



Anti-quarantine protesters took over the steps of the Pennsylvania State Capitol in May 2020. (B.A. Van Sise/NurPhoto/Getty Images)



Cuban santero Rudy Guardiola at Botanica Orisha Locumí in Brooklyn, New York in September 2016. (Marlon Krieger/Buzzfeed News)



A devotee attends an evening prayer on the banks of Ganges river during Kumbh Mela, or the Pitcher Festival, in Haridwar, India, April 10, 2021. (Danish



Sr. Deirdre Byrne, MD, retired U.S. Army officer at Stop the Shot! Conference August 2021. (PBS NewsHour/YouTube)

## Medicine Science Religion

Reading and Composition (R5B) Course in Anthropology  
Fall 2021

**Instructor:** Mauricio Najarro

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**Class Time and Location:** Monday Wednesday Friday 12-1pm Social Sciences Building 115

**Office Hours and Location:** Wednesday 1-3pm Social Sciences Building 44

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

When and how (if ever) should religious values shape scientific inquiry and the political economy or provision of healthcare? This question is as vexing as it is urgent, not only in the United States but also in many other places where forms of the religious and secular

look very different. How then can we learn to *think* and *write* about that question and those differences? In this course, we will engage medicine, science, and religion across a variety of texts and learn how to frame issues, evaluate evidence, and make supported arguments that do not hastily resolve the very real ambiguities and challenges we face as globalized biomedicine interacts with different forms of governance and systems of knowledge. Together, we will read selections from the history of science and technology as well as ethnographies that will require us to suspend intuitive notions of “medicine,” “science,” and “religion” as distinct categories and instead attempt to think otherwise about what constitutes the body, how facts and truths are made or shared, and what constitutes care and cure in different parts of the world.

In recent years, medical anthropologists have argued that medical science is a crucial site of contention between the secular and the religious. Terms like “philosophy,” “spirituality,” “science,” “religion,” “superstition,” “culture,” and “magic” have often been used to differentiate “good” knowledge from “bad” belief. Recognizing moral and ethical possibilities of intervention, care, and witnessing—in and through research and writing—requires careful and critical attention to contested histories and multiple perspectives. The stakes of such investigations are high, as we have all witnessed in different ways during the pandemic. This course is an invitation to think with scholars and discuss their contributions while developing skills to be able to conduct research that engages with the richness of the texts we will consider.

This course will develop students’ skills in discussing and rendering their understanding of authors’ arguments. Students will learn how to find and assess scholarly works, write drafts, comment on each others’ writing, and submit papers that make clear arguments within the context of a broader anthropological conversation. Together, we will reckon with the anthropology of religion and secularism as it bears on histories of medicine, postcolonial STS, medical/religious pluralism, and practices of healing in different parts of the world. Consequently, students will be asked to produce a book review, a number of written engagements with course readings, a research paper, and a book chapter/journal article pitch.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to improve their skills in reading, writing, and thinking in an atmosphere of collegial collaboration. Students will be encouraged to encounter course readings both charitably and critically. Writing will be a skill that will be honed by means of habit and training. Both reading and writing skills will form the foundation of thinking skills whereby students will learn to examine what conditions various forms of argument and evidence as well as how an argument is structured.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Students will be expected to complete reading assignments prior to class and engage readings productively in whatever manner is most effective given how they learn. All readings and written assignments will be posted on bCourses.

There will be six kinds of written assignments:

- A. Précis 400-500 words (2 pages with standard formatting)
- B. Book review 800-1000 words (4 pages with standard formatting)
- C. Research paper proposal 400-500 words (2 pages with standard formatting)
- D. Research paper 2500-3000 (10-12 pages with standard formatting)
- E. Book chapter/journal article pitch 800-1000 words (4 pages with standard formatting)
- F. Writing memo 200-250 words (1 page with standard formatting)

*\*Writing memos accompany all writing assignments EXCEPT précis.*

## **Formatting**

If students need to submit writing with different font size or line spacing to accommodate how you learn or work, please let me know. We will discuss options. Below is the standard formatting:

Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, 1 inch margins and please include word count at the end of your submissions.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

We will be reading the following two books:

1. Anne Fadiman, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.
2. Ludwik Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

All course readings will be available on bCourses. I highly recommend that you print out the other readings and bring them to class, but of course understand if you'd rather read on a laptop, tablet, or other device.

