Course Description

How do religious peoples understand and live in sickness and health? How does physical well-being connect to spiritual well-being? Medicine to meaning-making? How does looking at religion in sickness and health provide insight into its roles in different cultures and contexts? What is “religion”? “Sickness”? “Health”? How can we understand their relationships? From Southeast Asia to Africa, we’ll approach these questions using perspectives from anthropology, history, sociology, legal studies and the medical sciences, among others. We’ll learn how scholars of religion approach them. And we’ll be coming home to the U.S. and Wisconsin along the way to examine these questions as well.

Course Objectives

Thoughtful and prepared engagement in this class should lead you ~

To begin to develop global religious literacy. To understand some significant ways in which religious expressions close to home connect to situations and cultures around the world, particularly as they relate to sickness, health, and healing.

To understand something of the diversity of ways in which religion both reflects and shapes human communities and self-conceptions, particularly in situations confronting sickness, as illustrated by some of the cultures in Southeast Asia, forms of religious expression with roots in Africa, and the movement of Christianity across historical/cultural contexts. Also, to understand some of the connections between experiences of sickness and ethnicity, religion, race and gender as religious peoples immigrate to the United States (and especially Wisconsin).

To gain knowledge of and familiarity with some classic and current theories in the academic study of religion and to use these to examine
a variety of religious expressions related to sickness and health. We’ll also test these theories against the experiences and practices of people.

To learn and begin communicating in a vocabulary of religion and health in the humanities and social sciences and in thoughtful human discourse generally. (We’ll discuss a little bio-science too.)

To gain and practice skills in critical (that is, analytical) reading, writing and thinking about religion and particularly its connections to health and in discussing difficult and complex issues fruitfully in a diverse community. These skills are widely applicable to courses and careers outside this classroom and to being a global citizen and will help you continue to learn beyond this class.

No Prerequisites; Credit toward several programs
No prior study of religion is expected. For students pursuing a major or certificate in Religious Studies, this course serves as a “gateway” course and basic requirement. It also meets certain CALS, International Studies and Global Health certificate requirements and is a core course for the Health and Humanities certificate.

This is not an old-fashioned “intro to religions” course in which you learn several “facts” about some major religions. You will indeed do that. But this course focuses on helping you develop ideas and skills for understanding religion as a broad category and in specific contexts—a small village in Thailand, an immigrant community in Appleton, a hospital room in Botswana, a Medical School classroom in Madison. It aims to teach you how to recognize and interpret religion and use your understanding for the “health” of others and yourself—of human communities.

Accommodation
Students requesting accommodation due to documented disabilities, absence due to religious observance, or multiple final exams scheduled on the same date should notify Dr. Norman no later than the end of the second week of classes.

Honors Section Credit (no honors option credit)
Honors Students are expected to aim for excellence in all categories of course requirements. In addition, they will produce a project resulting in an approximately 10-page paper (or approved equivalent). Projects should
either 1) explore sickness and health in a religious tradition not covered in the course (or group within a tradition, i.e. Methodism in Christianity) via primary and secondary sources AND direct experience in observation or conversation appropriate to the topic OR 2) analyze a volunteer, work or learning experience of substantial length related to sickness and health using RS 101 materials and outside resources. Students are required to submit a proposal for their projects by _____ and to meet with Dr. Norman at least once prior to that date to talk about the proposal. The final project is due ________.

**Communication with the Teaching Team Outside Class**
The most efficient way to contact us outside of class is via email:
Dr. Norman  **cenorman@wisc.edu**
TAs:
You are always welcome to ask questions, seek clarification, etc. via email. Please do keep in mind that this is a large class, so check materials on LEARN@UW before emailing with a question that these might answer efficiently. Please note that Dr. Norman and TAs generally do not respond to email after 6pm but they will respond to evening emails the following morning whenever possible. Messages sent over weekends may not be answered until Monday morning.

**Offices and Office Hours: Welcome to Religious Studies!**

**Dr. Norman’s Office** is 7139 Social Science. She holds open office hours on Wednesdays, 1:30-3:30 and Thursdays, 3:00-4:30. Feel free to stop by during this time for conversation and usually some treats.

**TAs also can be found in the RS Suite at the following times. Look for them in Rooms 7141 or 7143.**

You may visit any of us during office hours, not only your TA. You may also email us for appointments if you cannot make office hours due to work or class meetings. When essays are due, there will be added times for consultation.
Read about your TA and Dr. Norman under “Getting Started” on learn@UW.

PEER MENTORS
Peer Mentors are Religious Studies students who have previously taken RS 101. They help Dr. Norman and the teaching team with various tasks in the course. Primarily, they are here to assist students and help create a vibrant learning community in the class. Look for info from them on events and resources related to the course content, study and writing workshop sessions, and supplementary resources in the EVENT AND RESOURCE folder on learn@UW. See their bios under “Getting Started” on learn@UW.

6 REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS FOR SUCCEEDING IN RS 101
1. What You Need to Bring to Lectures and Discussions
Even if you make notes via laptop (see policy below) please bring paper and pen to class. You may need them for in-class exercises. You will need to bring a copy of your weekly preparation assignments and notes (lecture and discussion preparations) to each discussion unless your TA instructs otherwise and also have access to each week’s readings in discussion. You are strongly advised to download and print the readings before reading and taking notes on them. See more about this in “Weekly Preparation Assignments” under Getting Started on learn@UW.

2. VERY, VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT COURSE READINGS, OTHER MATERIALS AND ASSIGNMENTS
   Course readings, assignments, and other materials for class will be posted on LEARN@UW. It is imperative that you check it regularly for new or altered assignments, materials, and announcements in the NEWS section on the course home page. Please check your email regularly as well and if you are asked to respond, please do so promptly.
   Readings and preparation will be assigned for some class and all discussion sessions. To optimize learning and participation, please complete readings and preparation assignments before the session for which they are listed. Discussion assignments always will be checked and factored into your grade. Always read the preparation assignment before reading assigned texts, viewing films, etc.!! Please see “Weekly Preparation Assignments” on learn@UW.
3. Submitting Work and Late or Missed Work
   Please be very careful about submitting work; it is very easy for work to be lost or not counted if it is submitted in the wrong place or not addressed and formatted according to instructions. Know your section number and submit work in Dropbox folders designated for your section only unless otherwise instructed.

   In most cases, late work will be accepted only by prior arrangement in exceptional instances or due to documented emergency situations. Otherwise, there will be no make-up option for discussion preparations, quizzes, or essays. If you should ever have a problem with an online quiz, accessing readings, etc. please contact your TA or Dr. Norman and title the email: ACCESS PROBLEM. If it appears to be a technical problem, please contact DoIT first.

4. Attendance
   Attendance and thoughtful engagement in lectures and discussions is required. Please sign in at every lecture on the attendance sheet for your section in order to receive credit. Lack of regular attendance and participation will adversely affect your grade and diminish what you are able to learn from the class. If you cannot attend class for an excusable reason, please notify your TA by email prior to the absence if at all possible.

5. Communication and Participation inside Class
   Welcome to the big, small class. Yes, there will be lectures, but we will also converse together about the material and sometimes engage in multiple activities in a class period. Questions and other forms of participation during lectures will be encouraged. However, please keep in mind that this is a large class in a room that is a tight fit and focus is very important. Please avoid unnecessary noise and private comments. Disturbing speakers or other students will affect your participation grade negatively and may be attended to immediately during lecture in front of the entire class. Plan ahead so that you do not need to leave the class for 50 minutes and please do not start packing up your materials until class has been dismissed. Finally, please do not eat in class (unless we all are). Water, coffee, etc. are fine.

   Sickness is a tough issue to discuss. So is religion. This course is based on the premise that discussion of important and complex issues is vital to individual and communal growth and well-being. The teaching team also realizes that students’ personal experiences or deeply-held values and the encounter with a number of difficult societal issues in a classroom may be
anxiety-producing or call up thoughts and feelings that are disturbing. We strive to create an environment that is safe and respectful of all and are eager to talk with you about any concerns related to this that you wish to share with us. We also encourage students to seek out the resources on campus (in Resources on learn@UW) that may help. This course strives to promote respect and understanding of the people we encounter on paper AND each other this term so that we can learn to be together productively. We ask students to commit to these goals with us.

6. TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The latest research shows that using laptops for note-taking actually HINDERS learning. It can also disturb neighboring students. Laptops and other devices may be used only as tools for learning in this course and ONLY ON THE FIRST THREE ROWS (where students not using laptops may also choose to sit). Students caught web-surfing or otherwise violating this policy will no longer be allowed to use laptops in lectures. Please turn-off your phones and put them away before class begins.

Dr. Norman suggests making notes by hand in class and then reviewing the Powerpoint slides and comparing or filling in with your notes as soon as possible after class. This can greatly aid retention and comprehension and save time and stress. So can doing the preparation assignment for lectures. We will assume you’ve done them in our lecture content. Also, you may review the class via video-link; attendance is still required however!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

PARTICIPATION (20%) The main basis for this grade is participation in the 12 discussion sessions of the term (and it would be very difficult to participate well without attending lectures and doing the weekly preparation assignments). TAs will check that you are present at each discussion session and that you have completed the weekly preparation assignments (for both lectures and discussion). You will receive only partial credit if you attend without the assignments and you cannot receive credit for the assignments without attending except in approved instances (see above on missed/late work). Your TAs will also adjust the base participation grade to factor in the quality of your preparation assignments and participation; they may collect assignments without notice to use in adjusting participation grades. The baseline grade for participation is as follows:

- Participation/preparation for 11-12 sessions: A (94)
- Participation/preparation for 11-10 sessions: AB (88)
Participation/preparation for 10-9 sessions: B (83)
Participation/preparation for 8 sessions: BC (77)
Participation/preparation for 7 sessions: C (70)
Fewer: D (60)

A student who just “shows up” 11 times and has done no more than go through the motions on weekly assignments would receive the baseline grade of 88 (AB). Another student who participates actively and has thoughtful weekly assignments would get A (94) as a baseline grade. The grade may also be affected by your attendance in lecture. Students who miss more than 3 lectures will have their overall participation grade lowered by a letter grade (6 points). Students who attend all lectures can have their participation grade raised by a letter grade. So, someone who attends only 10 discussion sessions but all lectures could get an A for participation, if the quality of preparation assignments and participation in those discussions is good. Someone who participates and does careful, consistent preparation for 11 discussions would receive a higher grade than the base grade of 94. The point is this: coming to discussion and lecture regularly and doing careful and consistent weekly assignments almost guarantees an A in participation—and makes it far more likely in other areas too.

What is a good preparation assignment? See “Weekly Preparation Assignments” on learn@UW.

5 ONLINE QUIZZES (20%) These short quizzes will test your knowledge of significant terms, ideas, and examples from the lectures and discussions, and especially the reading (or film, etc.) assignments for both. These come at the end of each unit and test learning within each unit. They consist of 10 items and are “open” for a 24-hour period, 5pm Thursday to 5pm Friday. You have an hour to complete each quiz once you begin. It is “open book” but lack of consistent preparation for lectures and discussions will make it practically impossible to do well on these quizzes; however, an hour should give prepared students time to check on a few items about which they may be in doubt. Students in Friday discussions who have documented classes or work scheduled all day on Fridays after their discussions may ask for an extension on quizzes but they must notify Dr. Norman no later than the second week of classes.

3 of 4 Short Essays (20% each; 60%) Essays 1 and 4 are required. You may choose to write essay 2 OR 3. You may also write both essays 2 and 3; the higher of the two grades will apply to your overall essay grade.
Learning Outside of Class
We want to encourage you to consider learning outside the class requirements and make connections across your experiences in college. To that end, TWICE this term you can receive extra credit (1 point, added to your participation grade) for attending and reflecting on an event, making a connection to another class, volunteer work, etc. Please see the Extra Credit form for details. The instructions must be followed “religiously” to receive credit. See EVENT folder and NEWS on learn@UW for opportunities.

General Grading Criteria for Essays
Further specific criteria and directions for each essay will be given as well.

An “A” essay follows directions, is clearly written and well organized, and most importantly, contains a thoughtful and analytical central argument (thesis) supported by illustrations and evidence drawn from course materials. It demonstrates that the student has grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings and discussions, and formulated a compelling argument. It is polished and cites sources correctly.

A typical “B” essay is a solid work that follows directions and demonstrates a good grasp of the course materials. It shows knowledge of ideas and concepts covered in the readings and discussions, but with little evidence of thought beyond what has been said in class or readings or a sophisticated synthesis. Other “B” papers may give evidence of thought but do not present an argument clearly or convincingly. Lack of clarity, polish, or correct citations may weaken the essay.

A typical “C” paper shows an inadequate or partly inaccurate summary of course materials or defense of an argument. Lack or poor use of evidence, clarity, polish and correct citation are often factors in C papers as well.

A paper that receives a grade less than “C” typically does not respond adequately to the assignment, is marred by frequent errors, unclear writing, poor organization, lack of evidence and citation or some combinations of these problems.

Grading Scale
A 94-100  AB 88-93  B 87-83  BC 82-77  C 76-70  D 69-60  F below 60

Academic Dishonesty
Instances of suspected plagiarism or cheating are reported to the Office of the Dean of Students for notification and possible investigation. If you have
any questions about academic honesty, such as how to use appropriate citations in a paper, please don’t hesitate to ask. We will be providing guidance throughout the term in this critical area.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule is subject to change, although graded exercises will not be moved earlier than listed. More details about readings and assignments are on learn@UW. Always consult the assignments before doing the reading.

INTRODUCTION: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH

Lecture 1: Getting Started. What is Religion and Other Healthy Questions.

Discussion Sections meet this week. Topic: Defining “Religion” and “Health.” See learn@UW for short writing assignment.

Reading: Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, Intro and Ch. 1.

Reading: Eliade, Ch 2, first half.

Discussion: Can a Hospital be a Sacred Space?
Assignment: Eliade assigned for this week plus listen to “The Science of Healing Places” interview with immunologist Esther Sternberg, and examine the powerpoint, “Sacred Spaces in the Hospital Setting.”

Lecture 4: Time and Myth.
Reading: Eliade, Ch. 2, second half. See the video on Haj before class (link on prep guide)

Lecture 5: Ritual, the Body and the Function of Religion.
Reading: Eliade Ch. 4.
Discussion: What does religion do in sickness and health? Eliade assigned for the week. Discussion will review Eliade by applying theory to a brief case study distributed in sections.

Quiz 1 must be completed via learn@UW no later than Friday @5pm.

UNIT I: RELIGION IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Lecture 6: Healing and Southeast Asian Religions 1: Religious Pluralism, the Person and Sickness in Southeast Asia.
Reading: “Medicine Sutra” and selected links at www.pluralism.org

Lecture 7: Healing and Southeast Asian Religions 2: Hmong Medicine and Cosmology
Reading: Vincent Her, “A Hmong Cosmology”

Discussion: Cosmology, Gender and Giving Birth in a Hmong Village in Thailand.
Reading: Patricia Symonds, Calling the Soul: Gender and the Cycle of Life in a Hmong Village, Ch. 2-3.

Lecture 8: How Shamans Heal. Reading: Thomas Dubois, Shamanism, Ch. 9.
Viewing: The Split Horn, a film about a Hmong shaman and his family in Appleton, WI (see viewing schedule).

Lecture 9: Seeing Medicine through Eyes of Hmong Patients, Ms. Maichou Lor, (RN and Doctoral Candidate, UW School of Nursing)

Discussion: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors and a Collision of Two Cultures. Reading: Selected chapters from Anne Fadiman, When the Spirit Catches You, You Fall Down. Essay 1 topic announced.

Quiz 2 must be completed no later than Friday at 5pm.

Lecture 11: Review and writing workshop during class period **required**.

*No Discussion Sessions this week. TAs will be available for consultation during discussion times. Essays are due in the Dropbox on learn@UW by Friday at 5pm.*

**UNIT 2: RELIGION IN SICKNESS AND HEALTH IN AFRICA AND AFRICAN DIASPORA (HAITI AND U.S.)**

Lecture 12: African Religions, the Body, and Healing.
Reading: John M. Janzen, “Health, Medicine and Religion in Central and Southern Africa.”


**Discussion:** Drumming up Healing in an African Village, Janzen and Turner plus N. Montiero and D. Wall, “African Dance as Healing Modality...”

Optional Reading: C. Berrol, “Neuroscience Meets Dance Movement Therapy.”


Lecture 15: Haitian Vodou: Balance as Healing.
Listen to interview with Vodou Priest and Prof. emeritus, UW-Milwaukee, Patrick Bellegarde Smith.


Lecture 17: Gospel, Jazz and the Blues—Healing Performances.
**Assignment for Essay 2.** Read James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues.”
Discussion: Community, Healing and all that Jazz. No new reading. Discussion will focus on review of resources for analysis in Essay 2. Students are required to prepare and participate whether they write Essay 2 or not.

Quiz 3 is due no later than Friday at 5pm.

Essay 2 is due in the dropbox by 5pm on Saturday.

UNIT 3: SICKNESS AND HEALTH IN CHRISTIANITY


Discussion: What Would Jesus Do? Healing in a Local “Cultural System” Read the 2 sermons by Rev. Dr. Paula Harris and review Geertz.


Lecture 23: How One Humanities Professor Builds Bridges to Healthcare in a Christian Minority Community. Guest: Professor Mark Lauden (German Department). View The Amish and read Donald Kraybill, “Prayer.”
Discussion: When Prayer Fails: Wisconsin v. Neumann. Read selected documents from Wisconsin v. Neumann and view video links provided on learn@UW. Optional: Shawn Peters (ILS), When Prayer Fails, Ch. 1.

Quiz 4 is due no later than Friday at 5pm.

Lecture 24: Writing Workshop during class period in preparation for Essay 3. This is optional but highly recommended. Office hours tba for Tuesday.

Lecture 25: No class. Essay 3 is due in the dropbox no later than 5pm. Instructors will be available until noon to consult via email or in Soc Sci 7141.

Happy Thanksgiving!

UNIT 4: BIO-MEDICINE AND RELIGION: Reconsidering the “Sacred” and the “Profane”
The final lecture sessions of the course introduce a variety of ways in which healthcare professionals encounter and respond to current issues and situations that are “religious” and “medical” in Wisconsin and how approaches in Religious Studies may shed light on them. Discussion sessions address 1) a new approach to religion that responds to new findings in science and health—some happening right here at UW! 2) new research that points toward religion’s roles in nursing care and a comparison with nursing in an African context revisited from Unit 2. Conversations in this unit aim to draw together our learning this term.

Lecture 26: Sickness and Health at the End of Life. Professional Staff and Religious Studies Program Intern from the Wisconsin Medical Society will join us. Read/view the materials at the links provided from the “Honoring Choices Wisconsin” website.

Lecture 27: Healing Native American Communities. Staff from Collaborative Center for Health Equity and Native American Center for Health Professions will join us. Reading: Barre Tolken, “Navajo” and viewing: “These Canoes Carry Culture.”

Discussion: The Brain, the Body, and Religion: New(?) Approaches to Religion and Health. See mini-lecture by Dr. Norman before reading.
Optional: Lutz, Slagter, Dunne, Davidson, “Attention Regulation and Monitory in Meditation”

Review notes and readings from lectures 26 and 27 and discussion.

Lecture 29: An Integrative Physician’s Practice, Dr. Adam Rindfleisch, Dept. of Family Medicine and Director, UW Integrative Medicine Program.
Reading: Gregory Plotnikoff in D. Rakel, “Integrative Medicine and Religion” and “Spirit and Soul: Educational Overview” from Dr. Rindfleisch’s manual for clinicians in Veteran’s Administration Hospitals.

Discussion: Religion Happens: Nurses’ Everyday Experiences of Religion in African and American Hospitals
See mini-lecture by Dr. Norman before reading.
Reading: Excerpts from Julie Livingston, Improvising Medicine: An African Oncology Ward in an Emerging Cancer Epidemic, and Wendy Cadge, Paging God: Religion in the Halls of Medicine, Ch. 6.

Quiz 5 is due no later than Friday at 5pm.

Reading: Atul Guwande, Epilogue from Being Mortal.

The Final Essay Exam 4 is due at the end of the designated examination period for this course in the Dropbox. There can be no extensions on the Final Essay.