



Religion & Medicine in Asia

Fall 2013

RELIGION 290S.01 | GLHLTH 390S.01

TuTh 03:05 PM - 04:20 PM

Dr. Pierce Salguero

Class Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xfdw91p60k27c9c/YXjgxNqXtG>

Class Resources Page: <http://guides.library.duke.edu/rma>

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COURSE SUMMARY & GOALS

This interactive, seminar-style course provides an introduction to the intersection between religion and medicine in Asia. We will examine the history and contemporary practices of healing associated with the major religions of the region (such as Yoga, Qigong, meditation, etc.), as well as local traditions of spirit healing, exorcism, and magic medicine. This interdisciplinary course will approach our topic from historical, anthropological, and hands-on perspectives. We will hone in on how religious beliefs and rituals shaped and interacted with views of the body, disease, and health. We will also have the opportunity to reexamine our own preconceptions about what the terms “religion” and “medicine” mean in a comparative and crosscultural context.

The immediate goal of this class is to introduce you to the history and contemporary practice of a broad range of Asian traditions of religious healing. Readings and discussions will cover India, China, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, and elsewhere, and will span from approximately 1000 BC to the present. At the end of the semester, we will examine the position of Asian religious healing in the contemporary globalized medical marketplace—including in the USA. While the class casts a wide net in terms of content, however, my ultimate concern is to help you develop skills that are central to academic success in the humanities and social sciences beyond the topics covered this semester. Close reading, critical thinking, and expository writing will therefore be prioritized over memorization and exams. Throughout the semester, you will undertake a series of exercises that will give you the opportunity to put these skills into regular practice, culminating in a final paper or project.

READINGS

All readings will be made available to you in PDF, so you do not need to purchase any books for this class. However, you may wish to purchase a copy of some of the books we are using more frequently for your convenience. Required and supplemental readings are listed in the schedule below. You are responsible for only the required readings, unless you are registered for graduate credit, in which case you are responsible for all of the readings listed. It is recommended that you read the assignments in the order given in the syllabus.

The mark ★ indicates a primary source reading. Unless otherwise announced, unmarked readings (which are secondary sources) will be discussed on Tuesday, and marked readings will be discussed on Thursday.

GRADING

This class uses Learning Contracts. A Learning Contract is an individualized agreement that you and I both sign that sets how final grades will be calculated, when your deadlines will be, and what your penalty will be for late papers and class absences. The components of the final grade that must be included in the Learning Contract are as follows:

1. Project-building assignments: This portion of the grade includes a series of assignments that will lead you through the steps of (1) compiling a reading list, (2) creating an annotated bibliography, (3) writing a brief prospectus of the project, and (4) outlining — all of which culminate in a major project due at the end of the semester. Each assignment will be discussed in more detail well before the “Suggested Assignment Due Date” marked in the schedule below.

2. Final project: The final project is intended to demonstrate your ability to apply the skills you have been learning in the project-building exercises to a set of research materials you have been gathering throughout the semester. This is also a chance to highlight your growing knowledge of the issues in the study of religion and medicine acquired from our discussions and readings.

The topic for the project is open, and I encourage you to choose something of interest to you or that connects somehow with your career plans. Your project can look more deeply into a topic from the syllabus using assigned readings as a launching-off point, or it can address gaps in the semester’s content. You may wish to analyze historical source texts (in English translation, or in original if you have the necessary language skills), write a literature review about a particular topic, conduct an ethnographic field-study of a local religious site or community, or study the uses of aspects of Asian religion in a contemporary complementary-alternative medical facility.

The format of your final project is also open, and I encourage you to design something that both will interest you and will help you in your development of professional or academic skills. Options include:

1. *Traditional term paper.* A 20-page research paper (standard fonts and margins, ~5000 words).
2. *Web or multimedia project.* A website, Wikipedia entry, blog, or other multimedia project containing at least 4000 words plus images (all images must be copyright cleared if your project is live on the web).
3. *Podcast or video documentary.* Audio or video containing at least 30 minutes of spoken analysis. (Must be uploaded to YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)
4. *Museum exhibit.* Design a museum exhibit based on a collection of at least 20 objects (~4000 words).

If you have an idea that is not listed here that you believe would represent a good opportunity to put to use the skills we have been learning in this class, please let me know what you are thinking about.

3. Effort: There is no strict formula for the effort grade. This is a holistic assessment of your overall contribution to class. Attendance of all scheduled classes is required for full credit here. You are also expected to read the assigned materials and to actively contribute to in-class discussions. In addition, each student will be responsible for introducing one primary source reading during the course of the semester—including information about the author and/or historical context of the text, and some questions and/or observations about the contents of the text to launch our discussion.