## **STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

We affirm the Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning's principles of integrity: as a member of the campus community, you are "expected to demonstrate integrity in all of

your academic endeavors. Any assignment submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. In all of your assignments, you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution.”

## **GRADING**

This course will employ a labor-based grading contract developed in the anti-racist writing and composition pedagogy of Asao Inoue.<sup>1</sup> What this means is that writing assignments in the course will not be graded on the basis of a certain aesthetic idea of what constitutes “good writing” but will instead employ concrete criteria and will be graded based on the amount of labor the student performs or needs to perform to meet such criteria. In order to better explain what this means, I will draw on a metaphor.

Imagine that the course you are currently in is actually a workshop where all of you are learning to construct a storage shed for your backyards. In such a workshop, you’d learn and get the chance to practice various skills that would enable you, by the end of the course, to build a shed that is not only structurally sound, but is the right size and shape for your own specific needs. Not everyone who builds a shed in their backyard needs or wants to build exactly the same kind of building or would want the same kind of aesthetic features. Some people would want decorative roofs and others would be more interested in functionality. What matters is whether or not the structure is sound and can withstand elements. In the workshop, I would introduce you to certain skills and you might, if so inclined, meet with each other outside the limited workshop time to practice specific skills together.

Writing is, in a sense, much like constructing something that can withstand scrutiny and “holds up.” Making an argument is a learnable and, I hope, teachable skill. In this course, we will learn the building blocks of a research paper. Given that you all come in with some experience, I’m hoping we have the chance to build on what you already know in such a way that you feel comfortable taking risks in your writing. You will receive a grade based on the amount of labor you do that adequately meets the expectations of the assignment.

When I learned how to write for a college course, the aim was simple: to teach everyone to produce the same kind of project. Moving from a five-paragraph essay to an analytical essay was a straight-forward project wherein students would learn to reproduce “simple, clear, and direct” language. This is an example of White supremacist pedagogy. In this course, we will work together to make sure there is room for multiple forms and styles of effective writing. As long as you meet the basic criteria for the grade you want in this

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<sup>1</sup> Inoue, Asao B. (2019). *Labor-Based Grading Contracts: Building Equity and Inclusion in the Compassionate Writing Classroom*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. <https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2019.0216.0>

course, I do not have any investment in *how* you meet the criteria. I will, of course, give you suggestions for how to make your writing “stronger.” I am committed, above all, to *liking* what you write and consulting with you on how to make it better along the lines of what you believe constitutes “better.” You will be graded on the amount of labor you do in order to meet the expectations of the course. There are only two ways to record a lack of labor fulfillment by a student: non-communication (usually regarding absence or tardiness from class) and late, incomplete, or missing assignments.

Such grading is a risky venture, but I will do my best to explain what this means below.

### **Communication**

Please ensure that you are set up to receive notifications via the bCourses site for this class. bCourses will be the primary way we communicate with you outside of class and section, and it is also where any additions or changes to the readings or syllabus will be announced and posted.

If you *communicate* with me about your participation in the course *in a timely manner* and complete all the labor that is asked of you—fulfilling the conditions below—you are guaranteed a course grade of B (3.1).

This course will consider participation (preparation and attendance) within the broader context of communication. Given the current and ongoing pandemic, it is not reasonable to lower grades if students are absent or late to class due to illness or emergencies. Preparation and attendance are, however, important since much of what we do in class, namely discussion, cannot be reproduced well outside of the classroom.

When you are not able to attend, you must communicate with the instructor *in a timely manner* about the reasons for missing class or being late. If this is done *in good faith* as determined by both parties to the contract, then the student will be considered to have fulfilled the communication requirement of the grading contract.

### **Collaboration**

Students are expected to work cooperatively in groups to refine and revise their writing during discussions and workshops.

### **Late/Incomplete Work**

All writing assignments must be submitted in hardcopy and on bCourses on time, in good faith, and in a manner that fulfills the expectations as laid out in the assignment. Late/Incomplete work is work that is submitted up to than 48 hours after the due date. Work submitted after 48 hours is considered missing. Please see the table below for what each of these categories mean in the contract.

## Revisions

The research paper students submit in this class will require substantial revisions wherein students will reformulate, extend, or clarify ideas and arguments. Revisions must engage with comments and suggestions made by the instructor as well as other students. *Revision and responsiveness to critique from the instructor and other students is key to fulfilling the conditions of the labor-based grading contract.*

## Copy Editing

Spelling, grammar, and punctuation are important parts of making sure your project is complete. Whether submitting a draft or a final paper, each of the documents must be copy edited. It's fine to get help in copy editing.

