

## General Information

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### Professor Information



**Instructor :** Erin  
Weston

**Office :** DM-528

**E-Mail :** eweston@fiu.edu

**Phone :** (305) 348-1329

**Office By  
Hours :** Appointment

**Website :** <https://religion.fiu.edu/faculty/full-time/faculty/erin-weston/>

### Course Description and Purpose

This online course investigates healing outside the norm of the USA through mediumship, channeling, PSI (paranormal psychological phenomena), shamans, animals and plants and offers a unique experience through alternative global practices that are studied through the use of texts, energetic readings, video streaming, artwork and resources information. In addition, the skeptic viewpoint that questions the validity of such healing and PSI experiences is included. An overview of accepted global alternatives in health and religious practices of categories that were considered taboo in Western medicine for many years, are currently being investigated and implemented by institutions of higher learning, universities and research laboratories in the US and world-wide. "Healers and Mediums" (through religious and cultural practices) treat diseases, maladies, and physical-emotional-spiritual problems encountered by human beings. Many treatments have been used for hundreds or thousands of years, and lie outside the normative practice of Western science, technology and medical practices.

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## Course Objectives

- Define the terms healer/s and medium/s using the glossary of terms for the course.
- Develop an understanding of the role that healers, mediums and shamans play in cultural and cross-cultural societies and describe some of their alternative methods of healing.
- Recognize patterns of evolutionary change past rituals and practices used in healing that may play a role in reshaping future traditions of aesthetics and cultural values.
- Recognize shamans exist within in specific community and that shamanism per se is not considered a specific religion or denomination within a religious realm in western concepts even though some shamanic beliefs have similar practices.
- Demonstrate knowledge of some alternative methods of healing and how they are being incorporated into medical practices of western medicine, i.e. meditation, yoga, acupressure and acupuncture.
- Describe healing methods that include ethnobotany: the use of plants in healing, and describe some plants used in healing. Note the indigenous cultures use of plants.
- Explain in definitive terms how animal are healers and used in the healing process through analysis of their importance today.
- Define PSI and the believers who support PSI experiences.
- Define skepticism from the glossary of terms and the accompanying skeptic viewpoints; synthesize why the skeptical viewpoint is important.
- Distinguish global perspectives that shape trends in healing systems like reincarnation or past-life regressions.
- Gain an appreciation for the diversity of healing methods for life on Earth as well as competing ways to heal the maladies of the body from global perspectives the lie outside the Western medical practices.
- Compare and contrast healing from areas like Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and South America.
- Relate the above objectives in problem solving regarding healing methods from the course beginning with the pre-course survey and connecting the solutions through the post course survey.

## Global Learning Course Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic and other values) that have been known to influence practices, both currently and historically, in diverse cultural contexts.
- Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their and others' understanding of a deeper and broader scope of healing on Earth- economically, political, sociological, technological, and cultural.
- Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems and be able to articulate the causes and contributions to these problems.

**This is a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts toward your graduation requirement.**

Important Information

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## Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies and Netiquette](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

As a member of the FIU community you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Code of Conduct](#).

## Technical Requirements and Skills

One of the greatest barriers to taking an online course is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently, and learning to use your computer, operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course; but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency using a computer. Please go to the [What's Required](#) webpage to find out more information on this subject.

Privacy Policy Statements for partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Adobe](#)
- [Google](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock \(PDF\)](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [NBC Learn](#)
- [OpenStax](#)
- [Adobe Connect](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)
- [Zoom](#)

Please visit our [Technical Requirements](#) webpage for additional information.

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## Accessibility and Accommodation

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

Web Accessibility Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Adobe](#)
- [Google](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock](#)
- [OpenStax](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [NBC Learn](#)
- [Adobe Connect](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)
- [Zoom](#)

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for additional information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

## Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

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## Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

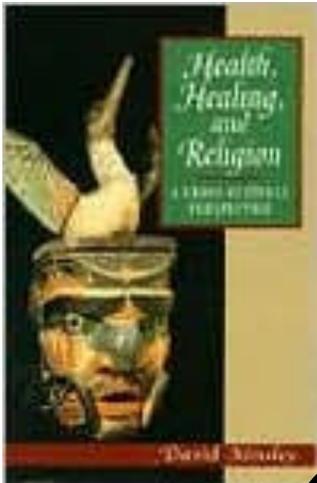
If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with [FIU's Panthers Care website](#).

