Syllabus

Healers and Mediums

1168-REL3185 RVC 83394

General Information

Professor Information

Instructor:
Mary Lou Pfeiffer
Office:
DM 239A-MMC or ACI 211-BBC, The Honors College
Office Hours:
By appointment
Phone:
Course Description And Purpose

This online course investigates healing through mediumship, channeling, PSI (paranormal psychological phenomena), shamans, animals and plants and offers a unique experience through alternative global practices that are studied through the use of texts, electronic readings, video streaming, art and resources information. In addition, the skeptic viewpoint that questions the validity of such healing and PSI experiences is included. An overview of accepted global alternatives in health and religious practices of categories that were considered taboo in Western medicine for many years, are currently being investigated and implemented by institutions of higher learning, universities and research laboratories in the US and world-wide. "Healers and Mediums" (through religious and cultural practices) treat diseases, maladies, and physical-emotional-spiritual problems encountered by human beings. Many treatments have been used for hundreds or thousands of years, and lie outside the normative practice of Western science, technology and medical practices.

Course Objectives

The course exposes the students to an overview of healing types from some global religious practices and rituals that usually occur outside the mainstream medical normative standards in the US and Europe. The epistemology takes form through the use of textbooks, media viewing, live discussion exercises, explanations and exams.

GLOBAL LEARNING COURSE OBJECTIVES (GLI)

This course complies with the global learning initiatives at FIU: Global Learning Outcomes:
Global Awareness- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic and other values) in diverse cultural contexts, presented through the use of texts and global cultural systems (historically) that exist to healing humanity.
Global Perspective- Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of a deeper and broader sense of healing on Earth- economically, politically, sociologically, technologically and/or, and inter-culturally. Global Engagement- Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems and be able to articulate the causes and contributions to these problems through the paradigm of aesthetics, values and authority. Appropriate assignments are designated GLI on the course schedule for assignments and assessments. In the GLI, the diversity of students may be displayed to demonstrate the variety of global learning. Students will participate in a pre-course survey at the onset of the class followed by a post-course solution survey.

Upon successful completion of this course for the GLI and objectives through readings, media presentations, active learning and exam exercises, the student should:

1. Define the terms “healers” and “mediums,” and describe alternative methods used by healers, mediums and shamans globally, using the glossary provided for this course that includes ethnobotany, animals as healers. GLI
2. Distinguish the global perspectives that have shaped the trends and systems of diverse cultures in healing methods (like shamanism and reincarnation or past-life regression) from the past and through current concepts GLI
3. Recognize patterns of evolutionary change from rituals and practices that may reshape the future while preserving the traditions of aesthetics and cultural values of the past that include animals in hunting societies and for healing purposes GLI
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural and cross-cultural dynamics involved in these alternative methods of healing GLI
5. Define skepticism and the terminology or glossary terms that accompany the skeptic viewpoints in terms of PSI. GLI
6. Gain an appreciation and explain in definitive terms the diversity of life on Earth as well as an acceptance of various ways used to heal the maladies of the body from a global viewpoint using plants (ethnobotany) and animals in healing; some of these methods lay outside the current medical practices in the USA and Europe where pharmacology is developed. GLI
7. Fulfill research requirements (PPT, media or paper presentation) that involve active contact with global forms of healing as methodologies GLI

Relate the objectives for problem solving from healing methodologies is demonstrated in the “pre-course survey” at the onset of the course, and “post” survey after the course is completed.

Course Overview

The texts include a first-hand account of healing and paranormal phenomena written by Miamian Philip Smith, *Walking Through Walls, A Memoir*. Shamans, possibly the oldest of known healers on Earth in religious and cultural communities, and many of their practices are presented in Piers Vitebsky's *Shamanism* and another memoir, *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman* by Malidoma Patrice Somé. Excerpts from *The Believing Brain* by Michael Shermer and information from James Randi present the skeptic viewpoint. *Life Before Life* by renowned physician Jim B. Tucker, MD explores reincarnation. Please note: none of the texts used in the course are novels. All are non-fiction works.

DVD's (videos), electronic readings and PPT’s with excerpts about ‘animals as healers enhance the course. These are coupled with nature/Earth-based religions that use alternative healing methodologies. Some ethnobotany and American tribal peoples use of plants are examined along with the ancient Chinese practice of acupuncture and acupressure, and there is a section on Spiritualism in the United States (US).