4. Extracurricular involvement: Throughout the semester I will be announcing opportunities for you to engage with Asian religion and medicine on campus and in the area around the university. At some point during the semester, you should attend a few of these events and write a 1-2 page report about each experience. If you become aware of a relevant event taking place during the semester, I invite you to discuss it with me in advance to see if you can get credit for attending.

Default Learning Contract: If you fail to hand in a Learning Contract by the deadline in the schedule below, you will be graded according to the Default Learning Contract, which breaks down as follows: 40% project-building assignments (10% for each assignment), 40% final project, 10% effort grade, 10% extracurricular involvement (2 events, 2 pages each). Late papers: docked 10% immediately upon missing the deadline, plus an additional 10% per 24 hours thereafter. Absence policy: minus 5% of final grade for each class missed.

PROPOSED COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1: Orientation & background

Aug. 27–29, Points of departure and basic problematics

Class #1: Go over syllabus

Class #2: Discussion of kawp-sien

Supplemental readings:

- Articles from *Encyclopedia of Religions* (2nd ed), pp. 3808–77.

Sept. 3–5, Demonological medicine in ancient India & China

Required readings:

- Kenneth G. Zysk, *Religious Medicine: The History and Evolution of Indian Medicine* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), pp. 1–11.
- Paul U. Unschuld, *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), Chapters 1–2.
- ★Kenneth G. Zysk, *Religious Medicine: The History and Evolution of Indian Medicine* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996), pp. 12-19, 72-78, 90-95.
- ★Donald Harper, “Spellbinding,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Supplemental readings:

- Finish Zysk, *Religious Medicine*
- Harper, Donald. *Early Chinese Medical Literature: The Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts*. London: Kegan Paul International, 1998.

Unit 2: Religion & medicine in South Asia

Sept. 10–12, Early Buddhist medicine

Drafts of Learning Contracts due this week.

Required readings:

- Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, “Buddhist Medical History,” in *Healing and Restoring: Health and Medicine in the World’s Religious Traditions*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York and London: Macmillan).
- Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code II: The Khandaka Training Rules Translated and Explained*, 2nd ed. (Valley Center, Calif.: Metta Forest Monastery, 2007), Chapter 5.
- ★I.B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline (Vinaya-Piṭaka)* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 2000), Vol. 4, pp. 269–85, 379–97, 431–4.

Supplemental readings:

- Kenneth Zysk, *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India: Medicine in the Buddhist Monastery* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998).
- ★Read selections from the Pāli Canon on www.AccessToInsight.org: *Sivaka Sutta*, *Kucchivikara-vatthu*, *Girimananda Sutta*, *Maha-hatthipadopama Sutta*.

Sept. 17–19, Medicine in Mahayana Buddhism

Suggested assignment due date: Topic and reading list

Required readings:

- Nasim H. Naqvi, *A Study of Buddhist Medicine and Surgery in Gandhara*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2011 [excerpts].
- Paul Demiéville, *Buddhism and Healing: Demiéville’s Article ‘Byō’ from Hōbōgirin*, translated by Mark Tatz (Lanham, Md., and London: University Press of America, 1985): 43–63.
- ★*Sutra of Golden Light*, excerpts
- ★*Vimalakīrti Sutra*, chapter 5

Supplemental readings:

- Finish *A Study of Buddhist Medicine and Surgery in Gandhara*
- ★*Lotus Sutra*, chapter 23

Sept. 24–26, Hinduism & Āyurveda

Required readings:

- David M. Knipe, “Hinduism and the Tradition of Āyurveda,” in *Healing and Restoring: Health and Medicine in the World’s Religious Traditions*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York and London: Macmillan).
- Kenneth G. Zysk, “Mythology and the Brāhmaṇization of Indian Medicine: Transforming Heterodoxy Into Orthodoxy,” in *Categorisation and Interpretation: Indological and Comparative Studies*, ed. Folke Josephson (Göteborg: Göteborgs Universitet, 1999).
- ★Lakshmi Kapani, “Upanishad of the Embryo / Note on the Garbha-Upanishad,” in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body 3*, ed. Michel Feher, et al. (New York and Cambridge: Zone, 1989).

- ★Kathleen M. Erndl, "A Trance Healing Session with Mātājī," in *Religions of India in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Supplemental readings:

- Sudhir Kakar, "Health and medicine in the living traditions of Hinduism," in *Healing and Restoring: Health and Medicine in the World's Religious Traditions*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York and London: Macmillan).
- ★Tony K. Stewart, "Encountering the Smallpox Goddess: the Auspicious song of Sītālā," in *Religions of India in Practice*, ed. Donald Lopez (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- ★Dominik Wujastyk, "Kaśyapa's Compendium," in *Roots of Ayurveda* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003).

