

St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute
Fall 2023

Class Day & Time: November 17, Friday evening 6:00-9:00; Saturday, November 18, 8:30am-4:30pm

Course Number & Name: TH653 Science Looks at Faith & Health (1 credit)

Instructors: Drs. Joel Shuman & Brian Volck

Course Description: In this course we'll theologically investigate the so-called "Faith and Health" movement, which includes a range of attempts to correlate health with faith and to study that correlation scientifically. We will look at the movement's origins in the last third of the 20th century and its antecedents in orthodox and heterodox Christianity; its more recent forms, including the nascent field of psychoneuroimmunology; and its prospects for the near future. Students will be asked to think and write critically about the movement with respect to their own vocations as health professionals, pastors, and chaplains. The course will build on students' learning in CONNECT Module One, "Text and Tradition" (TH651).

Course Requirements with Percentage Contribution to Final Grade:

Activity	
Reading	Approximately 300 pages
Writing	7-10 page essay bringing the breadth of their learning to bear on an analysis of one of four cases that raise questions at the intersection of faith & health; 80% of final grade
Other	
Class Participation	20% of final grade

Required Texts:

- T. M. Luhrmann, *How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). ISBN: 9780691164465.
- Joel Shuman and Keith Meador, *Heal Thyself: Spirituality, Medicine, and the Distortion of Christianity* (New York: Oxford, 2003). ISBN: 0-19-515469-X.

Required Readings on Canvas:

- Thomas Plante and Allen Sherman, "Research on Faith and Health: New Approaches to Old Questions," in Plante and Sherman, eds., *Faith and Health* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 1-12.
- Pat Fosarelli, "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: The Interconnectedness of Body-Mind-Spirit" in *Journal of Religion & Health* 41: 207-228, 2002.
- Philip Rieff, "Introductory: Toward a Theory of Culture," from *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1-27.