

IDIS 296
The Anthropology of Alternative Medicine

Dr. Suzanne Schneider

Office hours: Mon. & Wed. 10:30-12:30pm

Office: 318 PPHAC

Tel. 610-625-7015

Spring semester 2008

Course meetings: Tuesdays 12:50- 3:30 pm

Course location: 116 PPHAC

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. As we explore a range of different healing traditions and philosophies, we will rethink the concepts of health, illness, and healing from an alternative medicine perspective. The first half of the course examines key principles and applications of specific alternative medicine modalities, including Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, naturopathy, homeopathy, massage, and mind/body medicine. The second half of the course examines the cultural contexts in which these healing traditions are practiced and their “domestication” in industrialized countries. We will explore alternative health as a social movement while we broaden our understanding of the relevance of non-biomedical healing practices to contemporary cultures.

Required texts:

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

Schneirov, Matthew and Jonathan David Gezik. 2003. *A Diagnosis for our Times: Alternative Health, from Lifeworld to Politics*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Fadlon, Judith. 2006. *Negotiating the Holistic Turn: The Domestication of Alternative Medicine*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Course requirements:

Midterm exam (25%): There will be a midterm exam on February 26 which will cover course material for the first half of the class. The midterm will consist of short and long essay questions that require critical reflection on course material and class discussions. I will provide you with a review guide one week prior to the exams.

Final exam (25%): The final exam will be held on the schedule exam date (TBA) and will cover course material for the second half of the class. The final exam will not cover material from the first half of class, although it will require that you build off of previous terms and concepts. The exam will consist of short and long essay questions that require critical reflection on course material and class discussions. I will provide you with a review guide one week prior to the exams.

Ethnographic interview project (20%) You will be conducting ethnographic interviews with two people who practice or use alternative medicine. Your interviews will seek to understand why your subjects pursue or have pursued alternative medicine, their understanding of the philosophy behind the modalities they used, and their overall experiences with alternative medicine. The paper will be 5-6 pages long and will be due on February 12.

Presentation (10%): You will be placed in groups of three to research and conduct a 10-15 minute presentation on a topic of your choice (a list of possible topics will be provided). Your group will provide a 1-2 page handout for the class on the day of your presentation.

Response papers (10%): You will be asked to write five brief (1-2 page) response papers to course materials that will address specific issues we deal with in class. I will hand out questions for each of these papers a week in advance. Each paper is worth 20 points.

Attendance and participation (10%) This course will entail discussion, short lectures, and group activities. Your regular class attendance and active participation in discussion and group work are required and will be counted for 10% of your grade.

Grading:

Midterm exam	25%
Final exam	25%
Ethnographic interview project	20%
Presentation	10%
Response papers	10%
Attendance and participation	10%

Course Guidelines

1. All assignments must be typed and double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman font. 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. Any assignment that is turned in late will be docked one grade for every course period that it is late.

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, "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. 15: Introduction to the Course

Jan. 22: The Organization of Health Care

Helman: Caring and curing: The sectors of health care (81-120)

Helman: Doctor-patient interactions (121-155)

Jan. 29: Chinese medicine

Collinge, Chapter 2 (13-54)

Film: Healing and the Mind: Mystery of Chi

Feb. 5: Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Homeopathy

Collinge, Chapter 3 -5 (55-166)

Feb. 12: Mind/Body Medicine

Collinge, Chapter 6 (167-204)

Film: Healing and the Mind: Healing Within

Ethnographic paper due

Feb. 19: Osteopathy, Chiropractic, and Massage

Collinge, Chapters 7-9 (205-306)

Feb. 26: The Question of Efficacy

Collinge, Chapter 10 (307-321)

Film: The Alternative Fix

Midterm exam

Mar. 4: SPRING BREAK

Mar. 11: Approaches in NCM Research
Fadlon, Intro, Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-61)

Mar. 18: Clinics, Patients, and the Media in Israel
Fadlon, Chapters 4 - 7 (pp. 63-135)

Mar. 25: Holism and East Asian Therapy in Japan
(On reserve at Reeves) Lock, Chaps 7, 8, 10 & 14 (pp. 111-143, 157-178, 189-194, 217-228)

April 1: Alternative Health and Biomedicine in the US
Schneirov & Geczik, Intro, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-48 & bottom 58-64)

April 8: Auras, Commodities, and Technologies of the Self
Schneirov & Geczik, Chapters 3 & 4 (pp. 65-122)

April 15: New Social Movements
Schneirov & Geczik, Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 123-181)

April 22: Alternative Medicine and Social Change
Schneirov & Geczik, Conclusions (pp. 183-200)

Final exam date TBA