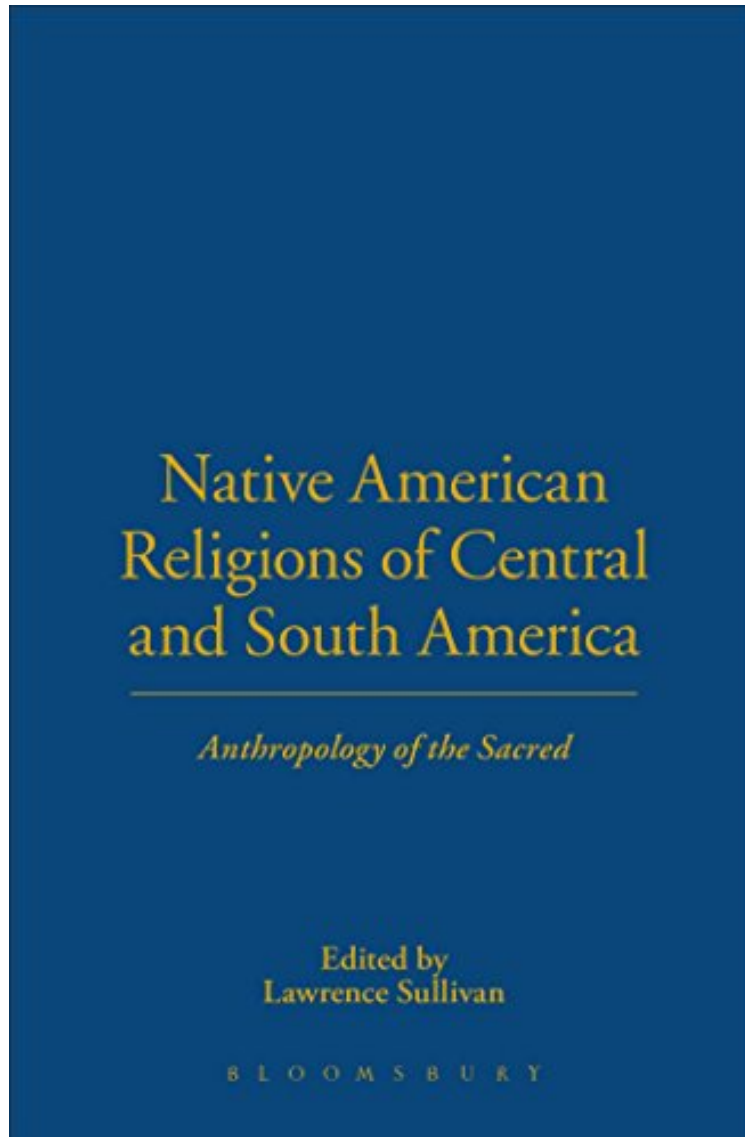


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From Brand: Bloomsbury Academic : Native American Religions of Central and South America: Anthropology of the Sacred before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Native American Religions of Central and South America: Anthropology of the Sacred:

The New World came into being in the Europeans' encounter with the indigenous religions and cultures of Central and South America. Yet these religions remain little known or are filtered through inadequate categories such as "animism," "superstition," or "syncretism." In this volume, an international group of the finest authorities working on the subject provide rich descriptions and provocative interpretations of religious ideas rarely gathered in one place. Since an exhaustive treatment would be impossible (it is estimated that there could be as many as fifteen thousand different South American languages living or extinct), the aim is to illustrate something of the range of religious beliefs and practices through cases that are exemplary. The first part of the book describes the religious views of the Aztec, Maya, and Inca, dating from the time prior to contact with Europeans. The rest of the book treats contemporary cases from the major cultural and geographical areas of Central and South America. Whether the focus is on myth, architecture, ritual celebrations, or shamanic practice, each essay provides a distinctive profile of the culture in question. Contributors include David Carrasco, Edgardo J. Cordeu, Mercedes de la Garza, Alfredo Lopez Austin, Juan Ossia Acua, Alejandra Siffredi, Lawrence E. Sullivan, Terence Turner, Peter van der Loo, Robin M. Wright, and Reiner Tom Zuidema.

From Library Journal Sullivan (director, Ctr. for the Study of World Religions; history of religion, Harvard) has compiled a well-balanced collection of essays by respected scholars on the history and roles of spirituality in a variety of Native American cultures. The groups included are as diverse as the Mescalero Apache, Lakota, Muskogee, and Tlingit. Sullivan's insightful introduction explains why each of the nine essays was selected, providing a broader examination of the ramifications of the anthropological study of Native American spirituality. All the essays unequivocally show that a dynamic religious vitality remains present in the Native American cultures examined. Each explores in depth the historical and contemporary significance of various Native American religious practices as well as the impact wrought by exposure to Christianity over the last two centuries. This excellent collection presents dignified and respectful views of Native American spirituality and is highly recommended for anthropology and religion collections in academic libraries. DE Elizabeth Salt, Otterbein Coll. Lib., Westerville, OH Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. The volume is clearly an important contribution to scholarship in religious studies, the anthropology of religion and area studies in Central/Mesoamerica and South America. Although academically sophisticated, it would be an appropriate text for graduate or advanced undergraduate students. -Studies in Religion, 2004 (Studies In Religion/Sciences Religieuses) About the Author Lawrence E. Sullivan is Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University.