Preliminaries:

The focus of the course will be on 'non-conventional' healers and healing practices in various religious traditions around the globe. The most important themes we shall discuss are: the 'efficacy of religious symbols' for the healing process; cross-cultural notions of the body, of pain, and healing; embodiment of healing powers by religious specialists; ritual performances and their meanings; the importance of sound, sonic imagery, and music to healing processes; the relations of healing practices to cosmology, metaphysics, and sacred narratives; and, finally, the transformations of self and meaning that emerge during or from a cure. The healing traditions we shall read about, by ethnic groups or geographical regions, are the following: (1) indigenous peoples of the Americas and urban mestizos of Latin America; (2) Asian and Southeast Asian; (3) African and African-derived traditions; (4) charismatic Christianity and Pentecostalism. How does each tradition contrast with 'Western' bio-medicine? What relations does each maintain with conventional western bio-medical systems?

Another important issue we shall discuss has to do with our current national health system and whether it is capable of incorporating, or at least collaborating with, non-conventional forms of spiritual healing? Or are the interests of the industrial complex and the pharmaceutical complex more related to controlling the reproduction of a globalized, dominant system of 'scientific', medical knowledge and practice.

Themes to be covered in the Readings:

- Phenomenological (study of experiences) approaches to sickness and healing, among traditional peoples of the Himalayas;

- ‘Aesthetic’ aspects of healing: the importance of the religious imagination in representing pain, the notion of ‘soul-loss’; synaesthesia, ethnopoetics, sonic...
imagery; relations of the fields of ethnomusicology and medical anthropology; traditional healers of Malaysia;

- ‘Performance’: traditional healing relies on a wide variety of performative aspects (e.g., dance and induction of altered states of consciousness) that must be mastered by the healer during his/her training; these aspects are crucial for the !Kung people of the Kalahari Desert who perform ‘community healing’ in which the specialists embody the ancestral energy, or life-force, transmitting it in their cures;

- Diversity of cultural meanings of sickness and healing (in cosmology, cosmogony, ontology, eschatology); the ‘category of the unknown’, reversible ‘deaths’, and levels of ‘knowledge’ in curing; sources of and access to, spiritual ‘power’;

- Plant spirit shamanism, ‘ayahuasca’ curanderos or ‘vegetalistas’ of urban South America who seek through visionary experience a cure for their clients; importance of sacred plants in healing rites;

- Healing as a process consisting of distinct phases; the relations between categories of illness and modes of healing; ritual forms, dietary restrictions, and preventive modes of protection against illness;

- Anthropologist T. Csordas’ idea of ‘embodiment’ of the sacred, in Western Pentecostal Christianity, and its contribution to understanding the processes of healing;

- The relevance of the socio-political contexts in which the non-conventional healers work, its relation to the ‘dominant structures of scientific expertise; AND economic, political power; the “cancer industry.”

**Required Readings (not in order):**

1. Csordas, Thomas. *The Sacred Self: A Cultural Phenomenology of Charismatic Healing*. UC Press. LA 0-520-20884-6. Paperback; On Amazon.com, used, paperback copies sell for 21.89. This is a key book for the course; we will read it in entirety, or as much as possible within a week.


among the Temiar of Malaysia in this superb blend of ethnomusicology and ethnomedicine;


6- Carol Laderman & Marina Roseman, eds. The Performance of Healing, Routledge, NY 1996; this collection presents a wide diversity of healing practices throughout the world. Used Amazon copy is $6.80, BUT I may be scanning a selection of articles and putting them up on the Sakai site for the course;

Total for ALL BOOKS used: $65.00 (less the chapters I will have scanned)

Web Resources:
www.newstudiesonshamanism.com
www.plants-and-religion.com

Calendar of Readings and classes
M – 07/02: Introduction to Course, its approach and requirements, the Sakai website.

