

**CREL 2443: HEALTH, ILLNESS AND RELIGION**  
**Winter 2019 Acadia University**  
**Wednesday 7:00-10:00PM**  
**BAC 138**



**Official dates and weekly readings posted on ACORN**

**Dr. Donna L. Seamone**

**Office: BAC 409**

**Office Hours:**

**Sign-up for appointments—either in-person at office or on skype—through the link provided on your acorn home page. Times are posted there. There will be a link on your acorn dashboard that called office hours with the course number.**

**E-mail: [donna.seamone@acadiau.ca](mailto:donna.seamone@acadiau.ca)**

**Cell phone 902-521-2858**

**1. CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:**

An examination of the different ways health and illness are related to religion. Ideas of sickness and techniques of healing will be studied in a variety of traditional and modern contexts. We will explore how differing religious and medical systems sustain a variety of understandings of the human person, culture/society relationships, and cosmological views.

**2. COURSE OBJECTIVES/OUTLINE:**

The purpose of the course is to study the different ways health; sickness and healing are related to religion. Through lectures and readings we will explore how differing religious and medical systems are related to and produce a variety of understandings of the human person, culture/society relationships, and cosmological views. To grasp the varieties of understandings of health and healing we will study both beliefs and practices of healers and those seeking healing. We will seek to understand ways in which illness and healing are culturally specific. A central question of the course will be: What is the relationship between bodily health and “spiritual” health in specific systems of healing?

The course will be organized around the following themes:

- ***Healing and Illness in Traditional Cultures:*** We will consider theories of disease and types of healers. Shamanism as a phenomenon will be studied in an historical and comparative perspective. We will focus on healing traditions amongst the Navaho, the Kung! people of the Kalahari, Chinese medicine and contemporary Vodou.
- ***Healing in the Christian Tradition:*** This section of the course will present an historical consideration of healing in Christianity and focus on contemporary practices and experience of healing in the Christian tradition. Considerations will include faith healers, religious ritual (laying on of hands and pilgrimage), and contemporary Christian healing groups.
- ***Contemporary and Modern Healing:*** This part of the course will focus on the modern medical establishment and allopathic (main-line) medicine in North America. Focus will be on discerning the values tacit in this kind of medical system and practice and the continuities/discontinuities with those of other traditions studied. The ways in which the medical system may be viewed as a "technocratic" ritual and belief system will be explored, especially in the example of hospital childbirth.
- ***The Transformative Possibilities of Illness and Healing:*** With the help of *illness narratives* we will consider the ways in which illness may be considered a religious experience. As well, we will investigate in what ways the experience of illness may question and illumine traditional definitions of what constitutes religious experience. The

capacity of illness to transform views of reality and the self will be considered as well as the role of illness in the formation of healers across cultures and religious traditions.

---

### **3. REQUIRED READINGS:**

- David R. Kinsley, *Health, Healing, And Religion: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Frank, Arthur. *At The Will of the Body: Reflections on Illness*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991. More recent edition Mariner Books (2002) ISBN-10: 0618219293 ISBN-13: 978-0618219292
- Weekly reading: Articles/book chapters posted on ACORN

---

### **4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **STUDENTS MUST ALWAYS CHECK ACORN FOR CURRENT DATES, READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Dates on acorn will take precedence over dates in the syllabus!**

- **15% Class attendance and participation**
- **15% Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography** (or Research project proposal & Annotated Bibliography) Due EITHER
  - ON OR BEFORE FEB. 15<sup>TH</sup> AT NOON in BAC 441 AND ON ACORN) **Feedback will be given in skype appointments over reading week and the week following the break. Signup for an appointment when you submit the assignment**
  - **35% Essay:** 8-10 pages (Due NO LATER THAN APRIL 8<sup>th</sup> AT NOON MY OFFICE AND ON ACORN). Submit the paper earlier if you want to have the grade before the exam.

Or

**Alternate Research project** Submit in writing a one-paragraph proposal for an alternate project to the instructor and meet to discuss by January 30th, 2019.

