

Summer 2018

Conjure Americana (RELG 93) Syllabus

Yvonne Patricia Chireau
ychirea1@swarthmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/dev-dhgrants>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Yvonne Patricia Chireau. (2018). "Conjure Americana (RELG 93) Syllabus". *Conjure Americana*.
<https://works.swarthmore.edu/dev-dhgrants/13>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Development at Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Humanities Curricular Development by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.

RELG 93 Conjure Americana; the Magic Book

This course rethinks the category of “magic” as a subset of “Religion” by looking at sources and materials from African American spiritual traditions that have historically efface these distinctions. Owen Davies said that “books of magic are *magical* books.” But in reviewing digital resources and library collections it is clear that there is a dearth of electronically archived sources on this topic, particularly those sources from within the American context. What I want to consider is the idea of the “magical book” as historical object, and even their uses as religious artifacts and ritual items. By studying the intersections between these categories by examining primary sources, we will build an electronic image and text archive that foregrounds the material and cultural production of books related to a variety of magic, occult, and esoteric traditions in the United States. In so doing we will also learn the basics of data compilation and annotation, scanning, and processing for the end product, a co-created digital archive that utilizes the Omeka platform to organize and manage our materials.

READINGS

Davies, Owen, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books*, Oxford University Press, 2009

Deslippe, Philip. “The Hindu in Hoodoo: Fake Yogis, Pseudo-Swamis, and the Manufacture of African American Folk Magic.” *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2014, pp. 34–56., doi:10.17953/amer.40.1.a21442914234450w.

Dudley, Sandra H. *Museum Objects Experiencing the Properties of Things*. Routledge, 2012.

FABIAN, ANN. *CARD SHARPS AND BUCKET SHOPS: Gambling in Nineteenth-Century America*. ROUTLEDGE, 2017.

Fabian, Ann V. *Card Sharps, Dream Books, Bucket Shops: Gambling in 19th-Century America*. Cornell Univ. Press, 1990.

Harris, LaShawn. *Sex Workers, Psychics, and Numbers Runners: Black Women in New York City's Underground Economy*. University of Illinois Press, 2016.

Harris, LaShawn. “Dream Books, Crystal Balls, and “Lucky Numbers”: African American Female Spiritual Mediums in Harlem, 1900-1945.” *Journal of Afro-Americans in New York Life and History*, Vol. 35, Issue 1, (January 2011): 1-30

Hazzard-Donald, Katrina. *Mojo Workin': the Old African American Hoodoo System*. University of Illinois Press, 2013.

Mccall, George J. "Symbiosis: The Case of Hoodoo and the Numbers Racket." *Social Problems*, vol. 10, no. 4, 1963, pp. 361–371., doi:10.2307/799207.

Morrow, Carolyn Clark. *Spiritual Merchants: Religion, Magic, and Commerce*. University of Tennessee Press, 2001.

Murphy, Joseph M. "Objects That Speak Creole: Juxtapositions of Shrine Devotions at Botánicas in Washington, Dc." *Material Religion*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2010, pp. 86–108.

Schlabach, Elizabeth Schroeder. "Policy, Creativity, and Bronzeville's Dreams." *University of Illinois Press*, 2017, doi:10.5406/illinois/9780252037825.003.0003.

Taylor, Alan. "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780-1830." *American Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1986, p. 6., doi:10.2307/2712591.

Shafton, Anthony, *Dream Singers: The African American Way with Dreams*, 2006

Weiss, Harry Bischoff. "*Oneirocritica Americana*", *the Story of American Dream Books*, by Harry B. Weiss. The New York Public Library, 1944.

White, S. "The Gold Diggers of 1833: African American Dreams, Fortune-Telling, Treasure-Seeking, and Policy in Antebellum New York City." *Journal of Social History*, vol. 47, no. 3, Sept. 2014, pp. 673–695.

White, Shane. *Playing the Numbers: Gambling in Harlem between the Wars*. Harvard University Press, 2010.