

HEALERS AND MEDIUMS 1125-REL3162VCC1125-51489

GENERAL INFORMATION • IMPORTANT INFORMATION • COURSE DETAIL • COURSE CALENDAR

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROFESSOR INFORMATION



Instructor:

Mary Lou Pfeiffer

Office Hours:

By appointment

E-mail:

[through course messaging](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This 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 skeptics 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 worldwide. "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 another memoir, *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman* by Malidoma Patrice Somé. *The Believing Brain* by Michael Shermer presents the

skeptics viewpoint regarding many of the healing methods and PSI material for the course. 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, 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. The 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 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 GA (A), GP (B), and GE (C), respectively on the weekly 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.

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 (GA, GP)
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)

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

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;
- Sits the Advisory Board for Arts and Sciences and is a recipient of the Alumni Torch Award at FIU; she 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, 2 cats, an Umbrella cockatoo, and an aviary of finches.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

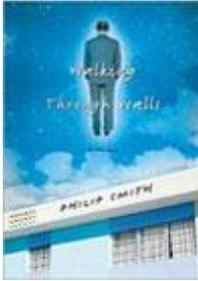
POLICIES

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.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

For information about prerequisites, [click here](#).

TEXTBOOK



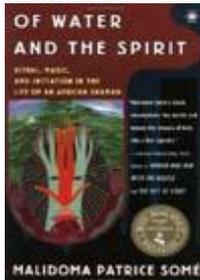
Walking Through Walls: A Memoir (Hardcover) (Required)

Philip Smith

Atria; First Edition edition (2008)

ISBN 10: 1416542949

ISBN 13: 9781416542940



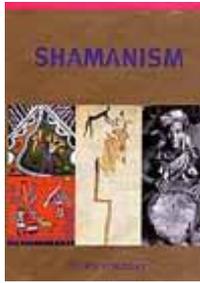
Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman(Required)

Malidoma Patrice Some

Penguin Books, 1994

ISBN 10: 0140194967

ISBN 13: 978-0140194968



Shamanism (Required)

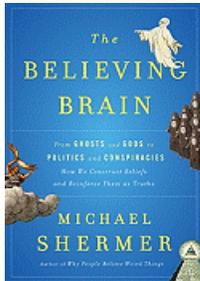
Piers Vitebsky

University of Oklahoma Press, 2001

ISBN 10: 0806133287

ISBN 13: 9780806133287

ISBN 13: 9780037389930



The Believing Brain (Required)

Michael Shermer

New York: Times Books

ISBN 13: 9780805091250

[Click here](#) to buy 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.

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.**

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.

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:

CATEGORY	1	5	8	10
Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion with limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic
Expression within the post	Does not express opinions or ideas about the topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated with occasional lack of connection to topic	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community; appears indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with the discussion	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic

Discussion Rubric altered from California State University at Hayward: Assessing Effectiveness of Student Participation in Online Discussions

QUIZZES

Each quiz is open for a 4-day period, (one attempt) from 08:00am of the first day until 12:00pm (noon) 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 08:00am of the first day until 12:00pm (noon) 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, 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

The Adobe Connect Pro Meeting is an online meeting room in which you can interact with your Professor and fellow students by sharing your computer, screens or files, chat, broadcast live audio and take part in other interactive online activities.

Requirements for using Adobe Connect Pro Meeting:

- Disable any window pop-up blocker.
- **Adobe Flash Player** is required to successfully run your Connect Pro meeting. You can **test your computer** to make sure that you are set up with all of the tools you will need to participate in the meeting.
- Use of a combination **headset and microphone** with USB connection is recommended to ensure quality sound and reduce technical difficulties.

Please [click here](#) for additional information on Adobe Connect (Tutorials & Help).

