

*\*Preliminary course outline, subject to revision\**

## **HEALTH, HEALING, AND RELIGION: WESTERN PERSPECTIVES** **Spring 2021Term**

**Instructor:** Dr Robert Jones  
**Email:** jonesire@mcmaster.ca  
**Office Hours:** by appointment via Zoom

### **Contents**

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives .....	3
Required Materials and Texts .....	3
Class Format.....	3
Course Evaluation – Overview .....	4
Course Evaluation – Details .....	4
Quizzes (40%) .....	4
Reflection paper (20%), due May 28 .....	4
Final take-home exam (40%), due June 18.....	4
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings .....	4
Week 1 (May 3–7) / Key concepts and themes .....	4
Week 2 (May 10–14) / Historical perspectives.....	5
Week 3 (May 17–21) / Religious healing: Christianity and Judaism .....	5
Week 4 (May 24–28) / Religious healing: Islam and New Age spiritualities.....	5
Week 5 (May 31–June 4) / Religion, healing, and Western biomedicine .....	6
Week 6 (June 7–11) / Colonialism and immigration.....	6
Week 7 (June 14–18) / Religious responses to plague and pandemic .....	6
Course Policies .....	7
Submission of Assignments.....	7
Grades.....	7
Late Assignments .....	7
Avenue to Learn .....	7
Turnitin.com.....	8
University Policies .....	8

Academic Integrity Statement.....	8
Conduct Expectations.....	8
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	9
Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work .....	9
Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO) .....	9
Copyright and Recording .....	9
Extreme Circumstances.....	10

## **Course Description**

SCAR 2WW3 will introduce students to the complex relationship between religion and health in the contemporary Western world. I will draw on historical and ethnographic research throughout the course. We will begin by considering some definitional, historical, and methodological issues; this will lay the ground work for a series of case studies involving particular religious communities and religious healing traditions in the West. Our primary task will be to understand how religious practitioners incorporate religious healing techniques into their individual and corporate lives, but we will also explore the ways that practitioners of religious healing interact with, and conceptualize the significance of, Western biomedicine. Throughout the course, I will demonstrate how focusing on health and healing can help us to think about the relationship between religion and race, colonization, immigration, gender, and law in the contemporary West.

## **Course Objectives**

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

- to explain key terms and concepts related to religion, health, and healing;
- to describe the relationship between religious and biomedical healing;
- to analyze how healing techniques function in different religious contexts.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- None; all readings will be posted on Avenue.

## **Class Format**

The class format will be asynchronous. There will be two lectures posted to Avenue each week. The first will be available every Tuesday. The second will be available every Thursday.

Students will be required to watch a few films (see Course Schedule below); these are available on Kanopy ([www.kanopy.com](http://www.kanopy.com) – free access for McMaster students, use your MACID and password) or other free websites. Links to all video can be found in the Course Schedule.

There will also be a guest interview series. These videos will be posted on Avenue at the beginning of the course, and students will be required to view them. You can watch these video at any point during the course. You will have to write a brief reflection paper on two of them (see Course Evaluations below).

*Guest speaker series with include interviews with:*

- a local hospital chaplain
- a local physician

- a local imam
- a local priest
- local Indigenous leaders

I will also make myself available to meet with students via Zoom on an *ad hoc* basis. Students who would like to arrange a “virtual office hour” with me can set an appointment by sending me an email request.

### **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Quizzes – 40% (Weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6)
2. Reflection paper – 20% (May 28)
3. Final take-home exam – 40% (June 18)

### **Course Evaluation – Details**

#### **Quizzes (40%)**

Students will take a total of five quizzes on Avenue, one each week from Week 2 to 6. Each quiz will go live on Monday afternoon, and must be completed by 11:59pm on Friday. The quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice and T/F questions, and will have approximately 10 questions. The quizzes will be based on the readings and videos for that week; they are not cumulative. Once you begin the quiz, you will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz. You may use readings and notes.

#### **Reflection paper (20%), due May 28**

Students will pick two of the Zoom interviews, and will write a reflection paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced) on them based on a prompt that I will post on Avenue. More details will be posted on Avenue.

#### **Final take-home exam (40%), due June 18**

Student will write an essay-based take-home exam. Student will be given 4 possible questions, and must choose 3 to answer. Each answer should be approximately 1-2 pages long (double-spaced). Question will be based on lectures, readings, and videos. More details will be posted on Avenue.

