



Rituals, Ceremonies, and Cultural Meaning in Higher Education (Critical Studies in Education and Culture Series)

Kathleen Manning

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College students and graduates have fond memories of campus events such as commencement, founder's days, convocations, and baccalaureate. These events, defined as rites of passage, secular ceremonies, or cultural performances, create a special feel to a campus remembered for years to come. Borrowing from interpretive anthropology, the author spotlights the following ideas: culture is revealed and forms of life are expressed through the actions and words of community members; human communities are dynamic, complex, and ever-changing environments revealed through analysis of cultural events; and commonplace rituals and ceremonies play a central role in the cultural work of human meaning. The purpose of the book is to explore campus culture as revealed through rituals and ceremonies.

While rituals are unique to each campus, this book discusses higher education ceremonies and traditions and offers explanations about the roles they play in building and maintaining campus culture. Dr. Manning combines educational research methodology, higher education and anthropological theory to vividly describe college rituals. In a readable fashion, case studies describing the rituals are interspersed between chapters discussing the theory of rituals. The cases include convocation, presidential inauguration, junior show, charter day, founder's birthday celebration, baccalaureate, and laurel chain and alumnae parade.

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