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

## Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

## Textbook and Course Materials



**Title:** Health, Healing, and Religion: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

**Authors:** David Kinsley

**Publisher:** Prentice Hall, 1st Edition, 1996

**Publish Date:** 1996

**ISBN 10:** 0132127717

**ISBN 13:** 978-0132127714

[Purchase/Rent at FIU Bookstore](#)

Textbook Description

## Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

## Course Detail

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## Course Communication

Communication in this course will take place via the Canvas Inbox. Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) or [Canvas Guide](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox. I will respond to all correspondences within 48 hours.

## Assessments

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

All assessments will auto-submit when (1) the timer runs out OR (2) the closing date/time is reached, **whichever happens first**. For example, if a quiz has a closing time of 5:00 pm but the student begins the exam at 4:55 pm, the student will only have 5 minutes to complete the quiz.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

## Quizzes

There will be fully online quizzes covering each section. Quiz scores will be averaged together for a final quiz score worth 10% of your final grade. All quizzes consist of 10 multiple-choice questions, and each question will be worth 10 points. A quiz will be available from Monday 12:00 pm till Monday 11:59 pm of the given week. Once you open a quiz, you will have 30 minutes to complete and submit it. You will have two attempts to take a quiz. The highest score will be counted.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

## Exams

There will be three non-cumulative exams based on the readings and materials covered throughout the course. Each exam will be worth 15% of your final grade. All exams consist of multiple choice, fill in the blanks, true/false, short essay questions, and each question will be worth 2 points. Essays will be worth 10 points each. Exams must be taken during their availability period. Once you open an exam, you will have 60 minutes to complete and submit it.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the "Practice Quiz" from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. It is your responsibility to make sure your computer meets the minimum [hardware requirements](#).

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

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## Journal Reflections

There will be weekly journal reflections, which will only be seen by the student and the professor. These reflections will only be graded that they were completed, but not for content. This will provide an opportunity for students to interact privately with the professor in regards to the course content. Journals may be a short paragraph, but must be turned in on time to receive credit. Altogether, the journal entries will be worth 7% of your overall grade.

## Blogs

Blogs are an open communications tool for students to share their thoughts. Here you can post text, images, links and attachments, open for comments. These will be completed within Discussions on Canvas. Blogs can be found in Discussion on the course menu or within the content area of the course.

- There will be ten course blog topics. The topics will be posted in the "Discussion" of the Course Content. Students must post well thought-out comments based on the required work throughout the semester. Participation is required and represents 11% of your final grade. Both the quantity and the quality of your posts will contribute to your grade. All students are required to participate in all of the three topics (at least 200 words). Blogs must be posted during the period they are assigned and are due by 11:57 pm on the Monday which ends that particular lesson.
- Once you have composed your original posting, take some time to carefully review other postings within your discussion group. Pick two that are most interesting to you and provide meaningful, detailed, and constructive feedback.
- Keep in mind that your blog postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

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## Critical Book Review

For your paper, you will write a critical book review on a book of your choice. I have posted a list of possible options, but you are free to choose other books as well. Each essay will be between 1200 to 2000 words long and will be worth 15% of your grade. These are formal academic essays and students must cite their sources. MLA is the preferred citation style in Religious Studies.

Turnitin- Read [Turnitin's Privacy Policy](#)

**Late Papers:** Late papers are only accepted under extreme and verifiable conditions.

Students are responsible for reading their messages and all announcements posted by the instructor. The instructor also reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus by means of announcements or messages with ample time allowed for students to respond and adjust appropriately.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, or attempting to pass off another's work as your own, falls into three different categories:

1. A written work that is entirely stolen from another source;
2. Using quotations from another source without properly citing them; and
3. Paraphrasing from another source without proper citations.

