

Religious Healing in the U.S.
840:580 | Fall 2016
M W | 3:55-5:15
HCK - 211 | Douglass Campus

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****Please note: Religious Healing in the U.S. meets concurrently with 840:380. Students taking the course for M.A. credit will be asked to complete additional assignments and attend meetings outside of the regularly scheduled class time.**

Course Description: This course will explore the history of religious healing in the United States, focusing especially on the following questions: How have major social, cultural, economic, and political trends in the United States impacted the way in which religious Americans defined illness and its cure? How have individuals from various religious traditions responded to the ascendancy of the medical establishment and the growing prestige of medical science? How does the practice of modern medicine compare to explicitly religious healing rituals? How have different healing traditions interacted in an American context? What are some of the key theories and models that scholars employ to analyze religious healing?

Course Objectives:

This course seeks to encourage critical thinking about the nature of religious healing in the United States. After taking this course, students should:

- become familiar with the diversity of religious healing in the U.S.
- gain a broad outline of major historical developments that have shaped the healing practices of Americans, such as the rising power of modern medicine, changing notions of gender, new immigration patterns in the U.S., etc.
- be able to critically compare the practice of modern medicine with explicitly religious forms of healing.
- be able to critically compare major religious healing traditions in the U.S. based on original research in primary sources.
- be introduced to key theoretical approaches to religious healing

Course Texts (other readings are available on the internet or through Sakai):

Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998
ISBN-10: 0374525641 ISBN-13: 978-0374525644

Whorton, James C. *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America*

Oxford University Press, USA, 2004
ISBN-10: 0195171624 ISBN-13: 978-0195171624

Barnes, Linda L. and Susan S. Sered. *Religion and Healing in America*
Oxford University Press, USA, 2004
ISBN-10: 0195167961 ISBN-13: 978-0195167962

******In addition to the regularly assigned readings, M.A. students should also read the selections listed under "Further Reading." We will discuss these readings at specially scheduled meetings for those taking the course for graduate credit.

Course Requirements:

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Essay: You will be required to write one main essay (15-17 pages/at least 3750 words). In your essay you will explore a topic related to the healing tradition of your choice. There will be a research component (you will need to utilize both primary and secondary sources). I will provide more specific guidelines in class.

**While undergraduates taking the course must participate in a peer-review process, this is optional for M.A. students.*

Mid-Term and Final: Unlike undergraduates taking the course, students taking the course for graduate credit will have a take-home mid-term. The questions for the exam will be handed out one week prior to the due date. There will also be final exam given during the scheduled final exam period.

Participation: Your participation grade will be calculated based primarily on your participation in discussions during the specially scheduled M.A. meetings, as well as a brief presentation that you will give towards the end of the semester (the presentation will focus on the research you conducted for your essay).

Grading System:

Main Essay: 40% Final Exam: 20% Participation: 20%
Mid-term Exam: 20%

Grade Scale:

100-90 A, 89-87 B+, 86-80 B, 79-77 C+, 76-70 C, 69-below F.

Course Schedule (**Fine Print:** I may make changes to the course readings, schedule, and policies as the course progresses. It is your responsibility, even if you miss classes, to keep yourself up-to-date on the course requirements.)

RELIGIOUS HEALING: KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

9/7 Course Overview. How will we study religious healing?

9/12, 9/14 **NO CLASS. Professor will be away at a conference on the 12th and 14th.

- PLEASE LOG ONTO SAKAI, GO TO “ASSIGNMENTS” AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS ENTITLED “ASSIGNMENTS FOR 9/12 & 9/14.”
- In order to complete these assignments, you will need to read Baer’s “Sacred Bodies,” Kinsley’s “Modern Medical Culture,” and Miner’s “Nacerima,” (all available on Sakai).
- THESE ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED AND UPLOADED TO THE SAKAI DROPBOX NO LATER THAN 11:59 P.M. ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 16TH.

9/19 Competing definitions of illness and healing. Please read Barnes & Sered, Ch. 14.

MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE HISTORY OF HEALING IN THE U.S.

The Biomedical Model

9/21 Please read Whorton, pg. 245-256, and an excerpt from Harrington, “The Placebo Effect: What’s Interesting for Scholars of Religion” (available on Sakai). ****You may also want to get a head start on the Fadiman reading that is scheduled for next week****

For further reading: “Biomedicine-as-religion readings” (available on Sakai).

The Shamanic/Traditional Religious Healing Model

9/26 Please read Fadiman, Chs. 1-7.

9/28 Please read Fadiman, Chs. 8-13.

For further reading: Robert Desjarlais, “Presence,” available on Sakai.

***Extra meeting for M.A. students this week**

The Faith Healing Model

10/3 Please read Williams, “Early Pentecostal Healing” & “Oral Roberts,” available on Sakai.

10/5 Please read Fadiman, Chs. 14-19.

For further reading: Excerpt from Curtis, *Faith in the Great Physician*.

The Metaphysical Model Pt. 1: The Power of Nature.

10/10 Please read Whorton, Chs. 1, 2.

10/12 Please read Whorton, Chs. 3, 8, & pgs. 230-43.

For further reading: Whorton Chs. 6, 9, 10.

***Extra meeting for M.A. students this week**

The Metaphysical Model Pt. 2: Mind over Matter

10/17 Please read “Mind Cure” selections, available on Sakai.

10/19 Please read Whorton, Ch. 5.

For further reading: Excerpts from Joshua Liebman, *Peace of Mind*, and Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with a Key to the Scriptures* (available on Sakai).

***Extra meeting for M.A. students this week**

10/24 Catch-up day/review.

10/26 Test #1

10/31 Create Your Own Healing Tradition Assignment *M.A. students not required to attend.

KEY TOPICS IN THE STUDY OF HEALING IN THE U.S.

Prayer & Science: The Politics of Studying Religious Healing

11/2 Please read selection “Why Are Biomedical Tests of Prayer Controversial?” from Brown, *Testing Prayer*, available on Sakai.

11/7 Create Your Own Healing Tradition Presentations *M.A. students not required to attend.

For further reading: Harrington, “The Placebo Effect: What’s Interesting for Scholars of Religion,” available on Sakai.

***Extra meeting for M.A. students this week.** *Instead of a group meeting, however, I will schedule times to meet with each of you individually to discuss your progress on the essay.*

Consumerism, Material Culture, and Healing

11/9 Undergrad peer-review groups assigned.

11/14 For today’s class you will be asked to bring in examples of advertisements for various religious healing products. Please be prepared to present your findings (further guidelines will be provided in class).

For further reading: Excerpt from Griffith, *Born Again Bodies* (available on sakai).

Gender, Sexuality, and Healing

11/16 Undergrad peer-review responses due. *M.A. students not required to attend.

11/21 Please read Barnes & Sered, Ch. 4, and an excerpt from Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, available on Sakai.

For further reading: Barnes & Sered, Ch. 16, 18

***Extra meeting for M.A. students this week**

Race, Ethnicity, and Healing

11/28 Please read Barnes & Sered, Chs. 10, 12.

11/30 Please read Whorton, 256-270, and Barnes & Sered, Ch. 19 (esp. 314-320).

Pain, Death, and Healing

12/5 Please read Hunt, “Death and Dying,” available on Sakai.

12/7 MA presentations

Where are we at today?

12/12 Combinationism in American Religious Healing Traditions. Please read Whorton, Ch. 12 & Conclusion. **Essay due for MA students.**

12/14 Summary and conclusion of course.

Final Exam Time: Friday, Dec 23, 2016: 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM