



The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction

By Fiona Bowie

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This introductory text combines discussion of the origin and development of ideas and debates within the anthropology of religion with a look at where the subject is going today.

- Provides students with a complete introduction to the anthropology of religion
- Uses worldwide ethnographies to illustrate the theory
- Includes extensive bibliographies and a list of films and videos that encourage students to explore the field further
- Encourages students to see that anthropology is not just about reading or doing fieldwork, but offers an enriching way of looking at the world
- Each chapter introduces the central theoretical ideas in the anthropology of religion and illustrates them with specific case studies, such as witchcraft in Cameroon, shamanism in the Arctic, or women's initiation ceremonies
- Links contemporary ideas and practices with the work of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars.

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The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction By Fiona Bowie Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1406477 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Blackwell Publishing, Incorporated
- Published on: 2000-02-01
- Format: Illustrated
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.06" h x .89" w x 6.02" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 296 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"There is no book like this. Bowie has done an excellent piece of work which should become the quintessential text for introducing all interested readers to the anthropology of religion. It was a joy to read."

– *Beebe Behrami, University of Notre Dame*

"The material is up to date, the style is clear, straightforward and accessible, and the book has a comprehensive coverage of topics that might be expected in a course on the anthropology of religion."

– *Geoffrey Samuel, University of Newcastle, Australia*

From the Back Cover

This introductory text combines discussion of the origin and development of ideas and debates within the anthropology of religion with a look at where the subject is going today. It will inspire students to explore the field further and encourage them to see that anthropology is not just about reading or doing fieldwork, but offers an enriching way of looking at the world.

There is a development of ideas throughout the book, but each of the eight chapters is also self-contained, with its own extensive bibliography, so that they can be approached in any order. Each chapter introduces the central theoretical ideas in the anthropology of religion and illustrates them with specific case studies. For example:

- witchcraft in America is illustrated with Evans-Pritchard's famous study of the Azande and witchcraft in Cameroon;
- shamanism is discussed with reference to 'classical' shamanism in the Arctic, and to contemporary 'neo-shamanism';
- the ways in which anthropologists approach ritual are examined, particularly in relation to women's initiation ceremonies.

Throughout, links are made between the work of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholars, and contemporary ideas and practices.

The appendix comprises a list of ethnographic films and videos that can also be used to illustrate and extend the issues raised in the various chapters.

About the Author

Fiona Bowie is Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and Religious Studies at the University of Wales Lampeter. She is the author of several books on spirituality, and anthropology and religion.

Users Review

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Martha Doughty:

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