

Spirituality and Helping HSER 415-01 Spring 2015

Class sessions: Mondays 6:00–9:20 p.m., Midway Room 12

Faculty

Therissa Libby, Ph.D.

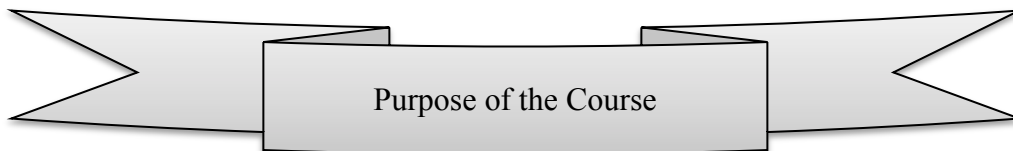
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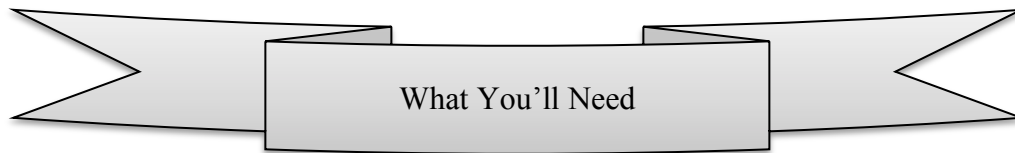
This is what I want you to be able to do in the world (**learner outcomes**):

- Identify aspects of religious and spiritual views concerning issues of human diversity, human development, and social dynamics
- Evaluate the influence of these views on existing helping ideologies and paradigms
- Critically reflect upon diverse religious and spiritual perspectives and their implications for the helping process: the client, the helper and the helping relationship
- Consider the qualities and competencies of spiritually-sensitive helping
- Frame and analyze arguments related to issues of spirituality and helping
- Develop a framework of knowledge, theory, values, and skills for spiritually-sensitive practice

This is what we work on the course (**learner objectives**):

- Considering a variety of religious and spiritual perspectives as they relate to the helping professions
- Examining the roles of family and culture in the formation of a religious and/or spiritual identity
- Reporting on findings from research literature on some aspect of spirituality and helping
- Performing a thoughtful analysis of a religious or spiritual tradition different from your own, and examining how you can best serve someone from that tradition who is seeking help
- Designing a personal statement regarding spiritually-sensitive practice
- Reflecting on your experience in this class through journaling
- Engaging in specific spiritual practices, such as mindfulness meditation and walking the labyrinth

This is the official word on what we're doing here (**course description**): For the past 30 years, helping professionals have deliberated about the role and integration of spirituality or religion in their practice. It is accepted that as clients' race, ethnicity, and culture affect their thoughts, feelings, and behavior, so similarly do clients' spiritual or religious orientations affect how they function in world and thus perceive and deal with their problems. This course is designed to introduce students to the issues related to spirituality and helping as well as to provide a framework for developing an ethical spiritually-sensitive practice that is cognizant of the significance of these orientations. Students will explore relevant knowledge, skill, and value competencies for success in this frontier of the helping field.



Willingness to prepare for, attend and participate in each class session: If you complete the assignments, come to class, find ways to be involved in what's going on in the classroom and use the resources available to you, you'll get what you need to get out of this class, and your grade will reflect that. *If you're doing all those things and not succeeding, see me.* This class is highly discussion-oriented, and completion of the between-class assignments is key to full participation. Perfection is not necessary, but dedication is. **Course policy:** Missing more than two class sessions results in a failing grade.

Focus: Both in class and when studying, you learn better when you reduce distractions. Find study places and times that let you bring your full and sustained attention to your work. You improve your own and others' classroom experience when you arrive before class starts, stay until the end, get up and move around during breaks, and silence and put away your phone. **Course policy:** Phones are to be silenced or turned off during class; no calls, texting or emailing during class.

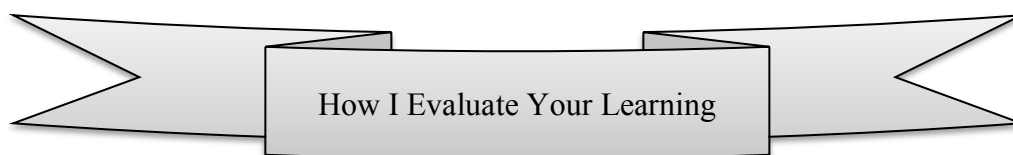
Integrity: You don't succeed in this course unless you are doing your own work (regardless of what grade you receive). You're expected to maintain academic integrity in fulfilling all course requirements. Cheating, plagiarizing and other violations of academic integrity are dishonest and unacceptable practices, and consequences for them may include failing an exam or assignment, failing the course, probation, suspension or expulsion. **Metro policy:** See D2L for the Student Conduct Code Procedure (Procedure 219).

