



Rel 3185 “Healers and Mediums”

Mary Lou Pfeiffer, LL.M., MA

Adjunct, Office DM 233- The Honors College 305-348-4100

Office hours (summer) by appointment only

Communication via Course Messages Online; if necessary <pfeiffer@fiu.edu>

Course Description And Purpose

This fully online course investigates healing through mediumship, channeling, PSI (paranormal psychological phenomena), shamans, animals and plants (ethnobotany) and offers a unique experience to explore some alternative global practices in that are studied through the use of texts, electronic readings, video streaming, art and other resource information. In addition, the skeptics viewpoint—questions regarding the validity of such healing—is included. An overview of accepted global alternatives in health and religious practices were often considered taboo in Western medicine for many years. Today these 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 (**these are not novels**) 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 one narrative, *Life Before Life* by James B. Tucker, DVD's/videos and electronic readings enhance the texts. PPT's are presented to supplement student learning. All texts, DVD's and electronic readings are required reading for the course.

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 vision quests from some American Indian groups, an overview of the ancient Chinese practice of acupuncture and acupressure, herbal remedies, and “spiritualism” in the US (the séances that attempt to contact the dead).

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:

- Define the terms “healers and mediums,” and describe alternative methods used by healers, mediums and shamans globally
- Distinguish the global perspectives that have shaped the trends and systems of diverse cultures in healing methods from the past and through current concepts
- 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
- 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.
- Define skepticism and the terminology or glossary terms that accompany the skeptics’ viewpoints.
- 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

Professor Biography - Prof. Mary Lou Pfeiffer

- Holds advanced degrees: LL.M (law) in Intercultural Human Rights from St. Thomas University School of Law and MA in Religious Studies from Florida International University;
- Currently a Faculty Fellow and Senior Instructor in The Honors College at FIU; adjunct instructor in Religious Studies
- 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;
- Specialty and research areas include American Indian cultures, biomedical and earth ethics, human rights law: rights of women, rights of the child, internally displaced persons/refugees, global indigenous peoples, the Everglades, gender issues and breast cancer.
- Attended the UN Sub-Commission on Human Rights for Indigenous Working Peoples in Geneva, Switzerland (known today as the UNPFII);
- 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;
- Served as past President of Women’s Studies Advisory Board, Friends of FIU’s Nature Preserve, and a member of FIU’s Vice Provost’s Council at BBC, and a Foundation Member of the Truman Little White House, Key West
- Is a recipient of the FIU Alumni Torch Award, the Bronze Torch Society and has received two Outstanding Service Awards from Religious Studies

- Her family included two sons- both avid surfers- one, a paramedic firefighter, the other a chef and café owner on Oahu, their wives and five grandchildren
- Her “other” family includes 2 dogs, 1 cats, an Umbrella cockatoo, and an aviary of finches

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.

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.

Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette 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](#)" webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

Accessibility And Accommodation

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

Please visit [Blackboard's Commitment Accessibility](#) webpage for more information.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

Course Prerequisites

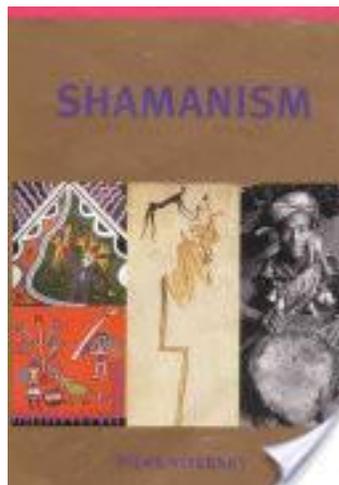
There are no prerequisites for this course.

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.

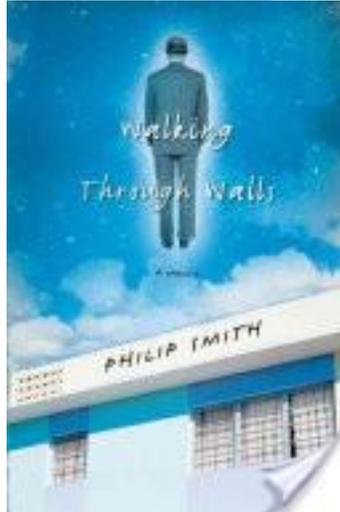
Textbook



Shamanism
Piers Vitebsky
University of Oklahoma Press, 2001

ISBN-10: 0806133287
ISBN-13: 9780806133287

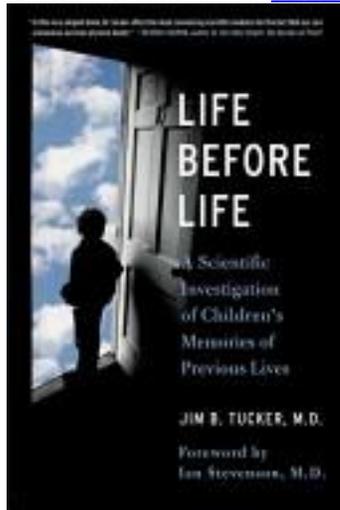
[Book Info](#). You may purchase your textbook online at the [FIU Bookstore](#).



