

REL 307 RELIGION AND HEALTH

SPRING 2021

12:30-1:45 Tuesday and Thursday via Zoom

Prof. Alice Keefe

Office hours: 1:00-1:45 Monday and Wednesday;
2:00-2:45 Tuesday, and by appointment

Email: akeefe@uwsp.edu



Course description:

- This course explores the interrelationships between religion or spirituality, and issues of health, illness, and healing. We will learn about traditional healing practices within a variety of global contexts and will employ a comparative methodology as we seek to understand how and why these healing practices “work” to generate contexts for healing. We will also look at modern syncretic healing practices that are emerging within our situation of globalization and ask questions about the appeal of these alternative healing practices within today’s medical marketplace. Throughout we will practice skills of empathetic understanding and critical analysis as we engage with diverse worldviews.

Course learning outcomes:

- To develop the capacity to empathetically engage with different worldviews regarding the cosmology, personhood, health and healing in order to be able to understand and respond to the different ways people assign meaning to illness and seek healing
- To gain knowledge of diverse array of healing systems embraced by human communities across time and space, and to employ a comparative methodology to understand how and why these practices “work” to created contexts for healing
- To analyze how the forces of globalization are creating a new and unprecedented situation in which diverse systems of healing from around the globe are being appropriated, transformed and used by modern persons as an alternative to or in tandem with modern biomedicine.
- To practice and improve skills in attentive reading, clear writing, critical thinking and information literacy.

Books on Text Rental:

David Kinsley, *Health, Healing, and Religion: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*

Candy Gunther Brown, *The Healing Gods: Complementary and Alternative Medicine in America*

John Morreall and Tamara Sonn, *The Religion Toolkit: A Complete Guide to Religious Studies*

Additional required readings available electronically on Canvas. For best results, these should be printed or at least downloaded onto your own computer, and formatted to permit highlighting and notation.

Criteria for Evaluation:

Short essay #1 = 10 %

Short essay #2 = 10 %

Research paper process step #1 = 2 %

Research paper process step #2 = 2 %

Research paper process step #3 = 2 %

Short research paper = 24%

Test # 1 = 10%

Test # 2 = 10%

Final exam = 10%

8 (out of 11) Weekly quizzes = 10%

8 (out of 11) Discussion forum posts = 5%

Attendance, participation and oral report on research paper = 5%

Explanation of Assignments

Test #1, test #2 and final exam (10% each) will test your knowledge of assigned readings, videos, and class lectures and discussion. Tests are open book and open notebook.

2 Short Essays (10% each). Each essay requires you to reflect thoughtfully on the assigned material with the aim of exercising and improving your skills in close reading, critical thinking and clear writing.

Essays will be assessed on a 100 point scale according to the following criteria:

- * essay exhibits a careful reading of the assigned materials
- * essay has a well-articulated main point or argument
- * essay uses quotes and/or specific points from assigned materials to support or illustrate points
- * essay is well organized, with a strong introduction, well organized supporting paragraphs and a conclusion that articulates the value or relevance of the argument.
- * essay is concise, coherent, and carefully edited and proofread
- * essay is approximately 2-3 pages in length (400-700 words), typed and double-spaced.
- * essay is handed in on the assigned due date. Late essays will lose 1 point for every day late (including weekends)

Research paper process steps 1,2 and 3 (2% each) and short research paper (24 %): Your short research paper will explore a focused question or topic area that arises at the intersection of religion/spirituality and health/healing/medicine/death & dying. The research paper process steps are designed to help you think about your thesis topic and research strategies in a systematic way, appropriately spread out over several weeks.

Research paper process step one: Prepare a research paper proposal. The proposal should contain the following elements: 1) the question which is your starting point (one sentence), 2) the reasons why this question is important to you and what you hope to explore or discover (approximately 100 words), and 3) full citations for three sources relevant to this research project (using correct citation format), one of which must be an academic article.

Research paper process step two: In one short paragraph, articulate your question for your research project and *the type of evidence or data* you will use in formulating a thesis. Then present three relevant sources, using full and correct citation format, *with annotations* (approximately 50 to 75 words each). Each annotation should explain what kind of source this is (academic article, organization web page, encyclopedia entry, etc.) and how this source may contribute to the research project.

Research paper process step three: In one short paragraph, articulate your question for your research project, the type of evidence or data you will use in formulating a thesis, and *what you think may be your argument or thesis*. Then present *three relevant sources* (different from those given in step two), using full and correct citation format, *with annotations* (approximately 50 to 75 words each). Each annotation should explain what kind of source this is (academic article, organization web page, encyclopedia entry, etc.) and how this source may contribute to the research project.

Research papers will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Your research topic must focus on a specific, narrow and well-defined issue or question at the intersection of religion (or spirituality) and medicine/healing. Research paper topics must be approved and finalized no later than two weeks in advance of due date.
- Your paper must show evidence, through appropriate use of footnotes or endnotes, of sound research methodology. It is expected that the thesis of your paper will be based on careful consideration and use of at least SIX relevant sources at a minimum.
- Your paper must be clearly argued, with the thesis or argument clearly stated at the outset and supported throughout.
- Your paper must be clearly organized, with clearly articulated paragraph structure, including introduction and concluding paragraphs
- Your paper must use correct and consistent format in citations and reference list; any standard citation style is acceptable.
- Your paper must be carefully edited proofread; grammar and spelling errors will bring down your grade.
- Your paper must be typed and double-spaced and approximately **5-7 pages in length**.