## Improving Your Contracted Grade

A grade of B (3.1) depends on the amount of labor completed responsibly and in a consistent manner. A higher grade than the default requires more labor that provides students with the opportunity to improve their own skills and those of other students in the class. You may select from the following items to improve your grade. Completing one item raises your grade by 0.3. Please speak with the instructor prior to doing the following assignments in order to receive more information about what each of these options entails. None of these can be done last minute as each requires planning and discussion, and all of them require at least six pages of writing with standard formatting.

Extra Précis: Students must complete three extra précis to earn 0.3. These are due the day we discuss the reading. Each précis is 2 pages with standard formatting.

Writing Memo Analysis: Students must write a reflective analysis to be shared with the class on the writing process. This analysis is six pages with standard formatting.

Media Analysis Paper: Students must analyze a news story, podcast, or other form of traditional/new media that substantively engages themes of the course. This analysis is six pages with standard formatting.

Annotated Bibliography: Students must submit an annotated bibliography that consists of at least three academic sources not read in class or on the syllabus. The annotations must be in the form of book/article reviews that engage and offer appropriate context for analyzing the arguments made by the author of the work.

Lesson Presentation: Students will consult with the instructor to determine the scope and purpose of the lesson. Students will work with the instructor at least two weeks in advance to select and prepare the following: (1) a 2 page handout for

the class on the reading; (2) a lesson plan for the day; (3) a 2-4 page reflective essay on the experience of organizing and implementing the lesson/discussion.

For every item you complete on the above list, your contracted grade will improve by .3 grade points. So if you meet the conditions for a B-contract (3.1), then your grade can improve in the following ways:

1 item completed = course grade of 3.4

2 items completed = course grade of 3.7

3 items completed = course grade of 4.0

If you are working toward a C-contract (2.1) or lower, the same .3 movement up the grade ladder applies by completing 1-3 items on the list above. You may even do more than three items and continue to raise your grade by .3 per item. Your course grade, then, equates to a 2.4, 2.7, 3.0, 3.3, respectively.

Below is a table that shows the main components that affect your successful compliance with our contract.

	# of Late Assignments	# of Missed Assignments	# of Ignored Assignments
A (4.0)	0	0	0
B (3.1)	0	0	0
C (2.1)	1	1	0
D (1.1)	2	2	1
E (0.0)	3	3	2

By staying in this course and attending class, you accept this contract and agree to abide by it. I (Mauricio) also agree to abide by the contract, and administer it fairly and equitably. Administering this contract fairly and equitably means being flexible when flexibility is warranted. Come speak to me early if you face a problem meeting the conditions of the contract (ideally before the contract is breached) and we can work through accommodations.

### **ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**

I am committed to meeting the needs of all course participants. To arrange class-related accommodations, please see Berkeley's Disabled Students' Program: <http://dsp.berkeley.edu>. I am happy to meet with students to discuss ways of expanding access

in the classroom that are not only mandated by law. Please feel free to make an appointment with me or come to office hours to discuss.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Tutoring in the Comparative Literature Department**

If you would like additional help with your writing this semester, the new Art of Writing Departmental Tutoring Program offers tutoring appointments designed specifically for students taking R&C courses in this department. Upper-level majors trained by experienced GSIs in the department are available to help you at any stage of the writing process. Please visit the program website for further information and to make an appointment with a writing tutor: <https://writingtutorscomplit.setmore.com>.

### **Other Campus Resources**

*Student Learning Center* (<http://slc.berkeley.edu>) offers a variety of programs to help you approach coursework in more strategic, balanced, and effective ways. These programs include writing tutoring, academic coaching, and workshops on learning strategies, as well as specific resources for transfer students and freshmen. You don't have to be experiencing academic difficulties to take advantage of the Student Learning Center; it can be extraordinarily helpful to talk over paper ideas and writing strategies even when things are going well.

*Centers for Justice and Community Education* (<http://ejce.berkeley.edu>), which include the Multicultural Community Center and Gender Equity Resource Center, provide support for students of color, women, and LGBTQ+ students.

