

TEACHING THE HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS HEALING



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OUTLINE



- 1) **SUBJECT MATTER:** Conceptual issues
- 2) **SYLLABUS:** Topics, assignments, & classroom experiences
- 3) **FEEDBACK:** Ideas for the future

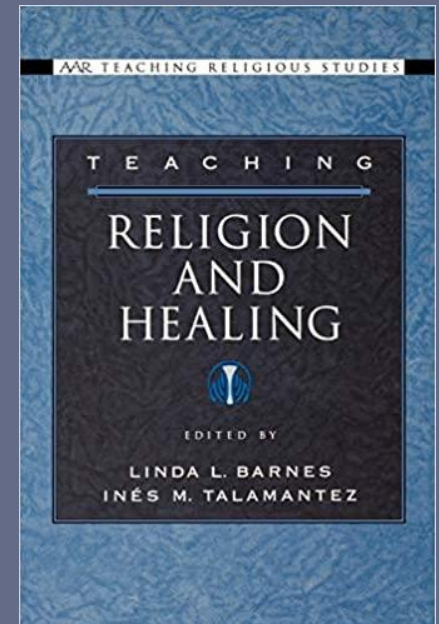
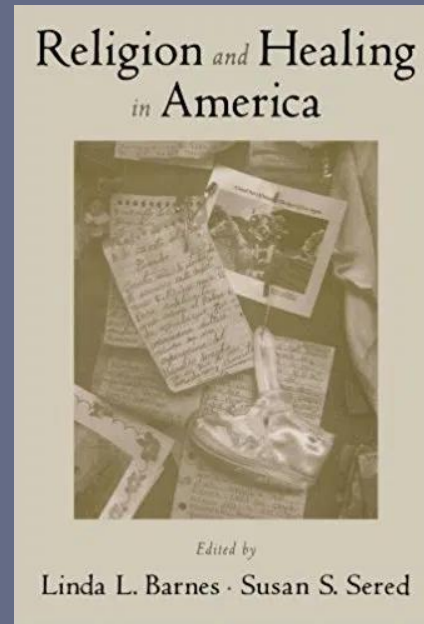
1. SUBJECT MATTER: Conceptual Issues

TEACHING RELIGION & HEALING

More typically taught as:

- an *anthropological* subject
- a *history* class
- a *religious studies* topic
- a *CAM* modality

At Baylor, I teach this as a *medical humanities* seminar to pre-health students. I draw on all of the above contexts.



HOW MY COURSE DIFFERS



- A medical humanities elective.
- Upper-level undergraduate pre-health students.
- Material from across professions, academic disciplines & fields, and medical specialties:
 - Incl. psychiatry, nursing, anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, religion, theology, pastoral care, biomedical sciences, integrative medicine, and more.
- Introduces students to the multifaceted & longstanding conversation between faith & the practice of healing that dates to antiquity.

COURSE DESCRIPTION



From the syllabus:

“This course provides an introduction to the subject of religious healing, including recent research. Nonmedical healing and the work of its practitioners are referred to by various names—religious healing, spiritual healing, faith healing, mental healing, energy healing—each implying something distinctive. Moreover, there is considerable variation within each category, as healers do not describe themselves uniformly. To add to the complexity, religious healers are found throughout the world, across cultures and faith traditions, and have existed alongside conventional medical care for thousands of years. ”

COURSE OBJECTIVES



After completing *Religious Healing (MH 4V98)*, students will be able to:

- (a) Describe the history and scope of the work of religious healers;
- (b) Identify theories that religious healers and scholars use to explain healing;
- (c) Share personal insights into the experience of healing;
- (d) Summarize contemporary perspectives on healing across religions and cultures; and,
- (e) Discuss important research findings from studies of religious healing.

CONTENT DECISIONS



- **Timeline:**

- Starting point, roughly, is the healing ministry of Christ.

- **Religious traditions:**

- Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, indigenous African religions, Brazilian Spiritism, New Thought, the paranormal, contemporary New Age religion

- **What got left out:**

- Pre-Christian antiquity (e.g., Rome, Greece, ANE, China, Indian subcontinent, OT era, pre-history). Material I covered in *Religion and Medicine* (OUP, 2020).

