

SPIRITUALITY AND THE HEALTH SCIENCES

Syllabus

IDH 3931 (Section 11C5)

Class Number: 20856

PLACE & TIME: 117 Little Hall, Wednesdays, 5:10-8:10PM (Periods 10-E1)

CREDITS: 3 Semester Hours

Instructor:

Louis A. Ritz, Ph.D.

Associate Professor Emeritus

Director, UF Center for Spirituality and Health

Department of Neuroscience, College of Medicine

Office: L1-116, McKnight Brain Institute

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: lritz@ufl.edu

Course Overview:

The Honors Spirituality and Health course is intended for all students, particularly those engaged in pre-medical, pre-counseling or health-related majors, who are interested in exploring the interface of spirituality and the health sciences. Interest in the intersection of spirituality and health is rapidly growing in our society, as we seek meaning and purpose in our lives and a more holistic approach to our wellness and our health challenges. Course topics will include: stress reduction through non-judgmental living in the present moment (mindfulness); mind-body relationships; links between religion/spirituality and health; brain-based drug addiction and the spiritually based 12-step program; scientific evaluation of the impact of prayer on our health; spiritual approaches to our lives; lessons on living from those who are dying; and stories that heal. The course is, at its heart, a semester-long, student-centered, dialogue about how various aspects of spirituality impact our health at the level of body, mind, and spirit.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, students will be able to do the following.

- 1) Discuss the qualities of a spiritual individual and definitions of "spirituality";
- 2) Compare and contrast spirituality with health, religion, and science;
- 3) Discuss the concept of mindfulness, its application to everyday living, and the factors that prevent us from being mindful;
- 4) Discuss the role of mindfulness in interrelationships, either personal or professional;
- 5) Describe Dossey's three eras of medicine, including concepts of mind-body relations;
- 6) Assess different perspectives and definitions of "health";
- 7) Describe Jeff Levin's links between spirituality/religion and health;
- 8) Discuss addiction as a biological disease (at least in part) and the spiritual aspects of the 12-step program as a therapeutic intervention;
- 9) Discuss what prayer is and how its effects on health can be evaluated scientifically;
- 10) Discuss Roger Walsh's essential spirituality – the seven spiritual approaches to our lives;
- 11) Describe Paul Kalanithi's challenges to living (his work) and to dying;
- 12) Discuss how telling and listening to stories, including life's challenges, can be healing;
- 13) Discuss a potential expansion of our personal belief systems to incorporate a holistic view of the entire human being;
- 14) Appreciate healthcare as applied spirituality.

Requirements, Assessment, and Grades:

I - Attendance, Participation, and Internet Research Project: 20%;

- 1) You are expected to complete assigned readings prior to each class.
- 2) Attendance will be taken each class. You may miss 1 class or 2 halves; more than that you will lose points. Please plan your Wednesday evenings accordingly.
- 3) The course is a semester-long, student-centered conversation, facilitated by the Course Director, about the “gray” areas of life. We hope to facilitate a “collective self-discovery” during this course through our group discussions. As such, participation from each student is critical.
- 4) Starting in the fourth week and continuing for the remainder of the course, we will have three five-minute student presentations based on internet research. Each student will present a unique website and discuss a new aspect of a topic that has been covered in class.

II - There will be 5 4-page papers (1200 words), each worth 16% (80% total). The papers are based on an integration of your reflections, understanding, and insights of our readings and classroom discussions.

UF Class Attendance Policies:

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

UF Grading Policies:

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at

<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/> . Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/ .

Class Culture:

- 1) This is a paperless course. All discussion materials, other than the books, will be sent to the students as a PDF. The reflection papers will be emailed to the Course Director as a WORD document (**.doc or .docx only**).
- 2) Out of respect for each student’s contributions to our discussions, we will give everyone our full attention. Please do not check your email during class time. There will be a break during each class session.

Required Reading List – Please purchase these books new or used, share with a classmate, get them on your e-reader, etc. Note that it is the “big” ideas in these books that we should focus on.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (2005)
Larry Dossey, *Reinventing Medicine: Beyond Mind-Body to a New Era of Healing* (2000)
Roger Walsh, *Essential Spirituality: The 7 Central Practices to Awaken Heart and Mind* (2000)
Paul Kalanithi, *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016)
Rachel Naomi Remen, *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal* (2006)

Course Schedule:

Jan 5 (class 1) – *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (Part 1) Meditation and Mindfulness
Jan 12 (class 2) – *Wherever You Go, There You Are* (Part 3) Meditation and Mindfulness
Jan 19 (class 3) – Handouts: *What is Spirituality? Is God All in Our Head?*

Paper 1 – TBA

Due via email by 4PM on Wed, Jan 26

Return via email by 4PM on Wed, Feb 2

Jan 26 (class 4) – *Essential Spirituality* (Section 1-14)
Feb 2 class 5) – *Essential Spirituality* (Section 15-26)
Feb 9 (class 6) – *Essential Spirituality* (Section 27-36)

Paper 2 – TBA

Due via email by 4PM on Wed, Feb 16

Return via email by 4PM on Wed, Feb 23

Feb 16 (class 7) – *Reinventing Medicine* (chapters 1-3); Experimental Approaches to Prayer
Feb 23 (class 8) – *Reinventing Medicine* (chapters 4-6); Jeff Levin handout
Mar 2 – (class 9) – Addiction and Spirituality; Handouts
Mar 9 – Spring Break
Mar 16 (class 10) – Addiction and Spirituality; Handouts

Paper 3 – TBA

Due via email by 4PM on Wed, Mar 23

Return via email by 4PM on Wed, Mar 30

Mar 23 (class 11) – *When Breath Becomes Air*
Mar 30 (class 12) – Selective handouts on death and dying

Paper 4 – TBA

Due via email by 4PM on Wed, Apr 6

Return via email by 4PM on Wed, Apr 13

Apr 6 (class 13) – *Kitchen Table Wisdom*
Apr 13 (class 14) – *Kitchen Table Wisdom*
Apr 20 (class 15) – *Kitchen Table Wisdom*

Paper 5 – TBA

Due via email by 4PM on Wed, April 27

Grades in by Friday, April 29