*Berkeley's Counseling and Psychological Services* (<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/counseling>), run through the Tang Center, work to "support the emotional, psychological, educational, social, and cultural development of all UC Berkeley students through a wide range of multiculturally based counseling, psychiatric, career, consultation, training, and educational services." Many of CPS's services are covered for free to Berkeley students; others are provided at very modest fees. Students do not need to be covered by the Student Health Insurance Program to see a counselor.

\*If you are seriously dissatisfied with any aspect of the class, please bring your concern to me directly in person or via email. If you remain dissatisfied after discussing your concern with me, please consult Frances Bright, the Undergraduate Student Affairs Officer in 215 Anthropology and Art Practice Building (formerly known as Kroeber Hall).



**COURSE SCHEDULE****August**

W 25 Introduction and Syllabus Review

F 27 **Book review and writing memo assigned;** Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, Prologue pp. xxvii-xxviii, Chapter 1 pp. 1-19, Chapter 2 pp. 20-51, and Chapter 3 pp. 52-81

M 30 Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, Chapter 4 pp. 82-145

**September**

W 1 **Book review and writing memo due in class and on bCourses;** Shapin, "The House of Experiment in Seventeenth-Century England" pp. 373-404

F 3 Winner, "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" pp. 121-136

M 6 NO CLASS

W 8 Hacking, *Taming of Chance* pp. 1-15, 47-55, 81-86, 160-170

F 10 **Précis 1 due in class and on bCourses;** Précis discussion; Haraway, "Situated Knowledges" pp. 575-599

M 13 **Research paper assigned;** Stolow, "Religion, technology, and the things in between" pp. 1-22

W 15 Clarke et al., *Biomedicalization* pp. 47-87

F 17 Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious" pp. 269-282

**M 20 Discussion**

W 22 Scott, "Science for the West, Myth for the Rest" pp. 175-197

F 24 **Précis 2 due in class and on bCourses;** Précis discussion; Subramaniam, *Holy Science* Prologue ix-xiii, The Land of Lost Dreams xv-xviii, Introduction 3-45 The Story of Uruvam 46-48

M 27 **Research paper proposal and writing memo due in class and on bCourses;** Proposal discussion; Asad, *Formations of the Secular* pp. 1-17, 21-66

W 29 Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age* pp. 1-28

**October****F 1 Discussion**

M 4 M. Taylor, *After God* pp. xiii-xviii, 1-42

W 6 Klima, "The Telegraphic Abject" pp. 552-582

F 8 **Précis 3 due in class and on bCourses;** Précis discussion; Pandolfo, "Divine Trial and Experimentum Mentis" pp. 293-311

- M 11 **Research paper draft due in class and on bCourses;** Draft workshop;  
Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You* Chapter 1-6  
W 13 Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You* Chapter 7-12  
F 15 Fadiman, *Spirit Catches You* Chapter 13-19

### M 18 **Conferences**

- W 20 Whitmarsh, "Protestant Techniques of Care" pp. 207-225  
F 22 Bennett, *Technicians of Human Dignity* pp. ix-xvii, 1-21

### M 25 **Final paper and writing memo due in class and on bCourses**

- W 27 Race, *Pleasure Consuming Medicine* pp. 1-31, 137-165  
F 29 Adams et al., *Medicine Between Science and Religion* pp. 1-28, 83-105

## November

- M 1 Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth* pp. 1-18, 19-47  
W 3 Brown, *Mama Lola* pp. 1-20, 35-78  
F 5 Fett, *Working Cures* pp. 1-12, 15-35, 60-83
- M 8 **Book chapter/journal article pitch assigned;** Schulman, *Let the Record Show* Preface, Introduction, and Chapter 4  
W 10 Vaibhav, *Hijras, Lovers, Brothers* pp. 1-24, 179-196  
F 12 **Book chapter/journal article pitch discussion;** Hansen, *Addicted to Christ* pp. 1-24, 25-45
- M 15 Nelson, *Body and Soul*, Preface pp. ix- xvi, Chapters 2 and 3 pp. 49- 114  
W 17 Garcia, "Rainy Season" pp. 101-121  
F 19 **Book chapter/journal article pitch and writing memo due;** Townes, *Breaking the Fine Rain of Death* pp. 9-25, 147-167, 168-186

M 22 NO CLASS

W 24 NO CLASS

F 26 NO CLASS

- M 29 Pandian, *Possible Anthropology* pp. 1-14, 44-76

## December

- W 1 **Précis 4 due in class and on bCourses;** Tuck, "Suspending Damage" pp. 409-427  
F 3 Conclusions