2. SYLLABUS:
Topics, Assignments, &
Classroom Presentations

MEDICAL HUMANITIES PROGRAM



- **Baylor's MHP:**

- The first undergraduate major in the U.S (2004). Now about 70 programs.
- Has ranged from 180-250 majors, with additional minors.
- Religion/spirituality is a core focus (with philosophy, history, literature, arts, behavioral & social science; plus clinical experience & bioethics).
- “Christian Spirituality & Healthcare” is a required course.

- **“Religious Healing”:**

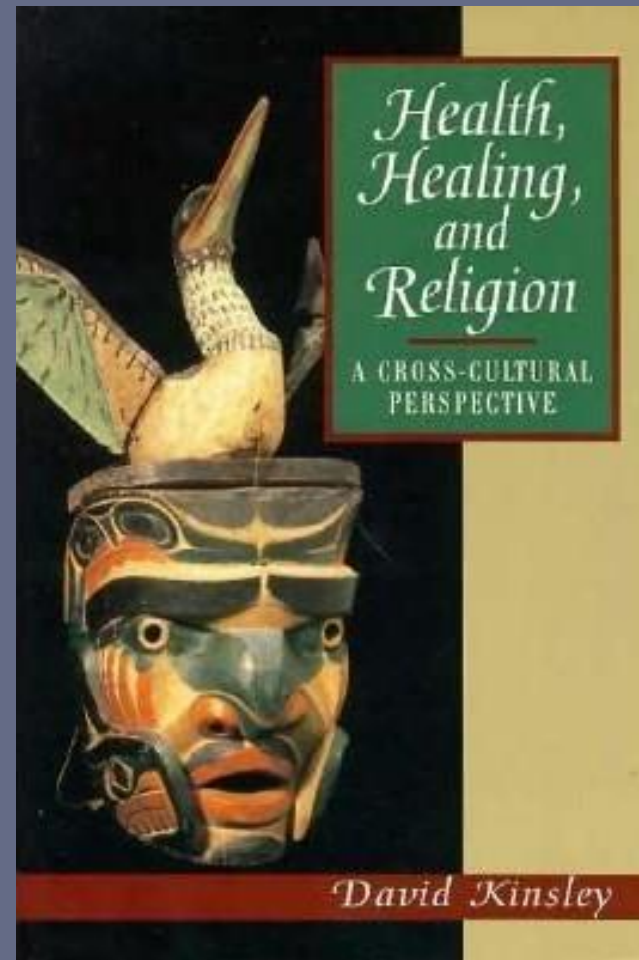
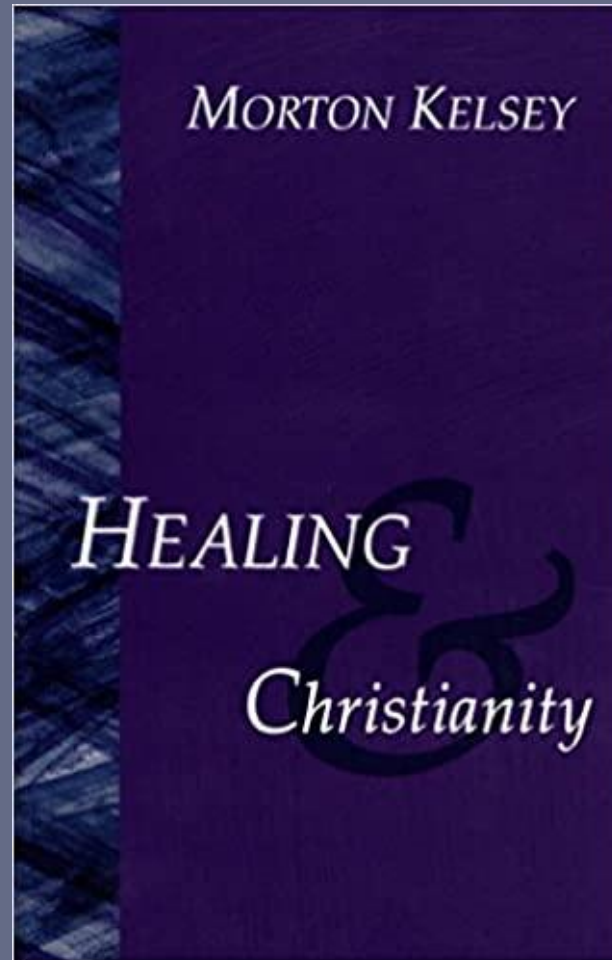
- Many special topics courses are taught (designated as MH 4V98), including “Religious Healing.”
- Offered as a seminar to up to 8 mostly honors pre-med MH majors, by invitation & approval from the MHP.
- Has also been offered, modified, as an Independent Study class.