Walking Through Walls

Philip Smith
Simon and Schuster, 09/16/2008
ISBN-10
ISBN-13

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



Life Before Life

Jim B. Tucker, M.D.
St. Martin's Griffin, 04/01/2008
ISBN-10: 031237674X
ISBN-13: 9780312376741

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

Expectations Of This Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses 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 with a photo of yourself in the appropriate discussion forum. [See student Bio Activity]
- **Take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with Blackboard.
- **Interact online** with instructor/s and peers and keep up with all assignments.
- **Review** and follow the course calendar. Any appropriate changes will be sent via course message and announcement.
- **Log in** to the course (at least several times per week during these SHORT Summer sessions); as noted above, as messages will be posted with any changes that occur throughout the summer.
- **Respond to** discussion boards, blogs and journal postings as required
- **Submit** assignments by their corresponding deadlines.
- **Use word doc or docx** to submit assignments, double line spaced in academic style writing. Some formats are not compatible and cannot be opened in Blackboard; thus your compliance is important. If you send an incompatible document, it will be returned with a grade deduction.

Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via **Messages**.

Messages is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to Blackboard to send, receive, or read messages. The Messages tool is located on the Course Menu, on the left side of the course webpage. It is recommended that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.

Visit our [Writing Resources](#) webpage for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

Course Details

Coursework consists of the following:

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: 800-900 words, 30%; total written assignments = 60%

Assessments: 4 quizzes (matching/multiple choice, True/False), 10%; 1 midterm exam, (matching, multiple choice), 20%; total assessments 30%

Discussions (4) 10%

Critical Book Review (See written assignments above)

Total percentage points for Summer “A” 100 (100%)

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

4 discussions topics are listed. You are expected to post your initial response by the due date and time; follow up with a respond to at least 3 others’ initial posts by the due date and time (total possible score for each discussion, 10 points). See the Discussion Rubric posted in Course Content. A zero grade is posted for late or missing assignments or assessments. All work must be

submitted by the due date and time (note: I use a 24-hour clock; most assessments and assignments are due by 23:55, 11:55 PM) usually on Sunday unless otherwise stated.

Quizzes

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](#).

Essays/critical Book Review

All essays, the critical book review and the abstract for the critical book review should be written in academic style (3rd person- avoid 2nd person pronoun [you]) unless otherwise stated list proper referencing for quotations or concepts from any author or resource. **Double-line space your essays, you may title your work but including a title page is not necessary; required is to list your name, date, course and all references even in the case of a personal reflection essay.** In this course, 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 books are listed in the Course Content. 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 with the objectives and review questions for each week; 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 to ensure you submit in a timely manner. **Again, 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! Again, a reminder: I use a 24-hour clock; all assignments and assessments close at 12:00 [noon, not midnight] on the due date.** Some musical presentations will be added for your listening pleasure that should be of interest

Grading

	Course Requirements	Number of Items	Weight
Discussions		4	10%
Essays		3	25%
Midterm		1	20%
Quizzes		4	10%
Final Critical book review		2 (Part A - 5%, Part B - 30%)	35%

Course Requirements				Number of Items	Weight
Total					100%
Letter	Range	Letter	Range	Letter	Range
A	Above 93	B-	81 - 83	D+	67 - 70
A-	90 - 92	C+	77 - 80	D	64 - 66
B+	87 - 89	C	74 - 76	D-	61 - 63
B	84 - 86	C-	71 - 73	F	< 61

Course Calendar

Weekly Schedule

Date	Tasks
	<p>Reading Assignments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction- read all the required material for the course under the “Introduction” folder ○ Study Glossary for Healers and Mediums in Religious Practices ○ PSI (Paranormal Psychological Phenomena) ○ Vitebsky, Shamanism pp 6-77 ○ Electronic PDF/Word documents to complete your first essay: 1) PSI PPT and 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 ○ PPT Reincarnation and Psychic Healing
<p>Module 1 <i>May 16 - May 22</i> Introduction to the course, Introduction to Paranormal Psychological Phenomena called “PSI”</p>	<p>View:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PPT presentation: “Healers and Mediums Introduction” ○ PPT on PSI <p>Written Assignment:</p> <p>Introduce Yourself: Post student biography with a photo of yourself by May 22 at 23:55 Please take the practice quiz to ensure your computer is compatible with the course</p> <p>Essay #1: “On Channelers and Mediums.” This is a personal reflection essay (it can be written in the 1st person narrative) that serves as part of the Global Learning Initiative;. Write your ideas regarding channelers and mediums as a method to transmit information from other realms to a live person. The word count should be approximately 300, double-line spaced with a list of references in a bibliography, due May 22 at 23:55 (submitted through the assignment dropbox tool); use any outside electronic readings or access websites like the Long Island Medium http://www.tlc.com/tv-shows/long-island-medium/</p> <p>Complete the pre-course global learning survey (Global Learning Initiative requirement) by Sunday, May 22 at 23:55</p>

