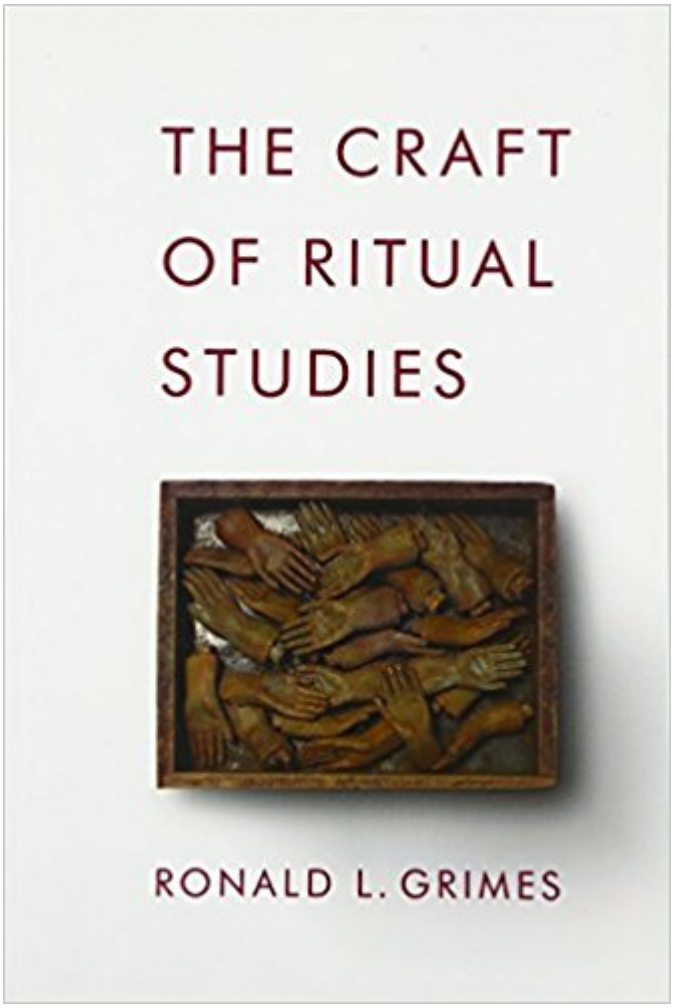
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The Craft Of Ritual Studies (Oxford Ritual Studies)



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Synopsis

In religious studies, theory and method research has long been embroiled in a polarized debate over scientific versus theological perspectives. Ronald L. Grimes shows that this debate has stagnated, due in part to a manner of theorizing too far removed from the study of actual religious practices. A worthwhile theory, according to Grimes, must be practice-oriented, and practices are most effectively studied by field research methods.The Craft of Ritual Studies melds together a systematic theory and method capable of underwriting the cross-cultural, interdisciplinary study of ritual. Grimes exposes the limitations that disable many theories of ritual--for example, defining ritual as essentially religious, assuming that ritual's only function is to generate group solidarity, or treating ritual as a mirror of the status quo. He provides a guide for fieldwork on complex ritual events, particularly those characterized by social conflict or cultural creativity. The volume includes a case study, focusing on a single complex event: the Santa Fe Fiesta, a New Mexico celebration marked by protracted ethnic conflict and ongoing dramatic creativity. Grimes develops such themes as the relation of ritual to media, theater, and film, the dynamics of ritual creativity, the negotiation of ritual criticism, and the impact of ritual on cultural and physical environments.This important book, the capstone work of Grimes's three decades of leadership in the field of ritual studies, is accompanied by a set of online videos, as well as appendices illustrating key aspects of ritual studies.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

.com/Craft-Ritual-Studies-Ronald-Grimes/product-reviews/0195301439"The contributions of this

book are manifold. First, worth mentioning is the experience Grimes brings to the subject matter. Grimes has the authority and experience that provides him the critical lens through which to (re)assess the field...Craft serves as a sort of manual and guidebook on how to approach ritual. And here he acknowledges that the book was written with the classroom in mind. Craft is of use to those with an interest in anthropology, undergraduates, and senior scholars. The undergraduate and graduate student will find great use in the material that prepares one for fieldwork...His place in and contributions to the field of ritual studies and beyond are undeniable. Needless to say, the use of the book extends far beyond the field of ritual studies. Craft is a book to be put into action, not to be placed on one s armchair."--History of Religions"The Craft of Ritual Studies deserves a place on the bookshelf of any student or scholar interested in the topic The generous spirit of the author is no less impressive than the intellectual rigor of his book, which extends an invitation to its reader and provides him/her with encouragement, provocation, and hands-on guidance A timely publication, The Craft of Ritual Studies meets the needs of beginners and offers itself as a reservoir of resources from a seasoned expert."--Journal of Religion"With The Craft of Ritual Studies, Ronald Grimes has written a legacy statement that will surely play a central role in the field for decades to come." --Journal of the American Academy of Religion"Highly recommended."--CHOICE"To say that Ronald Grimes is a major figure is an understatement. His books-this the latest of them-are witness to his accomplishment as an original thinker. This book is a culminating effort that will invigorate the field." --Richard Schechner, Professor of Performance Studies, New York University

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"I’m hoping to provoke you into doing your own reimagining of ritual, its theories, and the methods for studying it - even if you do so against what I have written here." With these words, Ronald Grimes concludes the main body of his new book, The Craft Of Ritual Studies. It’s a generous spirit with which to write a guide for students of ritual, and one that reflects the noncommittal approach that has come to typify the study of ritual.It’s ironic that the academic tradition of ritual studies has become so reluctant to adopt any particular stance about how ritual works, or even what ritual is. Ritual, after all, is a practice that requires some form commitment - at least enough to translate abstract ideas into concrete action, and often a great deal more than that. Over the last few

decades, ritual studies has wandered away from clear, inspiring metaphors into a misty territory of abstractions that often reads more like philosophy than a description of a form of human behavior.Such an approach is appropriate for academics, who specialize in sustaining intellectual debate. It hasn't produced much of use for those who would seek to apply the dynamics of ritual, rather than merely discussing ideas of ritual. To actually work in ritual requires more firm ground than ritual studies can offer.It's important, in reading this book, to remember that it is written for an academic audience - for students and professors whose goal is to publish papers, and perhaps books, with which to earn academic advancement. It is not written for consultants or managers who seek to learn about ritual so that they can craft more fruitful experiences. Those who would apply ritual dynamics are currently without a guide, and the Craft of Ritual Studies does not bridge the gap between academic study and practice.However, of all the books that have been written by specialists in ritual studies, The Craft Of Ritual Studies goes the furthest in providing concrete ideas about how to organize research of rituals. Unlike other books about ritual studies, which focus on ritual theory and on research findings, The Craft Of Ritual Studies explores the methods of research. So, while Ronald Grimes refuses to commit to any particular model of ritual, he at least provides those of us who seek to apply ritual dynamics with a set of tools for researching ritual activities, and for critically considering the models we adopt, not as final truths, but as solid methods for practice.The Craft of Ritual Studies is at its strongest in the lists that Grimes provides, which show the comprehensive scope of Grimes' consideration of ritual - a benefit of his decades of experience in the area. This book should be read by anyone who seeks to study ritual, either as an academic or in the application of ritual dynamics - not because Grimes always makes the most useful judgments about how ritual works, but because he has identified the most useful questions that students of ritual can ask.

A classic, which can still be used as a field guide/instruction manual.

No better book about contemporary ritual theory.

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