

**IDIS 296**  
**The Anthropology of Alternative Medicine**

Dr. Suzanne Schneider  
Office hours: 9-11am Mon. & Wed.  
Office: 318 PPHAC  
Tel. 610-625-7015

Spring semester 2007  
Course meetings: Tues. & Thurs. 12:50-2:00pm  
Course location: 218 Comenius Hall  
E-mail: sschneider@moravian.edu

**Course overview:** This course examines social, cultural, and economic aspects of non-biomedical healing practices, often referred to as “alternative medicine” in the West. Some of the practices that we will explore include traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, naturopathy, homeopathy, massage, faith healing, and spiritualism. The course examines the cultural contexts in which these healing traditions are practiced. It surveys their different concepts of health, illness, and healing, as well as their methods of diagnosis, approaches to healing, healer-patient relationships, and organizational structures. The course will explore legal contexts of alternative therapies and the role of the state in determining the legitimacy of such practices. Finally, the course will examine the issue of alternative medicine as a social movement.

**Required texts:**

Collinge, William. 1997. *The American Holistic Health Association Complete Guide to Alternative Medicine*. New York, NY: Time Warner Books.

Frohock, Fred M. 1995. *Healing Powers: Alternative Medicine, Spiritual Communities, and the State*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Lock, Margaret M. 1984. *East Asian Medicine in Urban Japan: Varieties of Medical Experience*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Additional articles are posted on Blackboard and are marked on the course schedule below with a (BB).

**Course requirements:**

***Exams (40%):*** There will be two exams, each worth 20% of your final grade. The midterm will consist of short answer questions and short essays and will be administered during class on Feb. 22. The final will be a take-home essay exam. I will distribute the questions for the final on the last day of class.

***Ethnographic interview project (20%)*** You will be conducting ethnographic interviews with two people who practice alternative medicine. Your interviews will seek to understand why your subjects pursue or have pursued alternative medicine, their experiences with alternative medicine and the health benefits (and side effects) of the modalities they used, their views on the therapeutic components of the system(s), and their understanding of the philosophy behind the system(s). In your paper, you will discuss what you have learned from your interviews and link your discussion with issues pertinent to *Healing Powers* (Frohock). The final section of your

paper will reflect on the process and what you have learned about alternative medicine. The project will be written up in a 6-8 page paper which will be due on April 3.

**Writing journal (20%)** You will be required to submit six writing journal entries during the course of the semester. A total of eight writing assignment options will be offered. These assignments will relate to class discussion, reading material, films, newspaper articles, op-ed pieces and scholarly debates. Your entries must be typed and organized by date and title in a writing folder. I will randomly select and review a portion of your folders every date that a journal entry is due. While you may use informal writing techniques such as exploratory or expressive writing, you must edit your work and demonstrate that you have seriously thought about the questions or issues posed. I will be looking to see if you are able to make connections between the readings, class discussions, and your day-to-day life. Your journal will be graded based upon the quality of your completion of six entries. The completed journals will be turned in on the last day of class.

**Attendance and Participation (20%)** This course will entail discussion, short lectures, and group activities. Your regular class attendance and active participation in discussion and group work are required. You will be required to bring a brief, typed summary of your assigned readings and two questions to each class. I will periodically collect these summaries and they will be graded on a check system (✓, ✓+, ✓-). I will not accept handwritten summaries. The combination of your attendance, active participation, group work, and response papers will amount to 20% of your grade.

**Grading:**

|                                |     |            |
|--------------------------------|-----|------------|
| Two essay exams                | 40% | (20% each) |
| Ethnographic interview project | 20% |            |
| Writing journal                | 20% |            |
| Attendance and participation   | 20% |            |

**Course Guidelines**

1. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced with 12 point Times New Roman font. Please number and staple your pages. No handwritten assignments will be accepted. Please edit your work carefully and correct your grammar, spelling, and punctuation. All assignments must be handed to the instructor. No e-mailed assignments will be accepted except in the case of emergencies or with prior permission of the instructor.

2. Regular attendance is required. Absences will be excused only in the case of appropriately documented emergencies, extended leave, or school-sponsored commitments. If an emergency should arise, please notify me prior to an assignment's due date and not after it is due. If you need to miss a class, please notify me in advance. Two late arrivals to class will be counted as an absence. Multiple absences from class will negatively affect your grade.

