

MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY

Health, Spirituality, and Religion

Spring Semester 2023

Comenius Hall Rm 111 Wednesday 6:00-9:00pm

Instructor: Ryan Goeckner, MA goecknerr@moravian.edu

Office Hours (via Zoom): Tuesdays, 12:00-3:00pm (link on Canvas)

Course Description:

This course will introduce students to the complex and dynamic relationship between religion and health from a cross-cultural perspective. Students will explore the impact of religious belief on multiple dimensions of health including physical and mental health as well as the implications of religious belief for patients and practitioners. Religious practitioners and their beliefs, as strong influencers on the social construction of reality, will be explored through conceptions of the body, bioethics, faith healing, and the relationship between Western medicine and colonialism.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to...

1. Explain what it means to say reality is socially constructed.
2. Explain how concepts such as health, illness, and disease are socially constructed.
3. Apply an understanding of the social construction of reality to the relationship between religion/spirituality and health.
4. Identify how religion impacts cultural understandings of disease etiology, conceptions of the body, healing modalities, perspectives on death, and cross-cultural interactions in a healthcare/public health context.
5. Understand the role that religion plays in community health as a social determinant of health.
6. Contrast a Western allopathic approach to health with those of religious communities explored in class.
7. Explain the explanatory role that religion can play in understanding health/disease.

Course Requirements:

Written Reflections (5, 75%): Throughout the semester, students will respond to brief prompts reflecting on the content covered in the course. They will synthesize their experiences throughout the course with their own understandings of health, highlighting the importance of a critical perspective to cross-cultural interactions. These assignments are expected to be 2-3 pages in length. Additional requirements will be provided via Canvas and in-class instruction.

Participation (10%): It is highly unlikely that any student will do well in this class without actively participating during our in-class sessions. The nature of the content being discussed in this class requires an open-mindedness and curiosity that is most effectively explored with your

peers and myself through in-class discussion. For the most part, I will not lecture over the specifics of material to be completed outside of class. You are expected to prepare these materials before you come to class. All readings and other materials will be made available, free-of-charge, via Canvas.

Commonplace Book (10%): Throughout the semester, you will be required to complete a “commonplace book” that you will fill with thought-provoking, confusing, or illuminating quotes/passages from our readings. Your book should include **a minimum** of 30 entries by the end of the semester (15 to be completed prior to spring break and 15 after). More details about your book will be explained during class.

Attendance (5%): Students will be expected to attend all sessions of the class, to the best of their abilities. Each student is allowed two, unexcused absences without penalty. Any absence thereafter should be discussed with me to determine any potential makeup work. Attendance will be recorded through daily exit slips at the end of class.

All submissions will be turned in electronically on the course's Canvas page.

Classroom Technology Policy

I know that many students use laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices to take notes or access course materials during class. However, these devices can be a major distraction (for you and your peers) and a hindrance to good class discussion. There is an abundance of literature to support this claim, including a lot that disproves the effectiveness of multitasking.¹ Because I know many of you prefer to take notes and access readings on them, I will allow them. However, if I find they become distracting or a barrier to effective discussion, I hold the right to disallow them in class.

Furthermore, unauthorized cell phone use in class is prohibited. If you need to take a call or respond to an emergency text (I understand that sometimes it's necessary), please step out of class.

I would also strongly suggest taking notes by hand (you learn better when you do!) and to print and annotate your readings if possible. There are many ways to save pages when printing readings, please ask me if you'd like some tips!

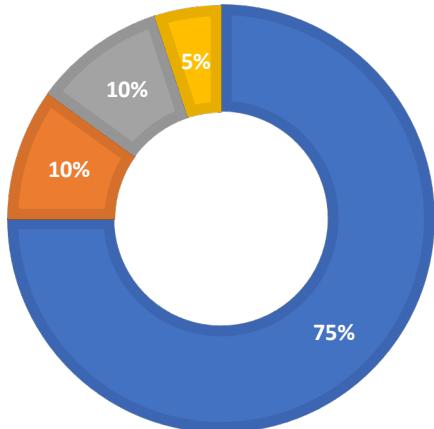
¹ Sana, F., Weston, T., Cepeda, N. J. (2013). Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers. *Computers & Education*, 62, 24-31. Ravizza, S. M., Uitvlugt, M. G., & Fenn, K. M. (2016). Logged in and zoned out: How laptop internet use relates to classroom learning. *Psychological Science*, 1-10. Leroy, S. (2009). Why is it so hard to do my work? The challenge of attention residue when switching between work tasks. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 109, 168–181.

