Traditionally, Polynesians understood something by identifying its origin. A person was understood through his or her genealogy. The curious shape of a boulder was traced in story to the action of a god. The great intellectuals extended this method to their greatest challenge: understanding the universe as a whole. Their chants and stories of the origin of the universe represent the highest level of Polynesian speculation.

The seminar will begin with a brief survey of traditions from other Polynesian groups: Sâmoa, Tonga, the Society Islands, and New Zealand. Hawaiian traditions will then be studied in their Polynesian context. The main text will be the *Kumulipo*, long recognized as a masterpiece of world literature and one of the most important sources for our understanding of Hawaiian religious culture. The importance of the *Kumulipo* and other origin traditions for modern Hawaiian cultural consciousness will be investigated.

Students will write one twenty-five-page paper and make a presentation in class on the subject of their paper. Knowledge of the Hawaiian language is desirable but not required.

Instructor: John Charlot
SAK A307  Telephone: 956-6848  charlot@hawaii.edu
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**Tentative Schedule**

**January 13: General Introduction**

**January 20–27: Polynesian Origin Traditions**
Reading: Text packet.
“O le tupuga o le Eleele o Samoa ma tagata”
J. Fraser: “Chaos and Strife. — A Solo”
J. Fraser: “The Samoan Story of Creation. — A ´Tala”
“Vavau and his Family—A Tala.”
“About Po and Ao, A Pair of Chiefs—A Tala.”
K. P. Emory: “The Tahitian Account of Creation by Mare”
T. Henry: selections from *Ancient Tahiti*
——“Four Society Islands Creation Texts,” *Journal de la Société des Océanistes*, Volume XLI, Number 81, December, 1985, pp. 169–184 (numerous typographical errors; see errata sheet).
February 3: Hawaiian Origin Traditions.
Reading: Text packet.
Ka ʻŌlelo Kumu o kā Dāvida Malo Moʻolelo Hawaiʻi.
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W. Ellis: selections from Polynesian Researches: Hawaii

February 10: topic paragraph for semester paper.

February 10–March 17: The Kumulipo.
Martha Beckwith: The Kumulipo.
Liliuokalani of Hawaii: An Account of the Creation of the World according to Hawaiian Tradition.

March 3: outline and bibliography of semester paper.

March 31–April 28: Student Presentations.

May 5: semester paper due.

May 5: General Discussion

Reading:

Martha Beckwith: The Kumulipo.

Liliuokalani of Hawaii: An Account of the Creation of the World according to Hawaiian Tradition.

Reading packet. Photocopies are available at Professional Image, 2633 South King Street, across from Puck’s Alley.

John Charlot articles on his Web site (please read errata sheets): www2.hawaii.edu/~charlot.

Students will write one twenty-five-page paper and present it to the seminar.

Paper Topics:

Students will write a paper or papers on a section of The Kumulipo not discussed in class or on another Hawaiian or Polynesian tradition of the origin of the universe. Comparative material from other areas may be used.
The following works are good starting points for your research.


**Deadlines:**

February 10: topic paragraph for semester paper.

March 3: outline and bibliography.

May 5: papers due.
Grading (plus/minus):

80% on the paper and presentation.
20% on class participation.

One unexcused absence will result in the deduction of half a grade.

According to departmental policy, incompletes will be given only for extraordinary reasons, such as health problems.

**Student Learning Objectives:** Students will analyse Hawaiian religious texts as a basis for discussing general ideas.
SAMOA

“O le tala i le tupuga o Samoa”
“O le tupuga o le Eleele o Samoa ma tagata”
Kareda Henningsen: “Materials for the Study of the Chant 'O LE SOLO O LE VA O LE FOAFOAGA O LE LALOLAGI”
J. Fraser: “Chaos and Strife. — A Solo”
J. Fraser: “The Samoan Story of Creation. — A 'Tala”
“Vavau and his Family—A Tala.”
“About Po and Ao, A Pair of Chiefs—A Tala.”

SOCIETY ISLANDS
K. P. Emory: “The Tahitian Account of Creation by Mare”
T. Henry: selections from Ancient Tahiti

HAWAI’I
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