COURSE TOPICS



- 1) Course Introduction**
- 2) Folk & Indigenous Healers**
- 3) Christian Healing I: Jesus, History, & Pilgrimage Sites**
- 4) Christian Healing II: 19th & 20th Century Movements**
- 5) Christian Healing III: Contemporary Pentecostal & Charismatic Healing**
- 6) Energy Healing I: Types & Theories**
- 7) Energy Healing II: Research Evidence**
- 8) Esoteric & Spirit Healing**
- 9) Faith Healing I: Healers on Film**
- 10) Faith Healing II: Clinical Implications**
- 11) Prayer Studies I: Research Evidence**
- 12) Prayer Studies II: Interpretation**
- 13) Student Healing Reports**
- 14) Student Term Paper Reports (2 sessions)**

REQUIRED BOOKS



COURSE ASSIGNMENTS



- **Class sessions:**

- Once/wk. for 3 hours, seminar style, seated around a table.
- Discuss assigned chapters plus 4-5 articles. Everyone reads everything.
- *Format:*
 - 1) We discuss book readings; I lead discussion, sometimes with YT clips or whiteboard material or show'n'tell. With Q&A.
 - 2) Student-led discussion of each respective article, journal-club style, @ about 25 min., 4 per class. With Q&A.
 - 3) Wrap-up discussion, then make next session's assignments.

- **Additional writing & presentation assignments:**

- Written book report (selected from a list of about 30 books).
- Compare-&-contrast report on 2 healer or healing service visits (w/oral presentation).
- Film review (done in teams of 2): "Elmer Gantry," "Resurrection," "Marjoe," "Kumaré." Formerly, various faith healer documentaries.
- Term paper: bio of a 20th C. healer (w/oral presentation incl. PPT).

GRADING



- 1) Oral presentations of assigned readings (15%).
- 2) Contribution to group discussions (15%).
- 3) Written book review (15%).
- 4) Written & oral report on experiences with healers (15%).
- 5) Term paper & oral report on a historically notable healer (40%).



ASSIGNED ARTICLES, BY JOURNAL



Medical Journals

Alternative Therapies in Health & Medicine
American Heart Journal
American Journal of Psychiatry
Annals of Internal Medicine
British Medical Journal
Complementary Therapies in Medicine
Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine
Explore: The Journal of Science & Healing
Investigación Clínica
J. of Alternative & Complementary Medicine
J. of the American Board of Family Medicine
J. of the History of Medicine & Allied Sciences
J. of Medicine and Philosophy
J. of the National Medical Association
Southern Medical Journal
Stress Medicine

Other Journals

American Journal of Sociology
Churchman
Ethos
Flying Saucer Review
Health and Place
J. of Religion and Health
J. for the Scientific Study of Religion
Medical Anthropology Quarterly
Mental Health, Religion & Culture
Religious Education

