

**Religious Healing in the U.S.**  
**840:380 | Spring 2018**  
**M W | 2:50 – 4:10**  
**MU - 301 | College Ave.**

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**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 introduced to various theoretical approaches to religious healing
- produce an original research paper based on both primary and secondary sources exploring the impact of historical trends discussed in class on a particular religious healing tradition in the United States

**SAS Core Curriculum Goals:** This course meets the following specific SAS core curriculum goals associated with Historical Analysis (HST), Writing and Communication in a Discipline (WCd), and Writing and Communication, Revision (WCr). I will look for evidence of your mastery of these goals in the writing assignments, presentations, and exams.

- Identify and critically assess ethical issues in social science
- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

## 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

## Course Requirements:

**Essay:** You will be required to write one main essay (9-10 pages/at least 2250 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, but you should be aware of the following:

*General Requirements for the Essay:* Papers turned in after class has started on the final due date will be considered late and lose 5%. Papers turned in after class is over will lose 15%. **No papers will be accepted if they are turned in more than one class period after the due date** unless arrangements have been made with the instructor. **In addition to the hard copy of your paper turned in during class, you should also submit your paper to Turnitin.com via Sakai on the due date of the paper.** **\*\*Please note, your paper is not officially turned in until I have a hard copy of the paper. You will also lose 10% off your paper if you do not submit it electronically via Sakai on the due date.** Email submissions *will not* be accepted.

*Peer-review process:* You will need to provide a draft of the paper **prior to the due date** and work with other students in draft reading groups. **You will lose 5% off your paper if you do not submit a working draft of the paper for peer-review by the date indicated on the syllabus.** (I will provide further details about this process in class.)

**\*\*Plagiarism and cheating will be handled in accordance with university policy.** See <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

**Mid-Term and Final:** There will be an in-class mid-term, and a final exam given during the scheduled final exam period. The format of the exams will include multiple choice, short-answer, and mini-essay responses.

**Quizzes:** There will be unannounced quizzes throughout the semester based on the course readings. **Readings should be read by the date they are listed on the syllabus.** One quiz score may be dropped and will not count towards the final grade (this includes a missed quiz). Make-up quizzes only will be allowed for excused absences, which need to be approved by me beforehand. **\*\*It is your responsibility to make sure you have read the material by the due date.** Problems downloading the online readings will not excuse you from taking a quiz.

Participation: **Attendance is expected at all classes.** If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Please note: A record of attendance will be kept throughout the semester. More than 4 missed classes will negatively impact your participation grade (you will lose 10% off your participation grade for each absence above the first four).

### **Grading System:**

Main Essay: 30%	Final Exam: 25%	Participation: 10%
Mid-term Exam: 20%	Reading Quizzes: 15%	

### **Grade Scale:**

100-90 A, 89-87 B+, 86-80 B, 79-77 C+, 76-70 C, 69-60 D, 59-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**

#### **1/17 Introduction**

**1/22 How will we study religious healing?** Please read Russell McCutcheon, "The Academic Study of Religion," available on Sakai.

**1/24 Competing definitions of illness and healing.** Please read Barnes & Sered, Ch. 14, and Baer's "Sacred Bodies," both available on Sakai.

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

#### **The Biomedical Model**

**1/29** Please read Kinsley's "Modern Medical Culture," available on Sakai.

**1/31** Please read Whorton, pg. 245-256, and Harrington, "The Placebo Effect: What's Interesting for Scholars of Religion," available on Sakai. **\*\*You also may want to get a head start on the Fadiman reading that is scheduled for next week.\*\***

#### **The Shamanic/Traditional Religious Healing Model**

**2/5** Please read Fadiman, Chs. 1-7.

**2/7** Please read Fadiman, Chs. 8-13.

#### **The Faith Healing Model**

**2/12** Please read Williams, "Early Pentecostal Healing" & "Oral Roberts," available on Sakai.

**2/14** Please read Fadiman, Chs. 14-19.

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

**2/19** Please read Whorton, Chs. 1, 2.

**2/21** Please read Whorton, Chs. 3, 8, & pgs. 230-43.

## **The Metaphysical Model Pt. 2: Mind over Matter**

**2/26** Please read "Mind Cure" selections, available on Sakai.

**2/28** Please read Whorton, Ch. 5.

**3/5** Catch-up day/review.

**3/7** Midterm exam.

**Spring Break, No class 3/12, 3/14**

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

### **Prayer & Science: The Politics of Studying Religious Healing**

**3/19** Please read the excerpt, "Why Are Biomedical Tests of Prayer Controversial?" from Brown, *Testing Prayer*, available on Sakai.

### **Gender, Sexuality, and Healing**

**3/21** Please read Barnes & Sered, Ch. 4, and an excerpt from Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, available on Sakai.

**3/26 Peer-review groups assigned.** Please bring 4 copies of your paper draft to class.

### **Consumerism, Material Culture, and Healing**

**3/28** 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).

**4/2 Peer-review responses due.** Also, Create Your Own Healing Tradition groups assigned.

**4/4 No class.** Use this extra time to meet with your group (and hopefully work on your paper as well).

### **4/9 Create Your Own Healing Tradition Presentations**

### **Race, Ethnicity, and Healing**

**4/11** Please read Barnes & Sered, Chs. 10, 12.

**4/16** Please read Whorton, 256-270, and Barnes & Sered, Ch. 19 (esp. 314-320).

### **Pain, Death, and Healing**

**4/18** Please read Hunt, "Death and Dying," available on Sakai.

**4/23 Essay due.**

### **Where are we at today?**

**4/25 Combinationism in American Religious Healing Traditions.** Please read Whorton, Ch. 12 & Conclusion.

**4/30** Summary and conclusion of course.

**Final Exam Time:** Wed. May 9<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM