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, Sociology, 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 14  Overview of Course and
Religion and Mental Health,
Demographic Correlates of Religious Participation/Spirituality

September 21  Religion and Spirituality

Readings:


Optional Readings:

**September 28  Religious Coping and Use of Religion in Counseling 1**

Readings:


Optional Readings:


**October 5  Use of Religion in Counseling 2**

Readings:


**Optional Readings:**


**October 12 Use of Religion in Counseling 3**

**Readings:**

**Required:**


**Optional:**


**October 19-20**    Fall Study Break

**October 24**    Midterm Due at 5:00

**October 26**    Religious Diversity and Use of Religion in Counseling 4

**Readings:**


**Optional: Readings:**


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**November 2 Use of Clergy for Mental Health Problems**

**Readings:**


**Optional: Readings:**


**November 9**    **Congregational Support**

Readings:


**November 16**    **Religion and Depression/Mental Illness**

Readings:


Optional Reading:


**November 23  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 30  Religion and Anxiety**

Readings:


Optional Readings:


**December 7**  
**Religion, Risky Behaviors and Substance Abuse**

**Readings:**


**Optional Readings:**


**December 14**  
**Poster Session**  
5-8 McGregor Commons

**December 15**  
Submit final paper (by 5 p.m.)
Course Administrative Tasks

Attendance
You are expected to attend and to be prepared to take part in each class session. Attendance is important for you to keep up with course work. Missing 2 unexcused classes will reduce your final grade (e.g. an A will be reduced to an B) and each additional absence will reduce your final grade an additional half grade. As adult learners, I expect you to make appropriate decisions about attending class. Please notify me as soon as possible if you must miss a class. It is your responsibility to get materials, handouts, or class notes from one of your classmates if you are unable to be in class. Please be aware of the disruptive nature of coming to class late; enter the classroom as quietly as possible and wait until break to catch up with what is going on. If you anticipate that you will be absent for religious observances, please let me know ahead of time so that we can plan accordingly.

Laptops and Electronic Devices: This class involves both lecture and discussion. As such, laptops, and tablets can only be used for taking notes. They cannot be used for e-mail, social media or other use during class time. Cell phones are not permitted in the classroom. Use of these devices can be a distraction to both the user and their fellow classmates. Students are asked to refrain from their use in order to promote a more engaged classroom environment.

Phones and Pagers: In consideration of your classmates, and due to their disruptive nature, I request that all telephones and pagers are turned off while you are in class. This is your time and I want you to be able to protect it. If you are required to carry a pager, please set it to vibrate only.

Accommodations for Students With Disabilities: If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know early in the term. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://ssd.umich.edu) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. If there are any circumstances and/or adaptations that are required for instruction or the classroom situation, please consult me.

Religious Holidays and Academic Conflicts: From the Provost’s Office: Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University’s policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be
demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course. Should disagreement arise over any aspect of this policy, the parties involved should contact the Department Chair, the Dean of the School, or the Ombudsperson. Final appeals will be resolved by the provost.

Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class or due dates for assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.
Assignments

1. All students are expected to read the required articles prior to each class and to be prepared to discuss them. All required articles are available on C-Tools.
2. All students are expected to write 3 discussion points/questions per article and post them on C-Tools by 5:00 p.m. the day before class.
3. All students are required to write a 5-7 page paper on the topic of religious diversity and counseling for the Mid-term assignment.
4. All students will be responsible for making an oral presentation on a topic on religion, mental health and counseling. The topic must be approved by the instructor. Each presentation should be a professional power point presentation drawing upon evidence based research. The presentation should be 10 minutes with 10-15 minutes for question and answer.
5. All students are required to write a 6-8 page final paper.
6. All students are required to produce a poster and participate in a class poster session which will be open to all individuals in the School of Social Work. The poster session will be held the last day of class.
7. The oral presentation, poster session and final paper are all on the same topic. Students are expected to incorporate reasonable feedback from their oral presentation in their poster and final paper.
8. All due dates are included on the class syllabus.

Grading:

10% Class readings, participation and discussion questions/points
30% Mid-Term
10% Oral Presentation and Poster
50% Final Paper