Research papers will be due in the last week of classes. Late research papers will lose 1 point for every class period late.

Weekly quizzes (10%) will encourage you to stay current in the course, attend or view zoom class sessions, and demonstrate knowledge of material covered each week in the course. Quizzes will be based on assigned materials with emphasis on reading questions and points covered in class since the last quiz. Quizzes are open book and open notebook. You are not permitted to consult the internet for answers.

Quizzes will be posted by 3 p.m. on Wednesdays and must be completed by 12:30 p.m. on Thursdays (that is, by the time class begins on Thursdays). Quizzes will remain open for a week after the due date; if you take the quiz late, you lose ½ point (out of a total possible 10 pts) per day late (including weekends). There will be 11 quizzes over the course of the semester. I will count your BEST 8.

Discussion forum posts (5%) will facilitate the exchange of ideas among students and allow for conversations that go beyond the class session.

Discussion forum posts will be due by 11:59 on Friday evenings on weeks when assigned. Discussion forms will remain open for one week after the due date; late posts will lose 1/2 point per day late (including weekends).

Discussion forum posts should consist of meaningful and substantive content, conforming to the following criteria:

- Posts should be approximately 50 to 100 words in length.
- Posts should reflect accurate knowledge of material under discussion.
- Posts should consist of complete and grammatically accurate sentences.
- Posts that initiate threads should raise an issue or idea to which others can respond.
- Posts that respond to existing threads should reflect thoughtful engagement with other posts on the thread, and should advance the conversation.
- Posts should avoid profanity, rants, personal attacks, or disrespect towards any group or person on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.

The criteria for scoring discussion points is as follows:

5 pts = Thoughtful and clearly expressed entry which reflects accurate knowledge of material under discussion and advances a conversation. Meets all criteria (see above)

4 pts = Entry is lacking in one of the required criteria (see above)

3 pts = Entry is lacking in two or more of the required criteria (see above)

2 pts = Entry is lacking in three or more of the required criteria (see above)

½ point off for every day late after the Friday midnight due date.

There will be 11 discussion posts assigned over the course of the semester. **I will count your best 8.**

Attendance, Participation and Oral report on research (5%)

Class attendance is required. I will take attendance in each class period and expect you to be present.

Excessive **unexcused absences** will adversely affect your grade.

Excellent attendance: two or fewer unexcused absences = A in this category.

Good attendance: three to five unexcused absences = B in this category.

Poor attendance: six to eight unexcused absences = C in this category.

Even worse attendance: nine to ten unexcused absences = D in this category.

Failing attendance: eleven or more unexcused absences = specific failing grade calculated by following formula – $x*100/30$ in which x = number of unexcused absences.

Excused absence: An absence may be excused for reasons of illness, family emergency or a school or team related event; if you wish for an absence to be excused, you must send an email to Prof. Keefe stating the reason for your absence in advance of the absence.

Power point slides and recordings of zoom sessions will be posted in Canvas. ***It is not the professor's responsibility to fill you in on what you missed if you were absent.*** If you miss class, complete the assignments, view the recording of class and carefully study the posted power point slides; then if you have questions, you can ask your professor.

Active Participation means that you come to class prepared, having completed assignments for the day, and that you ***regularly contribute to class discussion.*** Excellent active participation will raise your score in the attendance/participation category.

Zoom Classroom Etiquette:

- Please keep your microphone muted when it isn't needed to reduce noise distractions
- Please keep your camera on if your bandwidth allows. It is very difficult to teach or converse in front of a bunch of black screens, so it is a courtesy to your professor and fellow students to keep your camera on.
- If you cannot have your camera on, consider having a nice picture of yourself appear instead of a black screen with your name. Your picture should be professionally appropriate (avoid cocktail scenes, obscene gestures, swimsuit shots, etc.)
- Do your best to get to class on time. However, sometimes circumstances intervene, and it is OK to enter the Zoom classroom late.
- When speaking in class about matters involving religion, be aware of the religious diversity within the class, and strive to ensure that your comments are respectful of difference and contribute to an atmosphere of civil discourse.

Oral presentation on short research paper will be assessed on the following criteria. The oral report will not be formally graded, but strong oral reports will raise your score in attendance and participation, and a poor oral report (or failure to give an oral report) will lower your grade in this category.

- clarity of structure of report and evidence of careful preparation
- appropriate body language and clear speech
- use of appropriate supporting visual aids
- engagement with discussion questions to and from peers
- timing -- reports should be between 3 and 5 minutes in length

Plagiarism and cheating policy:

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of the codes of honesty and mutual respect that binds us together as a community. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. For more information regarding the university policy on academic misconduct (plagiarism) and disciplinary procedures, please see chapter 14 of the University Handbook, located at this web page link:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, check here: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyinfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability Services Office and then contact me at the beginning of the course. I am happy to help in any way I can. For more information, please visit the Disability Services Office, located on the 6th floor of the Learning Resource Center (the Library). You can also find more information here:

<http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability/>.

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