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. See the University Code of Academic Integrity at <http://www.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/2codeofacainteg.htm> if you need further clarification. Offenders will receive a grade of F for the plagiarized assignment, and possibly the course.

### Important:

You will need to do research; your textbook and required readings will not have enough information about the topic. You will need to consult a minimum of three outside sources and one must be a book reference. You will also need notes in your paper, and a Bibliography/Works Cited page in MLA style.

Do not use Wikipedia as an internet source. You may use internet sources, but use only academic sources from the internet. (Academic sources list individual authors, name their sources, and have institutional affiliations.) Points will be deducted for infractions of these rules.

If you have questions regarding how to cite or what to cite, ask me BEFORE you submit your essay. If you turn in your paper and you "accidentally" plagiarize part of your essay, you will fail the assignment and possibly the course. Better safe than sorry! To reiterate, ask me before the due date if you are unsure about how to cite your sources.

\*\*Students may not submit work from a previous semester or from another class for this assignment or any other assignment in this course. It will be flagged for plagiarism by Turnitin.

Review the grademark comments (feedback) from your professor.

## Individual Wiki Presentation

After you have written your critical book review, you will also create your own wiki page for your book. This wiki will be shared with the class. Your wiki page will present an overview of your chosen book, and will also include your analysis of the book applying the Religious Studies concepts that we have covered in class. This assignment is worth 8% of your overall grade.

You may research other wikis, but you must write and create your own page. Please see the sample wiki in module 3 content area.

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## Course Requirements

In addition to the completion of writing assignments, discussions, quizzes, and exams, a key requirement for successful completion of this course will be an open mind. Students are expected to exhibit respect to all religious traditions and peoples at all times. Thus, disrespectful or derisive commentary will not be tolerated in this course. Religion is, after all, a very personal and sensitive subject for many.

On the other hand, class participants can expect academic freedom to express their views. Although religion can be personal, this is an academic course taken for college credit and thus students are expected to examine the topics rigorously. Religion shall not be exempt from the scrutiny placed on any and all academic subjects.

## Zoom

In this course we will use a free, online web tool Zoom in order to schedule online meetings between students and Professor Weston.

With Zoom, you can share a story, celebrate a birthday, learn a language, hold a meeting, work with colleagues – just about anything you need to do together every day. You can use Zoom on whatever works best for you - on your phone or computer or a TV with Zoom on it.

## Grading

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points for Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Biography	1	10		2%
Journal	8	10		7%
Blogs	10	10		11%
Quizzes	10	100		10%
Exams	3	100	15%	45%
Critical Book Review	1	100		15%
Wiki Presentation	1	100		8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>			<b>100%</b>

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Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)	Letter	Range (%)
A	95 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87-89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

## Course Calendar

### Weekly Schedule

Date	Location
<p><b>Introduction</b> August 24 - August 31</p>	<p><b>Tasks:</b> Purchase textbook, start reading ahead</p> <p><b>Video:</b> <i>Evaluating Evidence</i></p> <p><b>Due:</b> Biography</p>
<p><b>Skepticism</b> August 29 - Sep 7</p>	<p><b>Tasks:</b></p> <p><b>Review:</b> PPT - Skepticism</p> <p><b>Read:</b> <i>The Burden of Skepticism</i></p> <p><b>Videos:</b> <i>Skepticism</i> <i>The Baloney Detection Kit</i> <i>Cl explained without Magic</i> (optional video)</p> <p><b>Website:</b> James Randi</p> <p><b>Due:</b> Blog 1 Quiz 1 Journal</p>
<p><b>Shamanism</b></p>	<p><b>Tasks:</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b> Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3,</p> <p><b>Videos:</b> <i>Native American Healers</i> <i>Brazilian Healing</i></p>

Sept. 7 - Sept. 14 *Phuket Pain Rituals*  
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**Due:** Blog 2  
Quiz 2

**Case Studies**  
Sept. 14 - Sept. 21

**Tasks:**

**Read:** Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7

Optional Reading - Yoruba

**Videos:**

*Possession*  
*Hmong Shamanism*  
*Incan Blood Ritual*  
*Santeria Ritual*

**Due:**

Blog 3  
Quiz 3  
Journal

**Themes in Healing**

Sept. 21 - Sept. 28

**Tasks:**

**Read:**

Chapter 8

*Disease Ecologies in Non-Western Medical Systems*

*Folk Magic & Symbolism in the West*

*Shamanism & Neurotheology* (optional reading)

**Videos:**

**Webpage:** Culture Specific Diseases

**Due:**

Blog 4  
Quiz 4

**Tasks:**

**Review:** PPTS - *Plants & In the House of Animals*

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**Read:**

*Emotions of Animals*  
*Psychedelic Drugs and Religious Experience*  
*The Magic Drink of the Amazon*

**Plants & Animals**

Sept. 28 - October 5

**Videos:** *The Animal Communicator*  
*Jungle to "Civilization" - How Plant Medicine Can Promote Health in a Toxic Culture*  
*San Pedro Ceremony*  
*Fire on the Mountain (optional video)*

**Due:**

Blog 5  
Quiz 5  
Journal

October 5 - October 12

**Due:** Exam 1  
Book Proposal

**Tasks:**

**Read:** Chapters 9, 10, 11

**Videos:**

*In Search of Lourdes*  
*A Day in the Life of a Modern Exorcist*  
*Man Crucified Every Year*  
*Padre Pio*  
*Charismatic Catholicism*