GRADING

COURSE REQUIREMENTS	WEIGHT
1 Written Essay assignment- #1 (Critical review of PSI website, 300-word minimum, A & B)	10%
4 Written Essay Assignments #2, #3, #4, #5 (400 word minimum, A & B)	15%
8 Graded Discussions, 2 live chats	10%
4 Quizzes	10%
1 Timed Midterm Exam	25%
Final Essay Critical Book Review Part A- abstract- 200 words, essay outline, bibliography 5%; Part B- Review, 1,500 words 25%, (A, B, C)	30%
Total	100%

LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE	LETTER GRADE	RANGE
A	Above 93	B-	80 - 83	D+	67 - 69
A-	90 - 92	C+	77 - 79	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 89	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	70 - 73	F	< 60

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 PM (THAT'S NOON, NOT IN THE EVENING) ON THE APPOINTED DAY, USUALLY SUNDAY UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

COURSE CALENDAR

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK	CONTENT	ASSIGNMENTS / ASSESSMENTS
<p>Week 1 Jan 7-13</p>	<p>Module 1: Introduction (Week 1)</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course Description - Course Objectives - Course Overview - Discussion Rubric - Academic Essay/Paper Guidelines 	<p>Required - Post Student Biography with a photo of yourself under the discussion board by Jan 13 at 12:00 PM</p> <p>Take the online practice quiz to ensure your computer is compatible with the course</p> <p>Return the signed agreement that you have read the course content and important folders by Jan 13 at 12:00 PM</p>
<p>Week 2 Jan 14-20 (MLKing Holiday Jan 14)</p>	<p>Module 2: PSI, Healing Through Mediums (Weeks 2-6)</p> <p>“New Age Information”</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Age PPT and Glossary - PSI Websites - Review the ARE (Association for Research and Enlightenment, Edgar Cayce Foundation); - PSI PPT - “Leichtman/Cayce Mediumistic Interviews” (electronic online reading), - Best Evidence (Michael Schmicker) - Begin Philip Smith’s <i>Walking Through Walls, A Memoir</i> 	<p>Discussion #1 due Jan 20 at 12:00</p> <p>Essay assignment #1 Website Critique due Jan 20 at 12:00 PM (250 word minimum)</p>
<p>Week 3 Jan 21-27</p>	<p>Required Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete Smith’s memoir <i>Walking Through Walls</i> <p>View “Spiritualism in the US” posted online in 4 parts (Part I-IV)</p>	<p>Quiz #1- New Age Concepts and glossary (PPT Week 2), opens Jan 24 at 08:00 AM, closes Jan 27 at 12:00 PM</p>

<p>Week 4 Jan 28-Feb 3</p>	<p>Required Reading: - Complete Smith's memoir</p>	<p>Live Chat #1 Thursday, Jan 31 20:00-21:00 (8-9PM) re: Psychic Healing</p> <p>Essay Assignment #2 due Feb 3 at 12:00 PM (Smith's Memoir)</p> <p>Discussion #2 due Feb 3 at 12:00 PM (Psychic healing)</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb 4- Feb 10</p>	<p>Required Viewing: Bill Moyers 4 part series, "Healing and the Mind" on Mind-Body-Spirit Healing, volume I-IV</p>	<p>Essay Assignment #3 due Feb 10 at 12:00 PM (Mind-body-spirit healing)</p> <p>Discussion #3 due Feb 10 at 12:00 PM (Mind- body-spirit healing)</p>
<p>Week 6 Feb 11- Feb 17</p>	<p>Required Reading- - PDF excerpts online from Susan McElroy's <i>Animals as Healers</i>, - Jeffrey Masson's <i>When Elephants Weep</i>," and - Healing Plants and Healing arts" by Emma Sans and Alice Snow</p>	<p>Quiz #2 PSI glossary and information- matching terms and definitions, opens Feb 14 at 08:00 AM, closes Feb 17 at 12:00 PM</p> <p>Discussion #4 due Feb 17 at 12:00 PM (Animals as Healers)</p>
<p>Week 7 & 8 Feb 18- Mar 3 (President's Day Feb 18)</p>	<p>Module 3: Shamans (Weeks 7-10)</p> <p>Required Reading: - <i>Shamanism</i> by Piers Vitebsky</p> <p>View: <i>Fire on the Mountain</i></p>	<p>Essay Assignment #4 due Feb 24 at 12:00 PM Alternative Healing methods</p> <p>Discussion #5 due Mar 3 at 12:00 PM (Shamans worldwide)</p>
<p>Week 9 Mar 4- Mar 10</p>	<p>Required Reading: - Complete Vitebsky's text - Begin Malidoma Patrice Somé's <i>Of Water and the Spirit</i></p>	<p>Midterm exam opens Mar 6 08:00 AM to Mar 10 at 12:00 PM; 48 multiple choice questions (randomized from a question date bank) and 1</p>