Grading:
Grading Scale

94-100 = A
90-93 = A-
87-89 = B+
84-86 = B
80-83 = B-
77-79 = C+
74-76 = C
70-73 = C-
67-69 = D+
64-66 = D
60-63 = D-
<60 = F

GRADE BREAKDOWN

■ Reflections	■ Participation
■ Commomplace Book	■ Attendance



Statement of Academic Integrity

All students should become familiar with the [Academic Code of Conduct](#). As we develop a community of ideas in this course it is important that we all adequately acknowledge the sources of the ideas and knowledges we will engage with in this class. These include not only the authors of texts used in this class but also your instructors and classmates. If you ever have any questions regarding plagiarism or where to draw the line between your own thoughts and those of others, please ask the instructor for this course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Moravian University is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or you think you may have a disability) and, as a result, you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the institution's programs or services, contact the Accessibility Services Center (ASC) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with ASC. The ASC works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without the student's permission. To contact the Accessibility Services Center (ASC), located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, call 610-861-1401, or email asc@moravian.edu.

Bias, Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation, and Sexual Misconduct (Including Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Stalking, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Exploitation)

Moravian University faculty are committed to providing a learning environment free from harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment/violence under Title IX. Should a

student disclose a concern of this nature, the faculty member is obligated to inform the Executive Director for Equity and Compliance (Title IX Coordinator), who will assist the student in determining support measures and resolution options. Reports can be made online anytime at www.moravian.edu/titleix. Fully confidential reporting options include the University Chaplains and professionals in the Counseling and Health Centers. Survivors are encouraged to seek immediate assistance by contacting the Advocates at (484) 764-9242. For more information, including grievance procedures, please view the Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-Discrimination Policy at www.moravian.edu/policy.

Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Read	Watch/Listen	Complete
Wk 1: 1/16-22	Course Introduction What is religion? What is health?	Corbett Hemeyer Ch.1 Helman Ch. 2	Anthropology of Religion	
Wk 2: 1/23-29	Religion and the Social Construction of Reality Triad of Realization	Wesch 6.2	The Matrix and the Social Construction of Reality American Circumcision	
Wk 3: 1/30-2/5	The Culture of Western Allopathic Medicine	Gordon 1988 Lupton 2012, Intro		Reflection 1 Due
Wk 4: 2/6-2/12	Religion as a Social Determinant of Health	Idler 2014 and 2021		
Wk 5: 2/13-19	Religion and Infectious Disease COVID-19	Lorea 2020 Lorea et al. 2022		Reflection 2 Due
Wk 6: 2/20-26	Religious bodies Religion and sport	MacAloon 2006		Turn in commonplace books

Wk 7: 3/6-12	Belief and Ethics in Healthcare			Reflection 3 Due
Wk. 8: 3/13-19	Religion and altered states of consciousness	Pollan 2018, Ch2 Bourguignon 2015	The Native American Church and the Sacrament of Peyote	
Wk. 9: 3/20-26	Faith healing Academic perspectives	Apud and Romaní 2020 Csordas 1997, Intro		
Wk. 10: 3/27-4/2	Class Cancelled!			
Wk. 11: 4/3-9	Faith healing Case Studies	Abramson 1999 Chavez 2021	Holy Ghost People Libera Nos	Reflection 4 Due
Wk. 12: 4/10-16	Colonizing health and medical missionaries	Kelm 1999 Ch1 MacLeod and Lewis		
Wk. 13: 4/17-23	Religion and death Palliative Care	Stevenson 2015		
Wk. 14: 4/24-30	Religion and death Near death experience	Fox 2002, Ch1 Shushan 2018, Ch1		Reflection 5 Due Turn in commonplace books