### **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

#### **Week 1 (May 3–7) / Key concepts and themes**

Lecture 1: What do we mean by “religion,” “health,” and “healing”?

Lecture 2: Healthcare systems and religious healing

Readings:

- Kleinman, A Selection from *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture* (11 pages)

- Sullivan and Sered, “Healing and Medicine: An Overview” (9 pages)

Watch: “What is Healing” TEDx talk by Shamini Jain – 12 minutes  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk7kzUt3-Lc&feature=youtu.be>)

## **Week 2 (May 10–14) / Historical perspectives**

Lecture 1: Health, healing, and religion in antiquity

Lecture 2: A brief history of Western biomedicine

Readings:

- Marx, “Religion, Medicine, and Health” (18 pages)

Watch: “How a few scientists transformed the way we think about disease” – 5 minutes  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9LC-3ZKiok>)

**Take Quiz 1 by 11:59pm on May 14**

## **Week 3 (May 17–21) / Religious healing: Christianity and Judaism**

Lecture 1: Christian healing practices

Lecture 2: Jewish healing practices

Readings:

- Marty, “Religion and Healing: The Four Expectations” (18 pages)
- Sharabi, “Deep Healing: Ritual Healing in the Teshuvah Movement” (13 pages)
- Sered, “Jewish Healing in Boston” (5 pages)

Watcher: In Her Own Time – 58 minutes  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrUB58a3Zrl>)

**Take Quiz 2 by 11:59pm on May 21**

## **Week 4 (May 24–28) / Religious healing: Islam and New Age spiritualities**

Lecture 1: Islamic healing practices

Lecture 2: New Age and eclectic spiritualities in the West

Readings:

- Rowe, “Honey, Hadiths, and Health Day” (7 pages)
- Weibel, “Of Consciousness Changes and Fortified Faith” (24 pages)

Watch: “Reiki and the Catholic Church” – 8 minutes  
(<https://www.pbs.org/video/religion-ethics-newsweekly-reiki-and-the-catholic-church/>)

Take Quiz 3 by 11:59pm on May 28

Submit your Short Reflection Paper by 11:59pm on May 28

### **Week 5 (May 31–June 4) / Religion, healing, and Western biomedicine**

Lecture 1: Religion and biomedicine: Conflict and integration

Lecture 2: Three models for integrating religion and biomedicine

Readings:

- Balboni, et al, “The Relationship between Medicine, Spirituality, and Religion: Three Models for Integration” (13 pages)
- Hollis, “Lotus Flowers and Rose Windows: A Season of Visits to Hospital Chapels” (6 pages)

Watch: “Medicine Woman: The Story of America’s First Native Medical Doctor” – 57 minutes (<https://mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/medicine-woman>)

Take Quiz 4 by 11:59pm on June 4

### **Week 6 (June 7–11) / Colonialism and immigration**

Lecture 1: The Native American Church: Religion, healing, law, and colonialism

Lecture 2: Hmong shamanism in America

Readings:

- Urban, “The Native American Church: Ancient Tradition in a Modern Legal Context” (19 pages)
- Xiong, “Hmong Shamanism: Animist Spiritual Healing in America’s Urban Heartland” (16 pages)

Watch: “The Split Horn: The Life of a Hmong Shaman in America” – 59 minutes (<https://mcmaster.kanopy.com/video/split-horn-life-hmong-shaman-america>)

Take Quiz 5 by 11:59pm on June 11

### **Week 7 (June 14–18) / Religious responses to plague and pandemic**

Lecture 1: Literary representations of religion and health in Camus’ *The Plague*

Lecture 2: Health, healing, and religion in the COVID-19 pandemic

Readings:

- “Can faith healing work by phone? Charismatic Christians try prayer to combat the coronavirus.” (*Washington Post*)
- “Jewish history explains why some ultra-Orthodox communities defy coronavirus restrictions” (*The Conversation*)

- “Orthodox Jewish Women Are Facing an Impossible Choice Right Now”  
(*The Atlantic*)

Watch: “Albert Camus – The Plague” – 10 minutes  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSYPwX4NPg4>)

Submit your Written Take-home Exam by 11:59pm on June 18

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments will be submitted via Avenue.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	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**

Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day unless arrangements for an extension are made with me before the due date.

### **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.

## **Turnitin.com**

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

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 behavior 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.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

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 credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **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](mailto: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.