

# Polytheism, Paganism, and the Anti-Christ

*Misconceptions of the Religious Other from Antiquity to the Modern Age*



RST 130 ♦ SPRING 2021 ♦ CAI THORMAN ♦ CRN 62359 ♦ MWF 12:10-1 PM

**Course Description:** Since the advent of Christianity, pagans have had an unfortunate reputation. Yet prior to Christianity in the Near Eastern and Greco-Roman worlds, polytheism was the way of the world. How did polytheists come to be called pagans? What does Neo-Pagan mean today? After a developing a grounded understanding of ancient Mediterranean polytheism, with a special look at mystery cults and magic, this course will take a tour through early Christian demonization of pagans, early modern witch hunts, esotericism, modern satanism, and the emergence of Neo-Paganism, with a brief look at modern Hinduism for comparison, in order to plumb the misconceptions that have both shaped and plagued polytheistic religious practice since the birth of Christianity.

**Prerequisite:** NONE. **GE credit:** World Cultures & Writing Experience

**Format:** Online, Lectures, Special Guest Lectures, Quizzes, Short Projects, Final Paper

Readings will be provided by the instructor and guest lecturers in electronic format.