Professor Biography

Prof. Mary Lou Pfeiffer:

- Holds advanced degrees: LL.M in Intercultural Human Rights from St. Thomas University School of Law and MA in Religion from Florida International University;
- Faculty Fellow, Full-time Senior Instructor in The Honors College at FIU;
- Her undergraduate degrees include religious studies, biology (minor-geology) and allied health breast care;
- Owns and operates an art glass studio specializing in stained/etched glass, stone and wood sculpting;
- Studied architectural glass in Germany with renowned glass artists and sculpting with Elliot Miller;
Her specialty areas include human rights law (rights of women, the child, internally displaced persons/refugees, and global indigenous peoples) and North American Indian cultures;

- Attended the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights for Indigenous Working Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland for several years;
- Her research areas encompass human rights, indigenous sacred sites, the Miami Circle and the Tequesta village in Miami, earth ethics, and studies involving breast cancer and asbestosis;
- Completing a project of her uncle's original "V" mail letters from WWII, and two current manuscripts - the Miami Circle, and a work from her life as the wife of a Naval fighter pilot who participated in a "seagull society" during the Vietnam years;
- Served as Past President of the Women's Studies Board, participates in the Pre-Professional Advisement and Evaluation Committee (PPAEC) and is a member of the Vice Provost Council at Biscayne Bay Campus;
- Is a recipient of the Alumni Torch Award at FIU, the Bronze Torch Society and has received two Outstanding Service Awards from Religious Studies;
- Has two sons- avid surfers, one is a Miami-Dade Country paramedic firefighter and the other a chef and café owner on Oahu; and 5 grandchildren;
- Her “other” family includes 2 dogs, a cat, an Umbrella cockatoo and an aviary of finches;
- Her home on a lake is a designated National Wildlife Habitat.

### Important Information

### Policies

Please review the [policies page](#) as it contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU and additional information on the standards for acceptable netiquette important for online courses.

### Technical Requirements & Skills

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the "What's Required" page to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our [technical requirements page](#) for additional information.

### Accessibility And Accommodation

Obtain more detailed information about the [specific limitations with the technologies](#) used in this course.

Review [Blackboard's Accessibility Commitment](#) for more information.

For additional assistance please contact our [Disability Resource Center](#).

### Course Prerequisites
The course does not have any prerequisites.

**Proctored Exam Policy**

Please note that the information contained in this section applies only if your course requires a proctored exam.

Through a careful examination of this syllabus, it is the student’s responsibility to determine whether this online course requires proctored exams. Please visit our Student Proctored Exam Instructions webpage for important information concerning proctored exams, proctoring centers, and important forms.

**Textbook**

![Walking Through Walls: A Memoir](image1)

**Walking Through Walls: A Memoir (Required)**
Philip Smith
1416542949
9781416542940

![Of Water and the Spirit](image2)

**Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman (Required)**
Malidoma Patrice Some
Penguin Books, 1994
ISBN 10: 0140194967
Shamanism (Required)
Piers Vitebsky
University of Oklahoma Press, 2001
0806133287
9780806133287

Life Before Life
Jim B. Tucker, M.D.
St. Martin's Griffin, 04/01/2008
ISBN-10: 031237674X
Book Info. You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore.
Additional Notes

Expectations Of This Course

This is an online course, meaning that the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course; in fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make them more demanding for some students.

Electronic information: DVD’s. PDF’s. PPT’s and glossaries are listed on the weekly syllabus below and in folders on the homepage. These complement the required readings and topics for each section: 1) Introduction, 2) PSI and Healing Through Mediums, 3) Shamans, 4) Skeptics

Students are expected to:
- Review the how to get started information located in the course content
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers
- Review and follow the course calendar
- Return an electronically signed form in Week 1 that you have reviewed the folders in the course content, syllabus, and course schedule and your computer is compatibility for submitting material online. All course assignments and assessments must be submitted through the course itself to receive credit for completion.
- Participate in the pre-course survey and the post solutions at the close of the course for those who wish to use the course as part of their global learning initiative.
- Review the 24-hour clock that is used in this course, rather than the AM/PM, 12-hour time listing. Required work: discussions-quizzes-exams-assignments are due at 23:59, that is prior to midnight unless otherwise stated.

## Academic Honesty And Plagiarism FIU Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellence in teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Academic misconduct includes:**

- **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations or other work; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Cheating violates both University and College codes.

- **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source, and the re-presentation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.

- **Unacceptable behavior** – Students will be disciplined accordingly if they show repeated or egregious disrespect for classmates or instructors or are disruptive.

## Course Detail

### Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via messages. An early warning system exists that will send a message directly to you if you miss an assignment, assessment or discussion; a zero is
assigned for the missed work. No make-ups will be accepted unless discussed in advance of the due date and verified by the professor.