A computer with printer and Internet access: This course includes D2L content, written assignments and online research. Readings for each week's class session, which include book chapters, journal articles and web content, will be posted on D2L. Periodically, assignments will also include videos, which either be embedded or linked to in D2L. You'll also need to spend many hours using a computer for

word processing and finding information online. To find out more about campus computer labs, use this shortcut: tinyurl.com/metro-computers

Your Metro State email account: Check your Metro State email for course announcements, reminders, D2L updates and other course matters, and *always email me from your Metro State email account*. Emails from other accounts are often screened out by junk filters, which means I never see them. I strongly suggest checking your Metro State email at least daily. **Course policy:** Emails from accounts other than your Metro account are unlikely to be answered.

Ways to take notes: You are welcome to use whatever note-taking media work for you, including paper and writing implements (pens/pencils, colored pens/pencils, highlighters), tablet, laptop and audio recording. Be aware that some class activities are best experienced without notetaking.



Brief in-class writing assignments: During some class sessions, you will be asked to answer a question or address a topic in writing. The questions/topics will be related to topic areas from the between-class assignments or the in-class discussions. A brief rubric will be included with each question. You may hand-write your assignment and hand it in or write it on your laptop or tablet and email it to me. Score: 10 @ 5 pts each = 50 pts

Reflective Journal: Each week, you will submit a reflective journal entry via the D2L Dropbox. For each journal entry, you will consider the following:

- What was it from the week's assignments, activities or discussions that you found most interesting or meaningful?
- How was it interesting or meaningful?
- How will what I learned from this assignment, activity or discussion either affect me personally or inform my work as a helper?
- What more do I need to learn about this?

Each journal entry is due by midnight (11:59pm) Sunday night. Score: 15 @ 10 pts each = 150 pts

Journal Club: Once during the semester, you will present a research article to your classmates. A number of article choices will be available on D2L. You are also welcome to choose an article from your own database search; your article must be approved by me. Each student will choose a different article. You will do an informal presentation during class. A separate handout on this assignment will be provided on D2L and discussed in class. Score: 50 pts

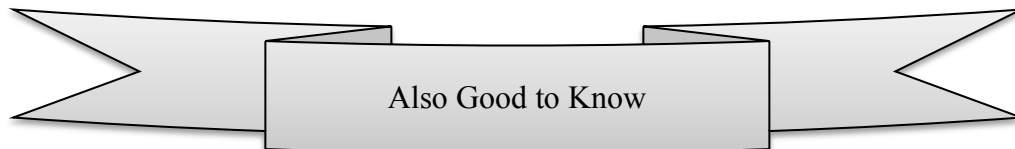
Research Paper: You will write a research paper on some aspect of spirituality-sensitive helping. For this paper, you will select a religious or spiritual tradition that is significantly different from your own. Your paper will include what you learn about beliefs from the tradition, how those beliefs might affect one's perspective on professional helping, why this understanding is important to you as a helper, and how it might affect your approach to helping. A separate handout on this assignment will be provided on D2L and discussed in class. Score: 100 pts

Framework for Spiritually-Sensitive Practice: There are two parts to this assignment. The first is to write a narrative on how your helping work will be sensitive and responsive to the spiritual needs of those you will interact with as a professional. The second is a visual representation of the spiritual underpinnings of your commitment to make a difference. A separate handout on this assignment will be provided on D2L and discussed in class. Score: 150 pts

Total points possible: 500

Course grading (these numbers will change slightly if a curve is applied):

- 90% (450-500 pts): A
- 80% (400-449 pts): B
- 70% (350-399 pts): C
- 60% (300-349 pts): D
- <60% (299 or fewer pts): F



Learning Strategies

The learning strategies used in this course include:

- class discussion
- informal instructor presentations
- informal student presentations
- written assignments
- reflective journaling

Additional Course Policies

Disability accommodations: Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must register with Disability Services (651-793-1540 or Disability.Services@metrostate.edu) as early as possible. If you have a documented physical, psychiatric, sensory, systemic or learning disability, or if you suspect you

have a learning disability which may influence your opportunity to succeed in this course, call Disability Services right away so that you can explore possible ways to obtain documentation of your disability and determine accommodations.

Late papers: Turning in a paper past the due date will result in a loss of 10% of the points for that paper for the first week and 20% for the second week. Papers will not be accepted more than two weeks late.

Changes to course content: This syllabus and the content of the course are subject to change by the instructor. Changes will be announced in class and via email.

Incompletes: An Incomplete will be granted only in cases of extreme hardship (medical or family emergencies) and only if you have already completed most (75-80%) of the coursework. If you are granted an incomplete, all coursework must be completed within an agreed-upon time. In any event, all coursework must be completed by the end of the following semester.

Extra Credit: There is no individual extra credit for this course; that is, if you are concerned about your grade and approach me about an individual assignment to earn extra credit, the answer is no. However, there may be opportunities that will be offered to everyone to earn a few extra credit points. If I decide to offer extra credit, I'll let you know in class.