Rel 3162, RVAA [Summer A] Healers and Mediums, Fully Online
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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 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 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 two narratives, Life Before Life by James B. Tucker, and Many Lives, Many Masters by Brian Weiss, MD. DVD’s/videos and electronic readings enhance the texts. PPT’s are presented in each module.

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, and Spiritualism in the US.

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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
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.

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.

4. Demonstrate knowledge of the cultural and cross-cultural dynamics involved in these alternative methods of healing and how they may be incorporated into healing practices used today by many varying methodologies.

5. Define skepticism and the terminology or glossary terms that accompany the skeptics’ viewpoints.

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.

NOTE
THIS IS A SHORT SUMMER SESSION that requires similar reading, viewing, written material and assessments usually presented in a full 16-week semester; therefore, it is IMPERATIVE that you prepare your schedule accordingly to meet the rigorous schedule that has been compacted from 16 weeks into 6 weeks.

UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS
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.

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.

For detailed information about the technical requirements, please click here.

Accessibility And Accommodation
For detailed information about the specific limitations with the technologies used in this course, please click here.

For more information about Blackboard's Accessibility Commitment, click here.

For additional assistance please contact our Disability Resource Center.

Course Prerequisites
For information about prerequisites, click here.

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Religious Studies and University policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:
FIU Code of Academic Integrity –
http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html

Religious Observances
Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester you will not be available to complete course work; however, the list of due dates/times are listed so that you may submit assignments or assessments in advance.

Professor Biography
Prof. Mary Lou Pfeiffer:

- Holds advanced degrees: LLM in Intercultural Human Rights from St. Thomas University School of Law and MA in Religion from Florida International University;
- Currently a Faculty Fellow and full-time Senior Instructor in The Honors College at FIU; adjunct instructor in Religious Studies;
- 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 (known today as the UNPFII);
- Her research areas encompass human rights, biomedical ethics, indigenous sacred sites, gender issues 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 participating in a “seagull society” as the wife of a Naval fighter pilot during the Vietnam years;
- Sits the Advisory Board for Arts and Sciences, the Women’s Studies Advisory Board, 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 on Oahu’s north shore, and five grandchildren.
- Her “other” family includes 2 dogs, a cats, an Umbrella cockatoo, and an aviary of finches.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

TEXT BOOKS
-Shamanism, Piers Vitebsky, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 9780806133287
-Walking Through Walls, Philip Smith, Artia Books, 9781416542940
-Life Before Life, Jim B. Tucker, St. Martin’s Griffin, 9780312376741
-Many Lives, Many Masters, Brian L. Weiss, Simon and Schuster, 9780671657864

COURSE DETAILS
Coursework consists of the following:
1. Written assignments: 3 essays (300 words or more), 25%; and listed as Essays #1-#3; an outline and abstract of 200 words for the critical book review that
replaces a final exam, 5%; critical book review: 700-1000 words, 30%; total written assignments = 60%

2. Assessments: 3 quizzes (matching/multiple choice), 10%; 1 midterm exam, (matching, multiple choice), 20%; total assessments 30%

3. Discussions (4) 10%

4. Critical Book Review (See written assignments above)

Total percentage points for Summer “A” 100 %

DISCUSSIONS
4 discussions topics are listed. You are expected to post your initial response, then follow up with a respond to at least 3 others’ initial posts (total possible score for each discussion, 10 points). See the Discussion Rubric posted in Course Content. No late work for missing discussions, assignments or assessments will be accepted! All work must be submitted by the due date and time.

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!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: The instructor reserves the right to make any changes deemed necessary to the course regarding assignments, assessments and/or course information. Please note that the syllabus is listed in weekly increments, completion dates and times are included. Because this is an online course, it often requires more diligence than a classroom course. Check each assignment or assessment for due date and time (noon, 12:00 PM) to ensure you submit in a timely manner. A zero will be assigned to any item submitted late or missed. NO EXCEPTIONS unless a dire emergency occurs. There are no offerings for a reduced grade for late or missed assignments or assessments because you have the course requirements, due dates and times posted online! Reminder: I use a 24-hour clock; all assignments and assessments close at 12:00 PM [that is noon, not midnight] on the due date. Some musical presentations will be added for your listening pleasure that should be of interest.