The message feature is a private, internal Blackboard only communication system. Users must log on to the blackboard system to send/receive/read messages. There are no notifications in Blackboard to inform users when a new message has been received; therefore, it is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

This is the best method to communicate with your instructor privately.

**Discussion Forums**

There are 8 discussions posted for grading and two live chats. Each student will post her/his comments for the topic listed and then respond to at least four other students' postings. Discussions and chats are graded according to content of the original post and responses on a 10-point scale; 10 points are awarded for the discussion and responses; deductions are awarded according to the quality of the posted information responses. [Review the Discussion Rubric below]

Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

Students are also required to know the expectations or "netiquette" that pertains to the discussion board. Students who abuse this forum by making harassing, inappropriate or abusive statements will be removed and receive a zero (0). Remember, your participation is key to connecting with other students. Further, often it is the deciding factor between receiving a higher or lower grade at the end of the term.

**Discussion Rubric:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Earned / Criteria</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Promptness and Initiative</strong></td>
<td>Responds with civility in a timely manner that is consistent with the required deadlines for each topic; reads all others postings and replies accordingly to others postings; demonstrates initiative</td>
<td>Responds to discussion often later than the required date; reads at least half of the postings and responds to less than the required replies</td>
<td>Responds to postings several days after due date; limited reading of others postings; limited replies</td>
<td>Occasional responses to topics; very limited reading of others postings; few replies</td>
<td>Does not respond to most topics; rarely participates in reading others postings; rarely replies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Correctness of Post</strong></td>
<td>Excellent grammar use with few misspelled words</td>
<td>Few errors in grammar; occasional misspelled words</td>
<td>Some errors in grammar and spelling</td>
<td>Many grammar and spelling errors</td>
<td>Poor grammar and spelling</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance of Post</strong></td>
<td>Consistent with topic presentation; adds references not found in</td>
<td>Frequent posts related to discussion topic; some posts</td>
<td>Occasionally posts are “off” topic</td>
<td>Most posts do not relate to topic; minimal expression</td>
<td>Little if any expression of topic ideas; very limited content</td>
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<td>Points Earned / Criteria</td>
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<td>are not relevant</td>
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<tr>
<th>Expression in the Post</th>
<th>Expresses opinions and ideas clearly and in a concise manner</th>
<th>Opinions are stated sometimes with lack of topic expression</th>
<th>Unclear connection to topic with minimal expression</th>
<th>Does not express ideas with clarity</th>
<th>Not to be determined</th>
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<th>Contribution to the Learning Community</th>
<th>Motivates the group discussion and demonstrates awareness of the community needs</th>
<th>Frequent attempts to present viewpoints and some community awareness</th>
<th>Occasionally posts a meaningful reflection</th>
<th>Appears indifferent to communal needs; does not develop ideas for the community</th>
<th>Makes no effort to involve the learning community</th>
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Discussion Rubric is based on the California State University at Hayward: Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions and altered accordingly to fit this course.

**Quizzes**

Each quiz is open for a 4-day period, (one attempt) from 08:00 of the first day until 23:59 on the 4th day. (US Eastern Standard Time or Daylight Savings Time). Each student has one attempt at each quiz. Once you open the quiz, you will have the allotted time to save each response and submit all your answers. (Remember not to touch the computer Back button within Blackboard - use arrows to scroll backward.) Please study all the relevant course material for each week. You will need to complete the quizzes and exams by yourself. Any interaction of any form with others will constitute cheating, and may have serious repercussions.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact FIU Online Support Services.

**Exams**

Exams are intended to assess your comprehension, retention, and knowledge of the materials covered in electronic postings, videos and required texts. The midterm exam is open for a 5-day period, (one attempt) from 08:00 of the first day until 23:59 on the 5th day.

**Make-up Policy**
No make-up assignments, quizzes or exams are accepted. All assigned material and due dates are indicated in the syllabus and a zero (0) grade will be assessed for any late or missed coursework. If some unforeseen emergency arises that prevents you from taking an exam or handing in an assignment, documentation must be provided (i.e., a summons for jury duty, letter on Physicians letterhead stating explicitly why student could not hand in assignment/take exam. This documentation will be verified by contacting the appropriate individuals. Once verified, a decision to proceed will be made by the Professor.

