Professor Information

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Please use Blackboard messages

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 and maladies using physical-emotional-spiritual encounters. Many practices have been used for hundreds or thousands of years, and lie outside the normative acceptance of Western science, technology and medical practices.

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. Life Before Live by Jim B. Tucker presented reincarnation experiences. Skeptics and skepticism are introduced to offer the counterpoint to the PSI viewpoint. DVD's/videos and electronic readings enhance the texts. PPT’s are presented in each module, most with my explanations for the slide presentations.
Electronic readings include excerpts about animals as healers (from Susan McElroy and Jeffrey Masson), nature and Earth-based religions that use alternative healing methodologies, American tribal peoples use of plants, (ethnobotany), a look into Tribal vision quests, the ancient Chinese practice of acupuncture and acupressure, herbal remedies, Taoist alchemy, and Spiritualism in the US.

Students use texts, online readings, videos, art, music, resources and web links to pertinent sites.

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

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 A (Global Awareness), B (Global Perspective), and C (Global Engagement), respectively on the schedule. The global learning objectives are incorporated into the weekly course schedule and are listed as A, B, and/or C in the assignments of the course schedule. The diversity (locale of students’ origins if known and with permission from the students)) within the course will be anonymously used in the Global Initiatives. For example, to demonstrate the diversity of 30 students: 10- North America, 8- Latin/South America including the Caribbean, 3- Africa, 5 European, 4- Asia. 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 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 (A, B)
2. Distinguish the global perspectives that have shaped the trends and systems of diverse cultures in healing methods from the past and through current concepts (A, B)
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 (A, B)
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural and cross-cultural dynamics involved in these alternative methods of healing (A, B, C)
5. Define skepticism and the terminology or glossary terms that accompany the skeptic viewpoints (A, B)
6. Students will gain an appreciation for 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 (A, B)
7. Fulfill research requirements (PPT, media or paper presentation) that involve active contact with global forms of healing as methodologies (C); this requirement relates the pre-problem solving from the beginning survey and post- solutions upon completion of the course. This then becomes a determinant for the global initiatives.
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;
- Currently a Fellow and 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 American tribal cultures, biomedical ethics, earth ethics, human rights law (rights of women, the child, internally displaced persons/refugees, and global indigenous peoples);
- Attended the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights for Indigenous Working Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland for several years;
- Her research areas encompass human rights, biomedical ethics, indigenous sacred sites, 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 taken from her life as the wife of a Naval fighter pilot who participated in a "seagull society" during the Vietnam years;
- Is a recipient of the Alumni Torch Award at FIU and has received two Outstanding Service Awards from Religious Studies;
- Has two sons (both avid surfers): one is a paramedic firefighter and the other, a chef and owner of a cafe on Oahu, and five grandchildren.

Her “other” family includes 2 dogs, 2 cats, an Umbrella cockatoo, and an aviary of finches.

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.

Textbook

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

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

*Life Before Life*
Jim B. Tucker,
St. Martin’s Griffin, 9780312376741

You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).

**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 12:00, that is 12 PM noon, not midnight.

**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 representation 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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Earned / Criteria</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<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>
</tr>
<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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance of Post</strong></td>
<td>Consistent with topic presentation; adds references not found in the course</td>
<td>Frequent posts related to discussion topic; some posts are not relevant</td>
<td>Occasionally posts are “off” topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points Earned / Criteria</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expression in the Post</strong></td>
<td>Expresses opinions and ideas clearly and in a concise manner</td>
<td>Opinions are stated sometimes with lack of topic expression</td>
<td>Unclear connection to topic with minimal expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution to the Learning Community</strong></td>
<td>Motivates the group discussion and demonstrates awareness of the community needs</td>
<td>Frequent attempts to present viewpoints and some community awareness</td>
<td>Occasionally posts a meaningful reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 12:00 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](#).

**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 12:00 on the 5th day.

**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, date, course and include your surname on each page with a page number; 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 is listed, Many Lives, Many Masters by Dr. Brian Weiss, MD. 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>
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<tbody>
<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 developing original ideas and appropriate analysis of the topic with some 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 in fairly well-developed paragraphs</td>
</tr>
<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>Consistently demonstrates mastery of proper usage, spelling, punctuation, pronoun-modifier match, noun/verb agreement with few errors</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 proper sentence structure without clichés, slang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citations/References</td>
<td>Lacks documentation of referencing material in the required format</td>
<td>Occasionally presents valid documentation of referencing material, sometimes without the required format</td>
<td>Presents valid documentation of referencing material in the required format or occasionally missing every resource</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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, etc). This documentation will be verified by contacting the appropriate individuals. Once verified a decision to proceed will be made by the Professor.

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.

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 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 headset and microphone with USB connection is recommended to ensure quality sound and reduce technical difficulties.

Reference 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.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Written Essay assignment- #1 (Critical review of PSI website, 250-word minimum, A &amp; B)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Written Essay Assignments #2, #3, #4, #5 (350 word minimum, A &amp; B)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Graded Discussions, 2 live chats (A, B, C)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Quizzes (A, B, C)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Timed Midterm Exams (A, B, C)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay Critical Book Review Part A- abstract- 200 words, essay outline, bibliography 5%; Part B- Review, 1,500-2,000 words 25%, (A, B, C)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Above 93</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 - 83</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 - 69</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 - 92</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>64 - 66</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 - 76</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>61 - 63</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 - 86</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 - 73</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60</td>
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