- **35% Final Exam** (Final exam TBA: Exam period April 10-23)

#### **NOTE!!!!!!DATES ON ACORN ALWAYS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THOSE IN SYLLABUS**

***Late Papers: There will be a 5% per day penalty for late assignments unless accompanied by a medical certificate or written explanation. If you have been meeting with me and working on your assignment I almost always grant an extension penalty-free. However, it usually takes up to 2 weeks to return assignments so there are limits on the length of the extensions.***

#### **THE FINE PRINT: COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- 1. Class attendance and participation.** Class participation and interest displayed can change your mark by more than a letter grade. Prepare for class by reading assigned texts and reflecting on general themes. In class contribute to discussion by sharing your questions and thoughts and by attending to the ideas of others. **Bring at least one critical question, arising from reflection on the readings to class each week TYPED AND NO MORE THAN ONE PAGE** to be submitted to the instructor **AS A RECORD OF ATTENDANCE—these questions will not be graded and cannot be handed in by a classmate if you leave halfway through class you get credit for ½ the class.**
- 2. All students will be required to take the final examination.** This exam will be based on required readings, lectures and videos. The final exam will be based on course texts, readings, videos and lecture materials. Exam format: 3 essay questions. The exam will consist of 3 sections each having 3 questions - Students answer 1 question from each section. When Possible I will put videos on reserve after the class viewing but some videos or segments of films will not be available outside of class time.
- 3. Required Readings as designated on ACORN. READING FOR THIS CLASS AS IT PROCEEDS IS IMPERATIVE.** Some readings are SELECTED from on on-line journals, chapters from books or popular sites. It is recommended that you at least **save a copy** to your hard drive **&/or print a copy** of the readings as you access them to facilitate study for exams.

**Each week you need to have either an electronic copy or a paper copy with you for use in class discussion. Review questions are provided for articles and on-line readings in the week assigned on ACORN.**

4. **Laptop/Cellphone Policy:** Laptops can be both a benefit and a distraction in a classroom. While many students benefit from taking notes using a laptop, other students cannot resist the temptation of checking e-mail, chatting, playing games or watching movies during class time. This class has a strict —no **non-class related usell rule for laptops** — if you are found violating this policy, then your in-class laptop privileges will be taken away. Cellphones are a distraction for everyone, and should be turned off during class. If there is a special situation where you need to have your phone on for a particular day, please let the instructor know the situation before class.

## **5. A RULES ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND DISHONESTY**

**Each student is responsible for familiarizing themselves with University Policies on Academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** Please read the section "Academic Integrity" found in the *Acadia University Calendar, 2006-2007*, either in hard copy or on-line at:

<https://libguides.acadiau.ca/plagiarism>

. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

All of these offences are serious breaches of intellectual ethics and serious offences. I will adhere to the policy of the history and classics department: plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (no departmental appeal is possible). In especially bad cases more severe penalties, including a course grade of F (zero) and/or a recommendation for expulsion from the university, are possible.

**Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, grade of F for the course or suspension or expulsion from the university.**

**NOTE In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism.**

**STUDENTS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THEIR MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

**ELECTRONICALLY TO ACORN AND IN HARD COPY TO THE PROFESSOR IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED SUBMITTED.**

### **5. B. Accessible Learning Services**

If you are a student with documentation for accommodations who anticipates needing supports or accommodations, please contact Accessible Learning Services at 902-585-1823, [disability.access@acadiau.ca](mailto:disability.access@acadiau.ca). Accessible Learning Services is located in Rhodes Hall.

### **6. C. WRITING HELP**

The Writing Centre offers free help to all students wanting to improve their writing skills. You can sign up online today:

- To book a one-to-one appointment with a trained writing tutor, click here: [writingcentre.acadiau.ca/writing-tutorials.html](http://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/writing-tutorials.html)
- To see which helpful presentations and workshops you'll want to attend this year, click here: [writingcentre.acadiau.ca/workshops-and-presentations.html](http://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/workshops-and-presentations.html)

---

## **6. OPPORTUNITIES FOR AWARDS**

### **The CFUW Award in Women's and Gender Studies**

Students engaged in research or an assignment on a topic relevant to women's and gender studies should consider applying for the CFUW Award (worth \$1500)... You do not have to be registered as a WGS student to apply for the award. See the WGS website:

[http://womenstudies.acadiau.ca/CFUW\\_Award.html](http://womenstudies.acadiau.ca/CFUW_Award.html) for full details, or discuss with the instructor or WGS Coordinator.