Essays/ Critical Book Review

All essays and critical book reviews are written in academic style (3rd person) unless otherwise stated and must contain proper referencing for quotations or concepts from any author or resource. Double-line space your essays; you may include a title page (not required), date, course and your name; properly list all references, even in the case of a personal reflection essay. The first essay will be returned to you with tracked changes for your information that allows a dialogue between us to occur, and offers to each an example of what I expect in written work. There are information sheets posted in the course content for “Academic Papers/Essay Recommendations,” “Critical Book Reviews” and a “Grading Rubric.” For the critical book review, the book list is posted under the Assignment Dropbox, Critical Book Review Part A. Again, as a reminder, no late work past the due date and time will be accepted!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Achievement / Criteria</th>
<th>Developing (12 points)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (15 points)</th>
<th>Commendable (18 points)</th>
<th>Distinguished (20 points)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis/topic development</td>
<td>Demonstrates lack of mastery in developing original ideas and inappropriate analysis of the topic with little clarity or relevance</td>
<td>Infrequently demonstrates a lack of mastery in developing original ideas and appropriate analysis of the topic; lacks some clarity and relevance</td>
<td>Demonstrates mastery in developing original ideas and appropriate analysis with some clarity and relevance</td>
<td>Consistently demonstrates mastery in developing ideas and appropriate analysis with clarity and relevance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Demonstrates lack of logic in the arrangement of thoughts and ideas without well-developed paragraphs</td>
<td>Sometimes demonstrates a lack of logic in the arrangement of thoughts and ideas in disorganized paragraphs</td>
<td>Often demonstrates logic in the arrangement of thoughts and ideas with fairly well-developed paragraphs</td>
<td>Consistently demonstrates logic in the arrangement of thoughts well-developed paragraphs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Mechanics</td>
<td>Demonstrates lack of proper usage, spelling, punctuation, pronoun-modifier match, noun/verb agreement</td>
<td>Demonstrates lack of proper usage, spelling, punctuation, pronoun-modifier match, noun/verb agreement</td>
<td>Demonstrates mastery of proper usage, spelling, punctuation, pronoun-modifier match, noun-verb agreement with few errors</td>
<td>Consistently demonstrates proper use of punctuation, match, noun-verb agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Style</td>
<td>Consistently lacks proper sentence structure; uses clichés, slang terms, or offensive language</td>
<td>Uses inappropriate sentence structure; some clichés, slang terms</td>
<td>Uses improper sentence structure with some clichés, slang terms</td>
<td>Consistently improper sentence structure</td>
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Levels of Achievement / Criteria

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<th>Developing</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Commendable</th>
<th>Distinguished</th>
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<td>(12 points)</td>
<td>(15 points)</td>
<td>(18 points)</td>
<td>(20 points)</td>
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Citations/References

- **Developing (12 points)**
  Lacks documentation of referencing material in the required format

- **Satisfactory (15 points)**
  Occasionally presents valid documentation of referencing material, sometimes without the required format

- **Commendable (18 points)**
  Presents valid documentation of referencing material in required format, but occasionally may not list every resources

- **Distinguished (20 points)**
  Consistently presents valid documentation of all referencing material in the required format

Adobe Connect Pro Meeting

Adobe Connect is an online meeting room where you can interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, sharing files, chatting, broadcasting live audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct live chats.

Requirements for using Adobe Connect:

- Disable any window pop-up blocker.
- **Adobe Flash Player** is required to successfully run your Adobe Connect meeting. You can [test your computer](Adobe Connect (Tutorials & Help)) to make sure your computer and network connections are properly configured to provide you with the best possible Adobe Connect meeting experience.
- Use of a combination of a headset and microphone with USB connection is recommended to ensure quality sound and reduce technical difficulties.

Reference [Adobe Connect (Tutorials & Help)](Adobe Connect (Tutorials & Help)) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting rooms and recordings.

Grading

Please Note That There Are Discussions, Assignments And Assessments Due During The Same Week, Same Date And Time. A Listing Brief Of Assigned Work Is Attached At The End Of The Course Calendar. All Assignments And Assessments Are Due At 12:00 (That’s Noon, Not in the Evening) On the Appointed Day, Usually Sunday Unless Otherwise Stated.

### Course Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th># Of Items</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Written Essay assignment - #1 (Critical review of PSI website, 250-word</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>minimum, GLI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written Essay Assignments #2- #5 (300 word minimum, GLI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graded Discussions (6), Live chats (2) GLI</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes GLI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timed Midterm Exam GLI</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay Critical Book Review Part A- abstract- 200 words, essay outline,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>bibliography 10%; Part B- Review, 1,500 words 20%, GLI</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>Above 93</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 83</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
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<td>76 - 70</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>84 - 86</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60</td>
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