



This comparative reader takes an anthropological approach to the study of religious beliefs, both strange and familiar. The engaging articles on all key issues related to the anthropology of religion grab the attention of students, while giving them an excellent foundation in contemporary ideas and approaches in the field. The multiple authors included in each chapter represent a range of interests, geographic foci, and ways of looking at each subject. Divided into 10 chapters, this book begins with a broad view of anthropological ways of looking at religion, and moves on to some of the core topics within the subject, such as myth, ritual, and the various types of religious specialists.

Anthropology's long and complex relationship to magic has been strongly influenced by western science and notions of rationality. This book takes a refreshing new look at modern magic as practised by contemporary Pagans in Britain. It focuses on what Pagans see as the essence of magic - a communication with an otherworldly reality. Examining issues of identity, gender and morality, the author argues that the otherworld forms a central defining characteristic of magical practice. Integrating an experiential ethnographic approach with an analysis of magic, this book asks penetrating questions about the nature of otherworldly knowledge and argues that our scientific frameworks need re-envisioning. It is unique in providing an insider's view of how magic is practised in contemporary western culture.

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