

Choice Project: Attend a CAM Healing Session

Assignment: Attend a CAM healing session, reflect on the experience and integrate course theory into analysis

Learning Objective: Experience

Tech Level: Low

Star Value: ☆☆☆☆

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW

In this assignment, students will attend a complementary / alternative healing session of a tradition with which they are unfamiliar (read: have not experienced or participated in before). In attending a healing session, students will experience “lived religion” and be exposed to the beliefs, practices and everyday experiences of the healers and participants of the healing tradition. Students will then reflect on their experience through an ethnographic description and make connections to course theory and materials

A [list of potential CAM healing providers](#) will be provided, but are simply suggestions (and are no way endorsed or connected to the instructor). Students that have a specific healing modality or provider in mind are welcome to propose it to the instructor for approval.

That being said, if students would like to attend a healing session of a CAM modality not covered in class, students will be required to first complete the “[Curate Course Content](#)” on the healing modality they would like to attend.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Attend a session of a CAM healing session as a participant-observer,
2. Describe the experience through an ethnographic lense, and
3. Make connections to course theory and themes through analytical analysis.

CONTENT:

The content of this assignment requires multiple steps: Preparation, Experience, Reflection

Preparation

- Research the CAM modality you would like to attend:
 - Conduct preliminary research on the specific location

- When does the healing take place? Are there weekly sessions, or is this a one-time event?
 - Is it an individual session, or will it take place in a group?
 - When does the session happen? Is it drop-in? Do you need an appointment?
 - What is the cost? Do you pay in advance, or at the door? If free, is there a suggested donation?
 - What is the address? What is your plan for getting there?
- Conduct general research on what to expect
 - What can you expect during the session?
 - Are there any cultural norms you need to adhere to be aware of and adhere to?
 - What should you wear?
 - Are there any items you need to bring? (a yoga mat, a towel or blanket, etc)
- Confirm details of the healing session you'll attend with the instructor, via the [project progress googlesheet](#)
 - Include the type of healing, the location and/or healer (with link to website), and the date of the session
 - Approval from instructor is required before attendance for credit

Experience

- Attend the healing session
 - Document attendance / participation where appropriate
 - Suggestion: Take a "selfie" picture at the location
 - If possible, take a picture of pertinent information, decor in the lobby / main entrance, or other points of interest
 - **BE MINDFUL AND RESPECTFUL OF OTHER ATTENDANTS AND PATIENT'S PRIVACY**
 - Be respectful when entering sacred / religious space and cultural norms - only take pictures inside the location if you obtain approval from an attendant or healer
 - Be fully present during the healing session
 - Turn off your cell phone
 - Pay careful attention to:
 - What did you hear? (music? ambiance?)
 - What did the healer / leader say?
 - What did other participants say?
 - What did you see?
 - What did you feel?
 - What happened (sequence of events, rituals)
 - What happened to your body?

- Was it moved in a certain way? Were physical postures or movement involved? Was any time of therapeutic touch involved? Energy manipulation?
 - What did you smell?
- As soon after the session as possible, jot detailed notes on your experience and important, pertinent, or surprising events.

Reflection

- **Describe** your experience, from start to beginning, from an ethnographic perspective
 - What happened?
 - Who was the healer?
 - What was said?
 - Describe the environment
 - Who was in attendance (population demographics)
- Analyze the experience
 - What connections can you make between your experience and the course theory and themes we've explored, including but not limited to:
 - Religious, metaphysical / spiritual, or New Age rhetoric / symbols
 - Themes of resistance and/or accommodation
 - Relationship to biomedicine
 - Reflection of societal hierarchy
 - Instances of appropriation, borrowing, creative reinvention, syncretism
 - Integrate quotations and cite theory from course readings using MLA endnote format

A NOTE ON COST:

Depending on the CAM modality, there may be a cost involved in this assignment. Public / communal healing sessions, such as meditation and yoga, can be accessed by students for free or less than \$20 per session. Other modalities, such as Acupuncture, Ayurveda, and Traditional Chinese Medicine herbalism, treat specific conditions and can cost upwards of \$100-\$150 per session.

Students are in no way required to spend this amount of money, but are welcome to do so based on their own personal health and financial situation. ***The instructor is not liable for any costs or debts accrued by students for this assignment.***

A NOTE ON MEDICAL PRIVACY:

This assignment is not meant to intrude on the medical privacy of students and does not require the divulgence of any health conditions whatsoever. The point of this assignment is to encourage students to experience the “lived religion” of traditions discussed in the course.

If students feel uncomfortable publicly analyzing their experience, or feel that they cannot do so without compromising the privacy of their health status (whatever that may be), students are strongly discouraged from choosing this assignment.

PRESENTATION:

The bulk of the credit from this assignment comes from the preparation, transportation, and time taken to attend the healing session.

Students are expected to thoughtfully analyze their experience and “bring it to life” for their readers through their reflection and description. Students are also encouraged to integrate photo and video documentation of their experience where applicable (ala travel blog).

DIRECTIONS FOR SUBMISSION:

First, **create a page** on your EduBlog and title it “**Attend CAM Session.**” Make sure this page is visible and accessible on the EduBlog landing page.

Next, **post your written content** directly into the page. Make sure it is formatted in an easily understandable way.

Finally, **embed** your personal photographs, video, or audio content from your experience where appropriate.