Date

Tasks

Discussion #1: (submit under the Discussion Tool) your initial post for the topic: “A PSI experience you or someone you know may have had.” Use the PSI glossary for defining a psychic experience; **write your initial post due May 19 at 23:55; respond to 3 others posts by Sunday, May 22 at 23:55 (Review the discussion etiquette and Discussion Rubric**

Reading Assignments:

- Vitebsky, pp 65-159;
- Electronic readings/PDF’s “In the House of Animals PDF from Susan McElroy’s *Animals as Healers* and Jeffrey Masson’s *When Elephants Weep*
- “Healing Plants, Ancient Arts, Nature’s Medicine” by Emma Sans and Alice Micco Snow (PDF)
- Long Island medium: <http://www.tlc.com/tv-shows/long-island-medium/>

Module 2
May 23 - May 29
**“Healing through
Mediums, Animals
and Plants”**

Written Assignment:

- **Essay #2** Discuss the difficulties involved in becoming a shaman from Vitebsky’s text. Present your findings in an essay of 300 words or more **due May 29 at 23:55**
- **Discussion #2** “Do you feel animals can play a role in healing?” **Write your initial comments by Thursday, May 26 at 23:55; respond to at least 3 others post by Sunday, May 29 at 23:55**

Assessment:

Quiz #1: (covers material from Week 1 electronic readings, PSI and New Age PPT’S, Vitebsky pp 6-77; True/False, Multiple Choice, Matching items) **opens May 26 at 08:00, closes May 29 at 23:55**

Reading Assignment:

- Philip Smith’s *Walking Through Walls, A Memoir*

Module 3
May 30 – June 5
**(Memorial Day
Observed May 30)
“ Psychic Healing”**

Assessment

- **Quiz #2:** Material from week 2 Vitebsky and electronic readings from McElroy, Masson on animals, and healing plants from Sans/Snow PPT, multiple choice, True/False, matching); **opens June 2 at 08:00, closes June 5 at 23:55**

Date

Tasks

Reading Assignment:

- Complete Smith's *Walking Through Walls, A Memoir*
- Read Jim B. Tucker's *Life Before Life*
- Reminder- none of the books in this course are novels; they are either documented texts or personal memoirs

Module 4

June 6 - June 12

"Shamans,

Shamanism and Shamanic Healing"

Written Assignment:

Discussion #3: Regarding Lew Smith's psychic healing abilities: believable or not; write your initial **post by Thursday, June 9 at 23:55; respond to at least 3 others by Sunday, closes June 12 at 23:55**

Essay #3: Using plants (ethnobotany) in healing. Select one plant from the list the following list of those with healing powers: belladonna, alfalfa, mint (hyssop), sage, St. John's wort; acai, lemon grass (Yerba Luisa), hoodia, fenugreek, tea tree oil, ginseng; research it, and present your findings in an academic style essay of 300 words. Please include an image of your selection with your essay; **due Sunday, June 7 at 23:55.**

Assessment:

Midterm Exam: (material presented in weeks 1-3, 100 points: multiple choice, matching, True/False items), **opens Thursday, June 9 at 08:00, closes Sunday, June 12 at 23:55**

Reading Assignment:

Module 5

June 13 - June 19

"Skeptics, Past Life Regression-Reincarnation"

- View DVD Secrets of the Psychics, Parts 1-IV and electronic information from the skeptics
- Complete *Life Before Life* by Jim B. Tucker, MD
- Skeptics Viewpoint
- Begin reading selection for your Critical Review from the list provided in the Course Content

Written Assignment:

Discussion #4: "Reincarnation: is it believable?" From Tucker's book *Life Before Life*; **post your initial response by Thursday, June 16 at 23:55; respond to at least 3 others by Sunday, June 19 at 23:55**

Date

Tasks

Assessment:

Quiz #3: Smith's memoir , Tucker's book and psychic healing; **opens Thursday, June 16 at 08:00, closes Sunday, June 19 at 23:55**

Reading assignment for final book critique:

Written Assignment:

Review shamans PPT and Vitebsky's book

Abstract of 200 words for your final book critique (Critical book review instructions in the Course Content) **due Monday June 15 at 23:55**

Final critical book review, 500-700 words with references **due Friday, June 19 at 12:00 (Noon)**

Module 6

June 20 - June 24

"Past Life

**Regression-
Reincarnation"**

Assessment:

Quiz #4: Past life regression, reincarnation, Vitebsky's book, skeptics material (matching, True/False, multiple choice), **opens Tuesday, June 16 at 08:00, closes Friday, June 19 at 23:55**

Complete the post-course survey for the Global Learning Initiative by **June 24 at 20:00**

Grades are due June 27