		Shamans, Weeks 2-8] Discussion #6- due Mar 10 at 12:00 PM (Shamanic trances and ethnobotany)
Week 10 Mar 11- 17 SPRING BREAK	Required Reading: - Complete Somé's <i>Of Water and the Spirit</i>	No assignments, no assessments during spring break
Week 11 Mar 18- Mar 24	Required Reading: - Begin Michael Shermer's <i>The Believing Brain</i>	Quiz #3 Shamans (Vitebsky PPT and text), opens Mar 21 at 08:00 AM, closes Mar 24 at 12:00 PM Essay assignment #5 (Somé's book) due Mar 24 at 12:00 PM Discussion #7 due Mar 24 at 12:00 PM (Somé's return to shamanism)
Week 12 Mar 25- Mar 31	Module 4: Skeptics (Weeks 12-15) Required Reading: - Michael Shermer's <i>The Believing Brain</i> View "Secrets of the Psychics" Parts I-IV (Randi the Great: skeptic James Randi) posted online	Live Chat - Shamans/Shamanism, Thursday Mar 28, 20:00-21:00 (8-9 PM) Quiz #4 Somé's book opens Mar 28 at 08:00 AM, closes Mar 31 at 12:00 PM
Weeks 13-14 Apr 1- Apr 14	Complete Shermer's book and "Secrets of the Psychics"; read PDF and articles on "Skeptics"	Abstract, Outline, Bibliography due April 14 at 12:00 PM Discussion 8 (Skeptics) due Apr 14 at 12:00 PM
Week 15 Apr 15-21	Complete outline and abstract (200 words) for Shermer's book; use at least 1 outside resource in supportive evidence	
Finals Apr 23-28	Final Critical Essay. 1500 words	Final Critical book review, 1,000 words (from...)

Flo Healers and Mediums Rel 3162 Spring 2013 Assignments/Assessments Due Dates

Student Biography with photograph due Jan 13 at 12:00 PM

Notification agreement (electronic signature) due Jan 13 at 12:00 PM

Discussion #1 Due Jan 20 at 12:00 PM (PSI)

Discussion #2 Due Feb 3 at 12:00 PM (Psychic Healing)

Discussion #3 Due Feb 10 at 12:00 PM (Mind-body-spirit healing)

Discussion #4 Due Feb 17 at 12:00 PM (Animals as healers)

Discussion #5 Due at Mar 3 at 12:00 PM (Shamans worldwide)

Discussion #6 Due Mar 10 at 12:00 PM (Shamanic trances and ethnobotany)

Discussion #7 Due Mar 24 at 12:00 PM (Somé's return to shamanism)

Discussion #8 Due Apr 14 at 12:00 PM (Skeptics)

Essay #1 (300 words) Due Jan 20 at 12:00 PM (Website Critique)

Essay #2 (300 words) Due Feb 3 at 12:00 PM (Smith's Memoir)

Essay #3 (400 words) Due Feb 10 at 12:00 PM (Mind-body-spirit healing)

Essay #4 (400 words) Due Feb 24 at 12:00 PM (Alternative Healing Methods)

Essay #5 (400 words) Due Mar 24 at 12:00 PM (Somé's Memoir)

Final essay abstract, outline, bibliography Due Apr 14 at 12:00 (*The Believing Brain*)

Final Course Critical Book Review Due Apr 23 at 12:00 PM (*The Believing Brain*)

Live Chats

Live Chat #1 Jan 31 from 21:00-22:00 (8-9 PM) Psychic Healing

Live Chat #2 Mar 28 from 21:00-22:00 (8-9 PM) on Shamans

Quizzes/Exams

Quiz #1 opens Jan 24 at 08:00 AM closes Jan 27 at 12:00 PM (New Age Concepts, PSI)

Quiz #2 opens Feb 14 at 08:00 AM closes Feb 17 at 12:00 PM (PSI)

Quiz #3 opens Mar 21 at 08:00 AM closes Mar 24 at 12:00 PM (Vitebsky)

Quiz #4 opens Mar 28 at 08:00 AM closes Mar 31 at 12:00 PM (Somé)

Midterm Exam opens Mar 6 at 08:00 AM, closes at Mar 10:00 PM (Weeks 2-8)

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