GRADING
Grades are assigned with the following weights:
Discussions, 10%
Essays 25%
Midterm 20%
Quizzes 10%
Final critical book review (Part A- 5%, Part B- 30%) total 35%

Grading scale: 93 and above, A; 90-92 A-; 87-89 B+; 84-86 B; 81-83 B-; 77-80 C+; 74-76 C; 71-73 C-; 67-70 D+, 64-66 D; 61-63 D-, <61 F

SYLLABUS

Module 1-Healing Using Channelers, Mediums; PSI, Animals and Ethnobotany

Week 1 May 13-19
Read and view:
• Introduction, PPT presentation: “Healers and Mediums Introduction”
  (Note: there is one book mentioned in this introduction that is not used for the summer A session: Somé’s *Of water and the Spirit*…
• Glossary for New Age Religions and PSI

Written assignment-
• Introduce Yourself: Post student biography by May 19 at 12:00 PM (noon)
• Take the practice quiz to ensure your computer is compatible with the course
• Complete Essay #1 “Channelers and Mediums;” this is a personal reflection essay and can include 1st person narrative. Write your personal ideas regarding channelers and mediums to transmit information from other realms to a live person. The word count should be approximately 300, double-line spaced with references as in a bibliography, due May 19 at 12:00 PM (noon) submitted through the assignment drop-box tool by the due date and time.
• Use the electronic readings for your essay:

  Reading assignments
  • Vitebsky, *Shamanism* pp 6-77
  • Electronic PDF/Word documents to complete your first essay: 1) PSI PPT (there is no oral presentation for this PPT); 2) PSI glossary; 3) “Heaven to Earth,” the Leichtman/Cayce Interviews; 4) Association for Research and Enlightenment- ARE, Edgar Cayce Foundation; 5) New Age Glossary; 6) *Best Evidence*, information taken from Michael Schmicker’s book

Discussion #1
• Post “Any PSI experiences you or someone you know may have had.” Use the PSI glossary for defining a psychic experience; write your initial post and respond to 3 others posts; closes May 19 at 12:00 PM at 12:00 PM

Week 2 May 20-26

Reading assignments
• Vitebsky, pp 65-159;
• Electronic readings/PDF’s “In the House of Animals PDF (this material is for your information only and is not material used in quizzes nor on the midterm exam), from Susan McElroy’s *Animals as Healers* and Jeffrey Masson’s *When Elephants Weep* and “Healing Plants, Ancient Arts, Nature’s Medicine” by Emma Sans and Alice Micco Snow (PDF)

Quiz #1 (covers material from Week 1 electronic readings, PSI and New Age PPT’S, Vitebsky pp 6-77) opens May 23 at 08:00 AM, closes May 26 at 12:00 PM

Discussion #2 “How animals play a role in healing.” Write your initial comments; then respond to at least 3 others post; opens May 20, closes May 26 at 12:00 PM

Essay #2 Discuss the difficulties involved in becoming a shaman. Present your findings (from Vitebsky) in an essay of 300 words, due May 19 at 12:00 PM.

**Module 2 Psychic Healing**

Week 3 May 27- June 2 (Memorial Day Observed) May 27

Reading assignment
• Smith’s *Walking Through Walls, A Memoir*

Quiz #2: Material from week 2 Vitebsky and electronic readings from McElroy, Masson on animals, and healing plants from the PPT; opens May 30 at 08:00 AM, closes June 2 at 12:00 PM

Week 4 June 3- June 9
Discussion #3: On Lew Smith’s psychic healing abilities; write your initial post, then respond to at least 3 others; opens June 3 at 08:00 AM, closes June 9 at 12:00 PM

Midterm Exam over material presented in weeks 1-3 (100 points: multiple choice, matching and one short essay response), opens June 5 at 08:00 AM, closes June 9 at 12:00 PM.

Essay #3: Using plants (ethnobotany) in healing. Select one plant with healing powers, research it, and present your findings in an essay of 300 words, due June 9 at 12:00 PM. You may include an image of the plant.

Module 3 - Skeptics, Reincarnation
Week 5 June 10 - June 16

Reading assignment
- View DVD Secrets of the Psychics, Parts 1-IV
- Life Before Life by Jim B. Tucker, MD
- Many Lives, Many Masters by Dr. Brian Weiss, MD

Quiz #3 - Smith’s memoir and psychic healing; opens June 13 at 08:00 AM, closes June 16 at 12:00 PM

Discussion #4: Reincarnation? From Tucker’s book, post your initial response; then respond to at least 3 others. Opens June 10, closes June 16 at 12:00 PM

Module 4 Reincarnation and Past Life Regression
Week 6 June 17-21


Written assignment:
- Write an abstract of 200 words for your final book critique due June 18 at 12:00 PM
- Final, critical book review, 700-1000 words due June 21 at 12:00 PM