Week 1 (07/03 – 07/08): Traditional and non-Traditional Healers
T: Reading "You Will Save Many Lives: Mandu (Baniwa jaguar shaman)"
Shamanism Annual 2011, pp. 9-15; clip, “Blood of the Gods” and accompanying audio-visual material, based on 3 decades of association with Mandu;

Supplementary Reading: Mysteries of the Jaguar shamans. Ancient Knowledge of the Baniwa Maliiri (University of Nebraska Press, 2012), ch. 2.
W: INDEPENDENCE DAY (no class);


http://www.shamanism.org/media/harneraudio_clips.html;

Supplementary Reading:
http://www.shamanism.org/articles/article13page2.html


M: S. Beyer, *Singing to the Plants*, Part I, chs. 1-5;
T: S. Beyer, chs.: 14-19, Film: “Shipibo Icaros”,
R: S. Beyer, chs.: 31-35;
F: Discussion and Reaction Papers.

**Week 3 (07/16 – 07/20): Himalayan Healers, Aesthetics and Bodily Emotion**

M: Desjarlais, chs.: 1-3; Film: “The Knowledge of Healing... Dorschi Dugarow” (2004, Icarus Films);
T: Desjarlais, chs.: 4-6;
W: Desjarlais, chs.: 7-9;
R: Film: “Fate of the Lhapas” (2007); http://www.der.org/films/ fate-of-the-lhapa.html


F (07/20): MID-TERM TAKE-HOME EXAM

**Week 4 (07/23 – 07/27): Malaysian Healers: Sound and Healing**
M: Roseman, chs. 1-2; the shamans, in context.
T: Roseman, chs.: 3-4; Film, “Temiar Healing Rite”;
W: Roseman, chs.: 5-6; Film, “Trance & Possession in Java” (2011);
R: Roseman, chs.: 7; Film, “The Medium is the Masseuse” (1982-3);
F: Discussion and Film reaction papers

Week 5 (07/30 – 08/03): Boiling Energy !Kung of the Kalahari and Community Healing
M: R. Katz, chs.: 1 – 4;
T: Katz, chs.: 5 - 8; Film: “A Curing Ceremony”
W: Katz: chs.: 9 - 12; Film, “N’um Tchai (Medicine Dance)”, (John Marshall)
R: Katz, chs.: 13 - 17; Film, “Bushmen’s Secret”
F: Discussion and Film reaction papers

Week 6 (08/06 – 08/10): charismatic healing in The Sacred Self, by Thomas Csordas.
M: Csordas, ch. 1;
T: Csordas, ch. 2;
W: Csordas, ch 3; Film: “NUMEN: THE NATURE OF PLANTS”, by Terrence Youk & Ann Armbrecht, 2012;
R: Film: “DYING TO HAVE KNOWN” THE POLITICS OF CONVENTIONAL AND NON-CONVENTIONAL CANCER THERAPY
F: Discussion

FINAL PAPERS DUE: 08/13 (5 p.m.). Late papers will not be received unless documented justification is provided. Send by email or deliver to Department of Religion before 5 p.m.

Course Requirements

The course requirements are:
1) Do Readings on time, according to course schedule; any changes will be announced in advance on course website;
2) A mid-term take-home exam, worth 35% of the final grade;
3) A final paper, 8 pp., worth 35% of the final grade; topics to be announced at end of 5th week of course;
4) Three (3) ‘reaction papers’(500 words apiece) to audio-visual material (videos), worth 30% of final grade.

Course Regulations:
1. **Plagiarism or cheating:** Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive a grade of zero on the assignment in question and will fail the course. In addition, they will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else’s material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without according him/her proper recognition (through a footnote, for instance). Other forms of cheating (particularly downloading material from the Internet and presenting as if it were yours) will also be subject to the same action. See http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htmhttp://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm for more information on UF policies.

2. **Incompletes are strongly discouraged** and will be given only when students who have finished most of the assignments satisfactorily cannot complete the final requirements due to unforeseen events. If this is the case, students must arrange for the incomplete **before** the end of the semester.

3. **Make-up exams and quizzes** will be given only under very special circumstances, such as a medical emergency. In that case, students must bring a doctor’s note.

4. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom. Please turn phones and pagers off during class.

5. **Students with Disabilities.** Students requesting classroom accommodation or special consideration must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation or special consideration.