- **Canadian Society for the Study of Religion Undergraduate Student Essay Contest**  
<http://www.cssrscer.ca/?q=node/20>

## 7. **APPENDIX ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES AND AIDS**

**STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THEIR WORK BOTH ELECTRONICALLY TO ACORN AND IN HARD COPY TO THE PROFESSOR IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED SUBMITTED.**

**READ THROUGH BOTH SECTIONS OF THIS APPENDIX BEFORE BEGINNING SINCE THEY ARE PART OF ONE LARGER RESEARCH EFFORT.**

**THERE ARE AIDS FOR ASSIGNMENTS ON THE COURSE ACORN PAGE UNDER ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**DEVELOPING A TOPIC FOR THE 2 STAGE ASSIGNMENTS 1) PROPOSAL and ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY & 2) THESIS DRIVEN ESSAY :**

**Select a geographic locale, time period and or issue related to illness and healing on which you would like to focus. Search for literature that connects these interests for you. The field is wide open in terms of topics, time periods and the globe within the parameters set by the course description and objectives. Please remember that it is impossible to develop a topic without searching for actual sources in journals. Use the paper as a chance to explore a topic in which you have a genuine interest.**

### **a) WRITING CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE—PAPER OR PROJECT PROPOSAL AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Your proposal should be in the form of a one page (or so) abstract with an annotated bibliography attached. The abstract should pose your question for research, briefly summarize the literature you will address, and propose the thesis you will argue in your paper. Your annotated bibliography should cite in an acknowledged form at least seven (7) peer-reviewed key sources you are using to investigate your topic. Below each citation include a single spaced annotation which follows the example below and the outline for annotations in the sample assignment. Course materials may be used as sources where applicable. Students may choose to write from a personal basis including their own experience as a “source” of insight and substance in the essay. **Since the second assignment builds on the first, students should read carefully syllabus description of this assignment and the criteria for papers below.**
- **WHAT IS AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?** An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 100-150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader about the expertise/disciplinary perspective of the author, the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. (see the process below)
- **ANNOTATIONS VS. ABSTRACTS.** Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority.
- **THE PROCESS.** Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise exposition, succinct analysis, and informed library research. First, locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic. Briefly examine and review the actual items. Then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic. Cite the book, article, or document using the appropriate style. Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central

theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) comment on the intended audience, (c) compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or (d) explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic.

- **SAMPLE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ENTRY FOR A JOURNAL ARTICLE.** Note the following example:

Adib, Salim M. "From the Biomedical Model to the Islamic Alternative: A Brief Overview of Medical Practices in the Contemporary Arab World." *Social Science & Medicine* 58 (2004): 697-702.

Salim Adib is an Associate Professor of Community Health in the Faculty of Public Health at Lebanese University in Beirut, Lebanon. Trained as a medical doctor in Lebanon and a psychosocial epidemiologist in the United States, Adib presents a unique perspective on contemporary Islamic medicine and what he considers its limited potential to function within the dominant biomedical model. He briefly reviews the interaction between these two competing models since the eighth century and the subsequent adoption of Western medicine by more affluent groups within the Muslim world. He also draws attention to potentially harmful aspects of Islamic medicine as perceived by the biomedical model. I will use this information to provide a historical context for the competition of these models in the Muslim dominant cultures and to illustrate the bias and prejudice inherent in western bio-medicine against Islamic healing practices.

