# Part 7: Belief Systems

## Key Terms and Definitions

**Creationism:** Belief that the world and its various life forms emerged from divine acts as specified in biblical accounts; a fundamentalist form of religion that rejects the science of evolution.

**Cultural Capital:** Social assets of a person; socially legitimized forms of knowledge and practice that promote social mobility.

**Fundamentalism:** Conservative religious movements that promote a return to traditional principles.

**Religion:** A system of ideas and practices surrounding the belief in supernatural forces that provides meaning and purpose, and explanation for unexplainable phenomena.

**Ritual:** Repetitive social practices of a sequence of symbolic activities that are closely tied to culturally significant ideas, to gain an understanding of a culture’s worldview.

**Taboo:** A rule or custom that prohibits or restricts a behavior or action.

**Fetish:** Worship for an inanimate object.

**Magic:** A set of beliefs and practices designed to control the world; manipulation of supernatural forces for the purpose of intervening in human activity or natural events.

**Religious Publicity:** The process of producing and circulating religious material in the public sphere.

**Witchcraft:** Acts of harm by humans who are believed to have an innate, nonhuman power to bring harm onto others; such acts are sometimes intentional and other times involuntary.