

SCCC 362R/ RELG594H: Proseminar in Religion & Healing (Anthropology and Religion)

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Office hours:

Wednesdays,

1-3 pm (Flinn office)

or by appointment

Required texts:

Linda Barnes and Susan Sered editors, *Religion and Healing in America* (RAH)
Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (FB)

Honors students, you have the option of using the graduate text of primary documents-we will discuss this the first day of class.

Opening Statement

Anthropology of religion has been blessed and often cursed as a route to understanding the capacity of human communities to enter religious belief. It has been blessed because of methodologies used to study religions and because the discipline has recorded religious life that would have been lost to scholarship otherwise. At the same time, anthropology of religion has often found itself a tool for colonization projects as strong developed nations have used the discipline to underrate-and then control-the "primitive" indigenous populations. Yet the methods of the discipline still provide the best route to study religious healing.

Course objectives

Religious healing serves as a lens for students:

- To become familiar with some of the basic scholars and concepts of anthropology of religion
- To think through some of the difficulties in understanding religious

- belief that is not our own
- To consider methodologies with their attendant challenges in anthropology of religion
- To understand the importance of theological anthropology in the construction of a given belief system

Structure of the course

The course is roughly divided into five interwoven parts. In the first, we will spend time reading literature from the field. In the second, there will be preparation for fieldwork. The third part is guest speakers, the fourth is fieldwork. Finally, discussion and writing comprise the final section of the course. EVERYTHING LEADS TO YOUR FINAL WRITING PROJECT. THE WORD LIST, JOURNAL AND LOG SHEETS ARE INTENDED TO ASSIST IN THIS FINAL PROJECT.

Readings

Selections from the two texts are grouped in the following order:

Group 1

RAH: Introduction; chapter 24
FB: chapter 1

Group 2

RAH: Chapters 2, 5
FB: Chapters 3, 6

Group 3

RAH: Chapters 4, 10, 11
FB: chapter 4

Group 4

RAH: chapters. 10, 12
FB: chapter 5

Group 5

RAH: chapters 23, 29, 30, 31

GRADING

Grading for this class is based on participation, preparedness and your final project. Participation requires regular class attendance with in-class involvement, working with your group, and visiting planned sites. Preparedness requires that you read or bring assigned materials on the dates they are due. Your final project will be with a group, but each person will get a separate grade for their work.

Journal: This is an opportunity to reflect on what and whom you will view, why you chose one site over another, and your feelings about the place or the persons. This is important because such journaling helps you get in touch with your perceptions and involvement. You are the center of this reflection.

Fieldwork: Because we will use fieldwork in our study of religion and healing in the Columbia area, we will need to become familiar with some of the techniques that can be used. Also as preparation, before you and your group head into the field, at least one speaker will be invited to the class and as a class we will visit one healing center. These will take place early in the term, dates to be announced. When it comes to actual fieldwork, the times and locations you are to visit a given site must be entered on Blackboard. We will discuss fieldwork much more in detail in the first weeks of the term.

Log sheets: See excerpted material from Barnes' essay. The healing site is the center of these sheets. These sheets will be turned in, see date below.

Final Project: This will be a focused study of one site. You will work with a group on this project. The journal and log sheets provide one critically important component of your research. You will also need to identify concepts from the readings that apply and you may need to research a particular religion or culture in order to provide context. We will discuss methods of delivery of the project-it will not necessarily be only a written paper. Examples of other types will be seen on the Boston Healing Project's website. http://www.bmc.org/_pediatrics/special/bhlp

Due Dates and Assignments: (readings should be completed by the date shown)

NOTE: LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE SELDOM ACCEPTED.

Graduate students (with professor) will have a fishbowl (seminar style discussion) in this class, date(s) to be determined. Dates will also be announced for guest speakers.

August 24 Introductions; select groups

29 Group work: healing-by-televangelist watch

31 Discussion: principles for understanding religious healing

September 5 Group 1 readings

7

12 Fieldwork techniques and questions I (including interview techniques, taping, etc) Some time for class practice.

14 Group 2 readings

19 Group 3 readings

21 Fieldwork techniques and questions II (including release forms and credentials)

26 Discussion: Final Projects

28 Group 4 readings

October 3 5

10

12 Group 5 readings

17

19 FALL BREAK: No class

24

26

31

November 2 Groups must determine shape of final projects and these will be turned in today

7 ELECTION DAY: No class

9

14

16

21 NO Class

23 Happy Thanksgiving

28 Logs must be turned in this week. Final Projects may begin coming in this week!

30

December 5

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