### **b) ESSAY TOPICS, WRITING CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE**

*Length: Essay: 8-10 pages. This essay is the continuation of the research begun in assignment one.*

### **RESEARCH PAPERS: WRITING AND EVALUATION CRITERIA \*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*\*\***

This is a summary of the questions I ask in evaluating student papers. Research papers are still the most standard form of scholarly communication. An excellent book on writing such papers is Rolf Norgaard's *Ideas in Action* (HarperCollins). Consider using it while writing your paper. The suggestions that Norgaard makes in chapter 5, "Troubleshooting Your Thesis," are especially useful. If you are trying to improve your writing, it is acceptable to receive help from the Acadia Writing Centre, a friend, or an editor, provided that you (1) acknowledge this assistance in a foot- or endnote, and (2) attach the edited draft(s) signed by your editor.

- **FOCUS & ADEQUACY OF COVERAGE.** Is your response well focused? The biggest single problem in student research papers is that they attempt too much in too small a space. I almost never read a paper that is too tightly focused. So narrow your TOPIC, then cut it in half! Think more about less! Are you aware of the scope of your TOPIC? If you leave out important issues or related issues, say so and justify the omission. Say what are the limitations and scope of your treatment. If there is further work that might be fruitfully done, describe it (usually at the beginning of the paper after the thesis statement and description of the how the paper will proceed OR as part of you conclusion OR both).
- **BASIC IDEAS, ORIGINALITY OF THOUGHT, CRITICAL ACUMEN.** Did you show comprehension of basic ideas and technical terms? *Define every technical, private or ambiguous term*, especially those that are central to your interpretation. Did you demonstrate that you can go beyond your sources? Pursue your own ideas and insights. Do not be content to parrot others. Think for yourself. Do not write a paper that simply summarizes sources. Did you ask good questions of your data? Were you critical? Do not accept everything you read as authoritative. If you use a theory or framework, don't use it uncritically; question it as well as your data. When you take issue, develop, rather than merely state, your criticisms. If you employed comparisons, were you fair? Did you consider contrasts as well as comparisons?
- **CLARITY AND COGENCY OF THESIS; TREATMENT OF COUNTER-ARGUMENTS.** Did you overtly state and develop a thesis or pose a clear, central question? Did you consider

counter-theses carefully? A thesis must *not* be either a truism or a tautology.<sup>1</sup> The clearest way to do so is to articulate a question (or questions) to which most of your paper is a response. Do not write a paper which is merely a description, report, or paraphrase. You may, of course, do some describing, reporting, or paraphrasing, but do so for a purpose and state that purpose clearly. Take a stance in relation to what you report and develop that stance at least as thoughtfully as you present the reported material. Thinking comparatively or else approaching your topic using a theory or framework usually helps develop a distinctive point of view.

- **ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER; QUALITY OF WRITING.** Were the grammar and syntax impeccable? Did you provide concrete illustrations to ground your big generalizations? Was the paper well organized? Make sure divisions, transitions, and development of arguments are obvious and logically coherent. Write clearly. Was the paper in a clear, readable, consistent format? Type. Double-space. Number each page. Staple (paper-clipped pages often get attached to someone else's paper). Leave ample margins for my responses. Did the paper flow? Were its transitions smooth and clear? Was the organization clear? Did you provide illustrations to ground your abstractions and generalizations? Did you use charts, diagrams, and other such aids when they would help clarify?
- **SELECTION AND HANDLING OF SOURCES.** Did you select and handle your sources well? Make it absolutely clear when you are paraphrasing someone else's ideas; inform your reader when the ideas or arguments you are presenting are your own. Do not fuse together bits of paraphrase and bits of original thought. If you synthesize, synthesize ideas, not phrases and sentences. **Write in your own words; do not pilfer or imitate the language of your sources, or you will raise the red flag of plagiarism. It is University policy that plagiarism results in an automatic zero.** Did you use a standard documentation format and use it consistently? Did you provide all the appropriate bibliographic data formatted correctly? Did you do a good job of integrating READINGS and insights from the course?

---

<sup>1</sup> Example of a tautologous thesis (a statement whose predicate is already contained in the definition of the subject): "Bald men have no hair." Example of a tautologous question: "Do bald men have hair?" Example of a truism (a statement so obviously true that it is not worth making), "These words are printed on a page." Example of a truism in question form: "Are these words printed on a page?"