

BRUJERÍA CLASS NOTES – UNIT 1

INTRODUCTION TO BRUJERÍA

Hello Everyone!

Welcome to your first Brujeria class! I am honored to have you here. Below, you will find links for your video classes this month (approximately 45 minutes of viewing in 2 videos). Please print out or have available this set of notes to follow along with the video.

Do not hesitate to contact me or post in your study group if you have questions.

Katrina

Video Class Part 1 → https://youtu.be/_AyHc7aQl4k

Video Class Part 2 → <https://youtu.be/29XCM709tgo>

I - BACKGROUND

- A. Around 1273, the islands of Tenochtitlan and Tlatelolco, which comprised Mexica (meh-sheé-ca) began conquering what would become the territories of Mexico, extending upward into the US.
- B. The Mexica made no attempt to forcefully convert the cultures they conquered if they paid tribute.
- C. This is how “Mexico” was formed, including parts of Mexico that extended into California, Nevada, Utah, most of Arizona, about half of New Mexico, about a quarter of Colorado, and a small section of Wyoming.
- D. The “Maya” and the “Aztecs” did not call themselves that. Those are names assigned later to identify the people of specific areas.
- E. “Maya” civilization spread across the Yucatan Peninsula (this includes the Mexican states of Campeche, Yucatan, Quintana Roo and part of Tabasco) and includes Guatemala, Belize, western Honduras and western El Salvador.
- F. The “Aztec” Empire was pretty much everyone else.
- G. When Cortes & army landed in 1519, he encountered 200,000-250,000 people in Tenochtitlan (part of Mexico City) alone and over 4.5 million people in the totality of the nation he sought to conquer for Spain.
- H. The Aztec Empire had different deities, beliefs, and rites throughout.
- I. Just as many languages are based on Latin, literally hundreds of languages were based on Nahuatl.
- J. The Mayans alone spoke 30 different languages by the 16th century and most are still spoken today.
- K. We owe much of what we now know about ancient magical work to two Franciscan monks, Bernardino de Sahagún and Andrés de Olmos, and one Dominican Monk, Diego Durán, so studied the practices and kept meticulous notes, even going so far as to encode them into codices.
- L. Durán realized that the veneration of the Catholic deities and saints were sorta kinda fake, but Spain refused to punish any known offenders.

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M. A man named Friar Diego de Landa went so far as to actively persecute, round up, and kill known dissenters, but Spain arrested him and eventually executed him for the crimes.

II – AN UNBROKEN LINEAGE OF MAGICAL PRACTICE

- A. While we have an unbroken lineage of magic from pre-conquest days forward, interpretations and practices change from person to person and area to area.
- B. When you go to a Santa Muerte temple in Los Angeles, the mythologies and traditions they share about her are different even from those of the Santa Muerte temple two streets over. Brujeria is the same. Different people work in different ways and embrace different traditions.
- C. Another important point about Brujeria that is common in most practices is that the Bruja/o does not view time as linear. They treat the client on multiple levels at once (Gestalt).
- D. Each level heals or reveals new information at a different speed. This creates multiple realities within the same case, so in every client approach, the bruja/o's job is to be in the moment, engaged with that client, plugged into the "now" and creating a path forward.
- E. The life goal within this culture is usually stated as, **"To live a good life" and "To die an honorable death."** Your work as a brujo/a is to support those goals with your clients, under their terms of definition (not yours). The ideal life view is to treat life as a sacred experience and to approach the world with wonder and gratitude.
- F. When a brujo/a comes truly into their power, they sometimes adopt the title of Don (for a male) and Doña (for a female) to identify themselves as a practitioner.

III - WHAT IS BRUJERIA?

- A. Best to start with what it is not:
 - a. Brujeria is not Wicca and does not subscribe to Wiccan concepts
 - i. Does not follow "harms none" or "three-fold law"
 - ii. Has no ethical boundaries other than "justified" or "not justified."
 - iii. Does not cast a formal ritual circle or use quarters
 - iv. Does not work with Gods & Goddesses (Saints, Angels, God, Blessed Mother)
 - b. Brujeria is not Pagan. It is a Christian religion.
 - c. Brujeria is not a reconstructed magical practice. It has evolved in an unbroken development since before recorded history.
 - d. Brujeria is not Hoodoo, although by definition, it is Conjure
 - e. Brujeria is not Curanderismo, although it is similar and often addresses the same problems.
 - i. Curanderismo views the physical or cultural manifestation of a problem and wonders if it has a magical or spiritual component
 - ii. Brujeria views a magical or spiritual manifestation of a problem and wonders if it has a physical, social, mental, emotional, sexual, or environmental component
 - iii. Curandero is venerated and the brujo is reviled
- B. Brujos are an essential part of any Hispanic community and they work for that community.

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- C. Brujeria is a service-based practice. We use it to help others, not to become a better magical asshole
- D. The bruja advocates for the client and is not judgmental. They meet the client where they are.
- E. Brujeria is taught as an oral tradition and in an apprenticeship arrangement

DEFINITIONS:

Bruja – A female witch

Brujo – A male witch

Brujería – Witchcraft, but through the filters and experiences of the people of what was once and what is now Mexico

Curandera – A female healer

Curandero – A male healer

Curanderismo – A healing practicing using what we know of as magical processes derived from the people of what once was and what is now Mexico

Hispanic – A person with heritage deriving from a country that is Spanish speaking

Latino/Latina/Latinx – A person with heritage deriving from Latin America

Syncretize – To layer a dominant incoming religion onto a less accepted religion to allow the less accepted religion to survive

Folk Magic – The magic of the people practiced within a certain geographic or cultural demographic.

Remember to ignore the part on the video about your homework. Your homework is to watch the videos, post your introduction in the study group, and think about what you have just learned about Brujeria and decide if it is what your spirit calls you to explore at this time and for the next year going forward.

Katrina