TERM PAPER BIOS



El Niño Fidencio



Sathya Sai Baba



Peter Popoff



Marjoe Gortner



Mary Baker Eddy



Mikao Usui



Padre Pio



Benny Hinn



Aimee Semple McPherson



Agnes Sanford



Olga & Ambrose Worrall



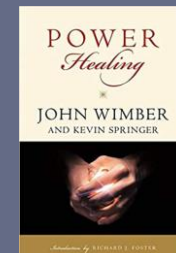
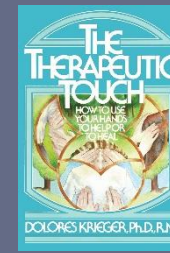
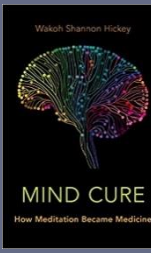
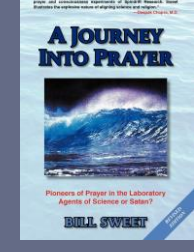
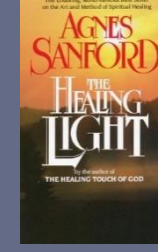
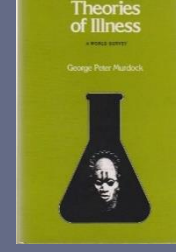
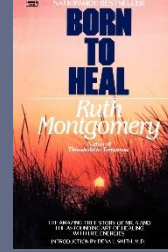
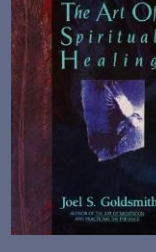
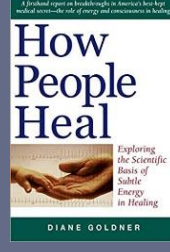
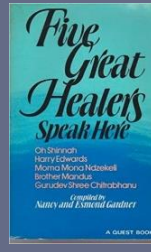
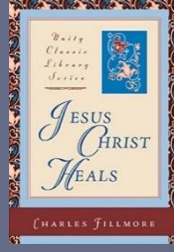
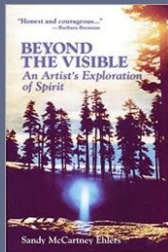
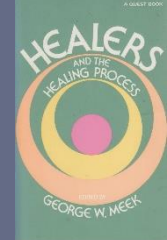
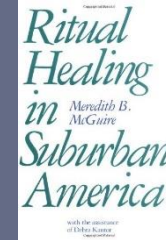
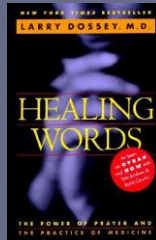
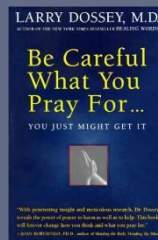
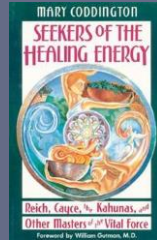
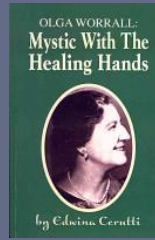
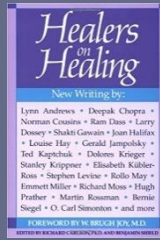
HEALING EXPERIENCES



- Upper Room revival
+ Reiki Fellowship of Dallas
- Unity Church of New Braunfels (meditation & *pranic* healing)
+ a *curandero*
- Gateway Church prayer service (evangelical-charismatic)
+ Yesha House prayer ministry
- A Houston D.O./acupuncturist (trained under Andy Weil)
+ a Bapti-costal church healing service
- Acts Church (charismatic Baptist) healing session
+ Waco Acupuncture Clinic
- A charismatic Baptist healing service
+ a Reiki healer
- A Dallas acupuncturist
+ Power of the Rainbow, Arlington, TX (crystal healing class)

Compare-&-contrast reports; written & oral presentations.

BOOK LIST FOR BOOK REPORTS



3. FEEDBACK: ***Ideas for the Future***

STUDENT FEEDBACK



- Very positive student evaluations: mostly 5's, with some 4's on particular aspects.
- Comments include that this has been a favorite class or that I'm a favorite professor.
- Students regularly ask me for medical or graduate school recommendation letters.
- Students have asked me to be their Honors thesis advisor.
- Post-graduation anecdotes from alumni currently in medical school that this was their favorite class at Baylor.



IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE



- **New topics:**
e.g., more medieval, pre-Christian, & Eastern content
- **New assignments:**
e.g., “Pilgrimages of Europe” video series
- **Guest speakers/practitioners:**
incl. healing demonstrations; may be an issue for Baylor
- **Publication:**
e.g., in a medical education journal, to encourage this content being taught elsewhere
- **A second course:**
e.g., on energy/spiritual healing modalities (incl. energy-based bodywork)

A limiting factor is the number of available class sessions.

ANY SUGGESTIONS?