**Healing in the Christian Church**

October 12 - Oct. 19

**Due:**

Blog 6  
Quiz 6  
Journal

**Tasks:**

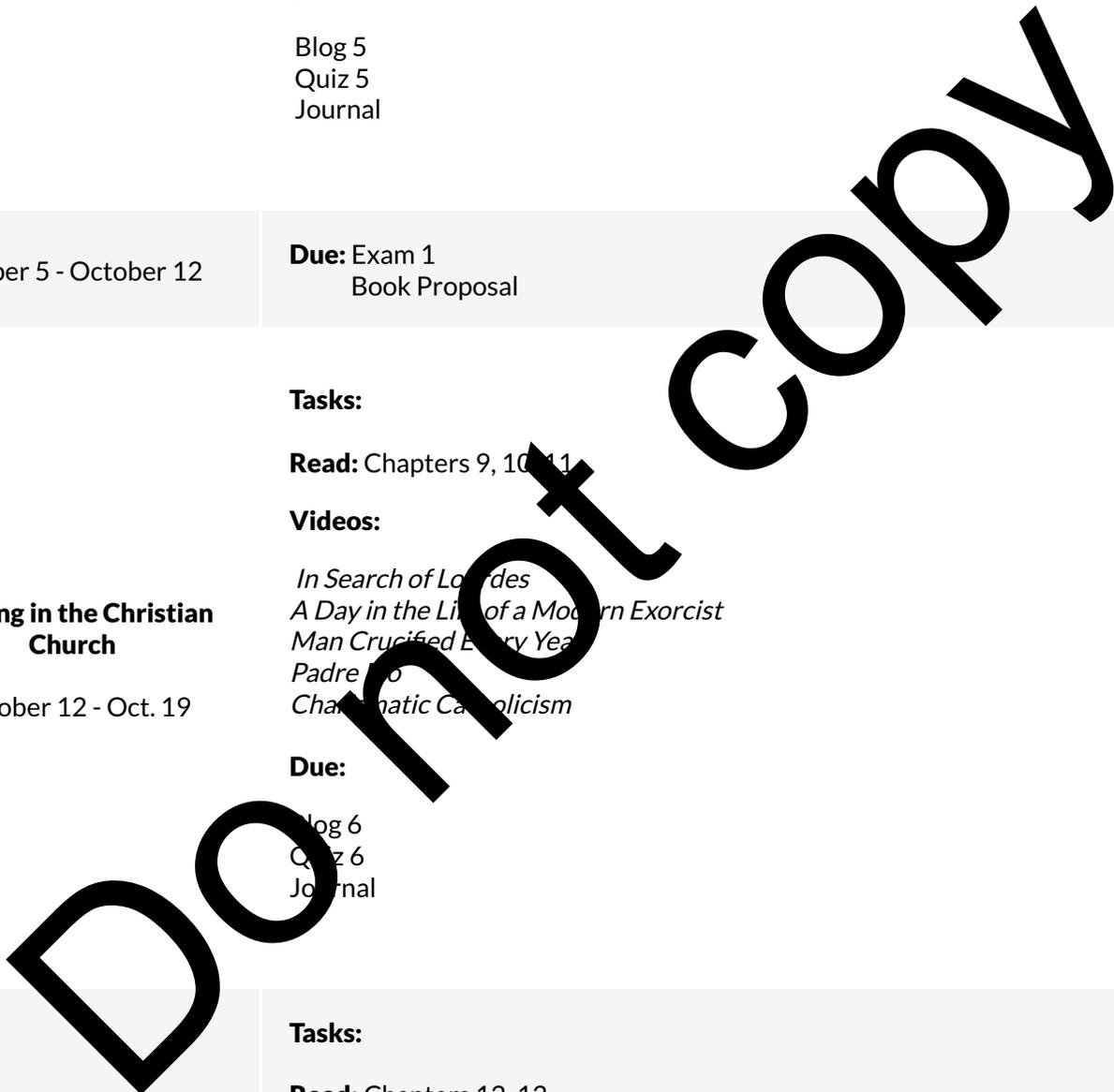
**Read:** Chapters 12, 13

**Videos:**

*What is Pentecostalism?*  
*My Life Inside: The Snake Church*  
*Pentecostal Service*  
*Speaking in Tongues (Service Example)*  
*Glossolalia: The Science of Speaking in Tongues*  
*Vice- Teenage Exorcists*

**N. American Faith Healers**

October 19 - Oct. 26



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**Due:**  
Blog 7  
Quiz 7

**Tasks:**

**Read:**

*Espiritismo: Creole Spiritism in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the United States*  
*Hypnosis and Trance Induction in the Surgeries of Brazilian Spiritist Healer-Mediums*  
Glossary: New Age Concepts

***Espiritismo & Reincarnation***

October 26 - Nov. 2

**Videos:**

*Spiritualism in the West (parts 1-4)*  
*Nosso Lar* Trailer  
*Allan Kardec: Fundamentals of the Spiritist Philosophy*  
*The Boy Who Lived Before*  
Interview with Jim B. Tucker  
Children's Past Lives

**Due:**

Blog 8  
Quiz 8  
Journal

**Tasks:**

**Read:**

*The Resurgence of Magic: Religion as a Response to the Crisis of Modernity: A Postmodernist Perspective*  
*Depth Psychological Perspective*  
*Amulets & Anthropology: A Paranormal Encounter with Malay Magic*  
PSI Glossary Terms

**PSI**

Nov. 2- Nov. 9

**Videos:**

*OBE's*  
*Expanded Consciousness and Psi Phenomena*

**Due:**

Blog 9  
Quiz 9

Nov. 9 - Nov. 16

**Due:** Exam 2

**Tasks:**

**Read:**

Chapters 14, 15, 16

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*What if the Placebo Effect Isn't a Trick?*  
*Religious Development: A Synthesis and Reformulation*

**Modern Medical Culture**

Nov. 16 - Nov. 23

**Videos:**

*Unified Theory of Everything*

**Due:**

Blog 10  
Quiz 10  
Journal

**Read:**

Chapters 17, 18

*The Rave: Spiritual Healing in Modern Western Subcultures*

*Embers, Dust, and Ashes: Pilgrimage and Healing at the Burning Man Festival*

*You are What You Eat: Religious Aspects of the Health Movement*

**Modern Western Subcultures**

Nov. 23 - Nov. 30

**Videos:**

*The Potential Role of Epigenetics in Ayahuasca Shamanism*

*The Search for Purpose and Meaning*

*Living Your Best Life*

**Due:**

Blog 11  
Quiz 11  
Critical Book Review

**Presentations**

Nov. 30 - Dec. 7

**Due:**

Student Wiki Presentations  
Journal

Dec. 7 - Dec. 12

**Due:** Exam 3