3. The grade scale for this class is as follows: 93-100=A; 90-92.9=A-; 87-89.9=B+; 83-86.9=B; 80-82.9=B-; 77-79.9=C+; 73-76.9=C; 70-72.9=C-; 67-69.9=D+; 63-66.9=D; 60-62.9=D-; less

than 60=F. Note that it is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignment and for the final course grade.

4. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for this course should contact Learning Services (x 1510). Accommodations will be provided once authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

### **Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is passing off others' work as your own. The Moravian handbook states that, "All work that students submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be their own original work unless otherwise expressly permitted by the instructors" (p. 26). Plagiarism can involve directly quoting passages from a text, the web, or any other document. It can also involve having a student write a paper for you or purchasing a paper from a writing service. Any case of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Academic Affairs Office. Plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the college policy on academic honesty (see Moravian handbook).

### **Course schedule:**

Jan. 16: Introduction to the course

### **Module 1: Understanding Alternative Medicine**

Jan. 18: Examining Alternative Medicine  
Collinge, Introduction and Chapter 1 (xvii-12)  
(Handout) Reisser et al., Examining alternative medicine  
(BB) Whorton, Countercultural healing: A brief history of alternative medicine in America

Jan. 23: Chinese Medicine  
Collinge, Chapter 2 (13-54)

Jan. 25: Chinese Medicine – cont.  
Film: Healing and the Mind: Mystery of Chi

Jan. 30: Ayurveda  
Collinge, Chapter 3 (55-94)  
*Journal entry 1*

Feb. 1: Naturopathy & Homeopathy  
Collinge, Chapters 4 & 5 (96-166)

Feb. 6: Mind/Body Medicine  
Collinge, Chapter 6 (167-204)  
(BB) Hall: Is Buddhism Good for your Health?  
Film: Interview with Pema Chodron (Bill Moyers on Faith & Reason)

Feb. 8: Healing through Meditation  
Film: Healing and the Mind: Healing Within

Feb. 13: Osteopathy & Chiropractic  
Collinge, Chapters 7 & 8 (205-265)  
*Journal entry 2*

Feb. 15: Massage Therapy and the Question of Efficacy  
Collinge, Chapters 9 & 10 (266-321)  
Film: The Alternative Fix

Feb. 20: Pros and Cons of Integrative Medicine  
(BB), Interview excerpts on “Pros and Cons of Integrative Medicine”  
*Journal entry 3*

Feb. 22: Exam 1

## **Module 2: Science, Faith and the State**

Feb 27: Health, Disease and Therapy  
Frohock, Preface, Intro, Luke, Chaps. 1 & 2 (vii-44)

Mar. 1: Belief and Reality in Medical Practice  
Frohock, Chap. 3, Luke, Chap. 4 (45-102)

Mar. 6: SPRING RECESS

Mar. 8: SPRING RECESS

Mar. 13: Spiritual Healing  
Frohock, Chaps 5 & 6 (103-165)  
*Journal entry 4*

Mar. 15: Theosophy and Meditative Healing  
Frohock, Luke, Chap. 7 (167-206)

Mar. 20: Political Discourse, Public Conflict  
Frohock, Luke, Chap. 8 (207-239)

Mar. 22: Liberal Governance and Ethical Dilemmas  
Frohock, Chaps. 9 & 10 (241-287)  
*Journal entry 5*

### **Module 3: Alternative Medicine in Cross-Cultural Context**

Mar. 27: Health care in Japan

Guest presentation: Japanese students from Osaka Ohtani University (Jennifer Creamer, translator)

Mar. 29: TBA

April 3: The Cultural Context of Medical Systems

Lock, Preface (v-xi), Preface (xvii-xx) & Intro. (1-20)

*Ethnographic interview project due*

*Journal entry 6*

April 5: Philosophical and Historical Context of East Asian Medicine

Lock, Part I (23-66)

April 10: Attitudes, Beliefs and Health Seeking Behavior

Lock, Part II (67-107)

April 12: Patients, Doctors and Pharmacies

Lock, Part III (111-154)

April 17: Clinics, Medical Schools and Specialists

Lock, Part IV (157-228)

*Journal entry 7*

April 19: Medical Pluralism in Japan

Lock, Part V (231-264)

April 24: Medical pluralism in Mexico

(BB) Schneider, TBA

April 26: Women's Participation in Alternative Health Movements

(BB) Schneider, TBA

*Final exam questions distributed*

*Journal entry 8*

Final exams: April 30-May 4