

HEALTH, HEALING AND RELIGION: COMPARATIVE VIEWS

Term 2, 2023

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Lecture: online via Avenue to Learn

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Course Description

In this course we will consider how religion and healing are interconnected, looking at examples located mostly outside of North America and Europe. My research and publications are on medieval China, so we'll talk a lot about Asian religions—but you do not need any background in Asian religions. In our exploration of health, healing and religion, we will develop our ability to interact with people of other religious and cultural traditions. We will do this by reading about, thinking about and observing various healing methods through a range of cultures. We will identify religious features such as meaning-making, ritual, pilgrimage, and sacrifice, as well as ways that healers build confidence in those they heal. These religious features appear overtly in some religious contexts, and covertly in “non-religious” modern medical and psychological contexts. We will compare and contrast these features across cultures and to reflect upon their implications for healthcare in Canada today.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Recognize, understand, and analyze the ways in which healing and religions appear in non-Western contexts
- Make their analysis available and accessible to others in digital form.

Required Materials and Texts

- All readings, videos and recordings for the course will be available via the Avenue page.
- There are no required textbooks

Class Format

This class takes place online in Winter 2023. All materials are on the Avenue website and can be accessed by students as required. We will not meet on Zoom, MS Teams or any other synchronous platform. Discussions take place on Avenue.

The Course has seven (7) modules.

There are no formal prerequisites. No knowledge of any language other than English is required.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation in online discussion forums 15%
2. Regular Quizzes 30%

3. Digital Research Project 30% due March 17, 2023
4. Final Project 25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation in online discussion forums (15%), due by end of each module

Students will be graded based on their regular participation on the Avenue discussion boards for this course. It is your responsibility to answer the posted discussion questions, and participate in conversation with others in the course. Students must answer the posted question directly, and provide a thoughtful and respectful response to other students in their discussion group. Answers must engage with the course readings. You are not graded on grammar, but you are still expected to write coherently and clearly.

Regular Quizzes (30%), due by end of each module

Each of the seven modules contains “knowledge check” quizzes which must be completed in order to advance through the module, or to the next module. The quizzes contain multiple choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answer questions. They must be completed within a set time limit.

Digital Research Project (30%), due March 17, 2023

Details of this assignment will be posted separately to Avenue. Students will collect and curate examples of health healing and religion found online (websites, streaming services, TikTok, Instagram, Youtube, etc.).

Final Project (30%), due April, 21, 2023

Details of this assignment will be posted separately to Avenue. Students will design a 10 minute digital presentation focusing on questions arising from the course content.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Module 1 (Opens Monday January 9, Closes Friday January 27)

Theoretical and Methodological Approaches

Readings:

- Kleinman, Arthur, 1993. ["What is Specific to Western Medicine?" by Arthur Kleinman](#), *Companion Encyclopedia of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 1, edited by W. F. Bynum and R. Porter, Routledge, pp. 15---23.
- Rodrigues, Hillary and Harding, John S. Harding, 2009, [Introduction to the Study of Religion](#), Routledge, pp. 1–17

- Boyd, Kenneth, 2000. [“Disease, illness, sickness, health, healing, and wholeness: exploring some elusive concepts,”](#) *Medical Humanities* 26, 9–17

Assessments: Knowledge Check Quiz, Discussion posts

Module 2 (Opens Monday January 23, Closes Friday February 17)

What is the Human Body?

Readings:

- Wujastyk, Dominik. 2008. [“A Body Of Knowledge: The Wellcome Ayurvedic Anatomical Man And His Sanskrit Context.”](#) *Asian Medicine* 4 (1): 201–48.
- Leslie, Julia. 1999. [“The Implications of the Physical Body: Health, Suffering and Karma in Hindu Thought,”](#) In *Religion, Health and Suffering*, edited by Roy Porter, Routledge, 1999, pp. 23-45
- Despeux, Catherine. 2005. [“Visual Representations of the Body in Chinese Medical and Daoist Texts From the Song to the Qing Period \(Tenth to Nineteenth Century\).”](#) *Asian Medicine* 1 (1): 10–52.

Assessments: Knowledge Check Quiz, Discussion posts

Notes: Start working on Digital Research Project assignment, due March 17

Module 3 (Opens February 13, Closes March 10)

What is Wellness?

Readings:

- Unschuld, Paul U. 2009. [“What Is Medicine? : Western and Eastern Approaches to Healing.”](#) Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press. Pp. 1-9, 40-44.
- Bray, Francesca. 1999. [“Chinese Health Beliefs”](#) In *Religion, Health and Suffering*, edited by Roy Porter, Routledge, 1999, pp. 187-211
- Alter, Joseph S. 1999. [“Heaps of Health, Metaphysical Fitness: Ayurveda and the Ontology of Good Health in Medical Anthropology.”](#) *Current Anthropology* 40 (S1): pp. 43–66. <https://doi.org/10.1086/200060>.

Assessments: Knowledge Check quiz, Discussion posts

Notes: Work on Digital Research Project assignment, due March 17

February 20-24 Midterm Recess

Notes: Midterm Recess is “self-care week” in this course. Resources for self-care, physical and mental wellness will be highlighted this week.

Module 4 (Opens March 6, Closes March 24)

What causes disease?

Readings:

- Skorupski, Tadeusz. 1999. [“Health and Suffering in Buddhism: Doctrinal and Existential Considerations.”](#) In *Religion, Health and Suffering*, edited by Roy Porter, Routledge, pp. 139-165
- Hsu, Elisabeth. [“The Experience of Wind in Early and Medieval Chinese Medicine.”](#) *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13 (2007): S117–34.
- Triplett, Katja. 2020. [“Pediatric Care and Buddhism in Premodern Japan: A Case of Applied ‘Demonology’?”](#) *Asian Medicine* 14 (2): 313–41. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15734218-12341455>.

Assessments: Knowledge Check quiz, Discussion posts

March 17

- Digital Research Project assignment due.
- Start working on Final Project, due April 21

Module 6 (Opens March 20, Closes April 7)

How do individuals and societies respond to epidemics?

Readings:

- [Visualizing the History of Pandemics](#)
- Lowe, Bryan. 2020. [“Protection without punishment: Turning to Buddhist gods during Covid-19.”](#)
- Stanley-Baker, Michael. 2020. [“Daoism and Disease in China and Diaspora.”](#) Hot Spots, *Fieldsights*, June 23.
- Rotermund, Hartmut O., and Royall Tyler. 2001. [“Demonic Affliction or Contagious Disease? Changing Perceptions of Smallpox in the Late Edo Period.”](#) *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28 (3/4): 373–98.

Notes: Work on Final Project, due April 21.

Module 7 (Opens March 27, Closes April 12)

Final Reflections—Wholistic worldviews of health, healing, and religion

Readings:

- Wujastyk, Dominik. 2004. "[Medicine and Dharma.](#)" *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32, no. 5/6 (2004): 831–42.
- Alter, Joseph S. 2005. "[Modern Medical Yoga: Struggling With a History of Magic, Alchemy and Sex.](#)" *Asian Medicine* 1 (1): 119–46.
- Seaman, Amanda C. 2009. "[The Ties That Bind: Pregnancy and the Persistence of Tradition in Contemporary Japan.](#)" *Asian Medicine* 5 (1): 39–56. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157342109X568937>.

Notes: Final Assignment due April 21

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

All assignments will be submitted via Avenue.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

I do not accept work submitted late.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to the [Office of Academic Integrity website](#).

Courses with an On-line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.