  
Wallendorf & Arnould: pp.536-551

**Nov. 9: Types of Ritual VI: Political and Legal Rites**

Bell: pp.128-137  
Winn: pp.552-565

**Nov. 13: Types of Ritual VII: Family Rituals**

Auslander

**Nov 16: Types of Ritual VIII: Workplace Rituals**

Auslander

**\* Research Paper Due November 16\***

**\* Take-Home Assignment Distributed\***

**Nov. 18: Fraternal Organizations**

Bogdan: pp. 27-52  
Kenney: pp.1-37  
Kenney: pp. 80-114

**Nov. 20-23: Ritual and Communication Studies**

Rothenbuhler: pp. 73-131

**Nov. 25-27: Ritual and Deviance**

Kenney & Slowey: pp. 1-42 (Cult)  
Urban: pp. 191-221 (Satanism)  
Deegan (ed): pp. 21-72 (Racism/Sexism)

**Nov. 30: Ritual and Consumerism**

Ritzer: pp. ix-xii; 1-45

**Dec. 2-4: Ritual and Popular Culture**

Zurcher: pp.1-22 (Sports)

Altman: pp. 85-95 (Disney)

Jindra: pp. 27-51 (Star Trek)

**\* Take-Home Assignment Due \***