This course will explore the influence of religion and spirituality on mental health. Topics covered will include research on spirituality and religion and their interface, as well as the demographic correlates (e.g., age, gender, race) of religious participation. With regards to mental health, the course will examine several issues including: 1) religion and its relation to psychological well-being, depression, suicide, and anxiety disorders such as OCD, 2) religious coping strategies, 3) the use of clergy for mental health problems, 4) church based social support networks and 5) religion and substance abuse. The use of religion and religious frameworks in interpersonal practice will also be examined.

1. Course Design:

The course format will include lectures, discussion, individual assignments.

2. Relationship of the Course to Four Curricular Themes:

- Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed throughout this course. The course will cover religion and mental health among several racial and ethnic groups including non-hispanic whites, African Americans, Black Caribbeans, Native Americans and Mexican Americans. It also covers several religious denominations including Jews, Muslims and Hindus. Content related to cultural differences in religious beliefs and how that may impact counseling and mental health will be highlighted.

- Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed in content on cultural competency and understanding differences in religious beliefs among different religious denominations.

- Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation will be addressed through content on the efficacy of religious and spiritually-based treatment and treatment programs in religious settings (churches).

- Behavioral and Social Science Research will be presented throughout the course and will include findings from Social Work, Psychology, Religious Studies, Gerontology and Psychiatry.
3. Relationship of the Course to Social Work Ethics and Values:
This course will address ethical and value issues related to religious and spiritual based counseling. In particular, an emphasis will be placed on when it is appropriate or inappropriate to pray with clients or use other spiritual and religious based practices. The NASW Code of Ethics on Cultural Competence and Social Diversity as well as other literature will be used to inform practice in this area.

4. Intensive Focus on Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS):
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on diversity. In particular, the course investigates ethnic and cultural diversity with regards to racial and ethnic groups (African Americans, Black Caribbeans, Mexican Americans and Native Americans), as well as religious denominations (Jews, Muslims).

CLASS SCHEDULE

September 8  Overview of Course and Religion and Mental Health, Demographic Correlates of Religious Participation/Spirituality

September 15  Religion and Spirituality

Readings:


Optional Readings:


**September 22**  
Religious Coping and Use of Religion in Counseling 1

Readings:


Optional Readings:


**September 29**  
Use of Religion in Counseling 2

Readings:


Optional Readings:


October 6 Use of Religion in Counseling 3

Readings:

Required:


Optional:


October 13 Fall Study Break

October 19 Midterm Due at 5:00
October 20  Religious Diversity and Use of Religion in Counseling

Readings:


Optional: Readings:

October 27 Use of Clergy for Mental Health Problems

Readings:


Optional: Readings:


November 3 Congregational Support

Readings:


November 10        Religion and Depression/Mental Illness

Readings:


Optional Reading:


November 17        Religion and Suicide

Readings:


Optional Reading:

Colucci, Erminia and Graham Martin. 2008. Religion and spirituality along the suicidal path. *Suicide and Life Threatening Behavior, 38*, 229–44.

November 24       Religion and Anxiety

Readings:


Optional Readings:


December 1       Religion, Risky Behaviors and Substance Abuse

Readings:


December 8       Poster Session       5-8 McGregor Commons

December 10      Submit final paper (by 5 p.m.)