Oct. 1–3, Yoga & Tantra

Required readings:

- Vesna Wallace, "Buddhist Tantric Medicine in the Kālacakratāntra," *Pacific World NS* 11-12 (1995–96): 155-74.
- Georg Feuerstein, *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice* (Prescott: Hohm Press, 2001), pp. 350-68, 390-400.
- ★ *Yogakūṇḍalī Upaniṣad*: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/tmu/tmu32.htm>

Supplemental readings:

- David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
- ★Kathleen M. Erndl, "A Trance Healing Session With Mātājī," in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Unit 3: Religion & medicine in East Asia

Oct. 8-10, Daoist self cultivation & inner alchemy

Suggested assignment due date: Annotated bibliography

Required readings:

- Nathan Sivin, "Health Care and Daoism," *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 3 (2011): 1–16.
- Catherine Despeux, "The Six Healing Breaths," in Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoist Body Cultivation: Traditional Models and Contemporary Practices* (Magdalena, NM: Three Pines Press, 2006).
- ★*Nei Ye*

Supplemental readings:

- Catherine Despeux, "Talismans and Sacred Diagrams," in Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000).
- Fabrizio Pregadio "Elixirs and Alchemy," in Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000).
- Yoshinobu Sakade, *Daoism, Medicine and Qi in China and Japan* (Kansai University Press, 2007).

Oct. 17, No class

Oct. 22–24, Healing in Chinese Buddhism

Required readings:

- C. Pierce Salguero, “Fields of Merit, Harvests of Health: Some Notes on the Role of Medical Karma in the Popularization of Buddhism in Early Medieval China,” *Asian Philosophy* 23, no. 4 (2013): 341–9.
- Chen Yunü, “Buddhism and the Medical Treatment of Women in the Ming Dynasty: A Research Note,” *Nan Nü* 10 (2008): 279–304.
- ★C. Pierce Salguero, “‘Treating Illness’: Translation of a Chapter from a Medieval Chinese Buddhist Meditation Manual by Zhiyi (538–597),” *Asian Medicine: Tradition and Modernity* 7, no. 2 (2012).
- ★Satiranjana Sen, “Two Medical Texts in Chinese Translation.” *Visva-Bharati Annals* 1 (1945): 70–95.

Supplemental readings:

- Vijaya Deshpande, “Glimpses of Āyurveda in Medieval Chinese Medicine,” *Indian Journal of History of Science* 43, no. 2 (2008): 137–161.
- Finish Strickmann, *Chinese Magical Medicine*

Oct. 29-31, Japan & Korea

Suggested assignment due date: Thesis paragraph or prospectus

Required readings:

- Katja Triplett, “Magical Medicine?—Japanese Buddhist Medical Knowledge and Ritual Instruction for Healing the Physical Body,” *Japanese Religions* 37, no. 1-2 (2012): 63–92.
- Pamela D. Winfield, “Curing With Kaji: Healing and Esoteric Empowerment in Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 32 (2005), pp. 107–30.
- Don Baker, “Monks, Medicine, and Miracles: Health and Healing in the History of Korean Buddhism,” *Korean Studies* 18 (1994): 50-75.
- ★*Medicine Buddha Sutra*

Supplemental readings:

- Read all of “Religion and Healing in Japan,” special issue of *Japanese Religions*, Vol. 37, nos. 1–2 (2012).

Unit 4: Religion & medicine in the “hybrid zones”

Nov. 5–7, Tibet & Central Asia

Required readings:

- Frances Garrett, "The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine (*sman sgrub*): Situating the Yuthok Heart Essence (*G.yu thog snying thig*) in Literature and History." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37 (2009): 207–30.
- Schaeffer, Kurtis R. "Textual Scholarship, Medical Tradition, and Mahayana Buddhist Ideals in Tibet," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 31 (2003): 621–41.
- Angela Dietrich. "Research Note: Buddhist Healers in Nepal, Some Observations." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 23, no. 2 (1996), pp. 473–80.
- ★Excerpt from *Quintessence Tantras*

Supplemental readings:

- Finish *Quintessence Tantras*
- Frances Garrett, "Tibetan Buddhist Narratives of the Forces of Creation," in *Imagining the Fetus: The Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture*, ed. Jane Marie Law and Vanessa R. Sasson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- Laila Williamson and Serinity Young. *Body and Spirit: Tibetan Medical Paintings*. New York: American Museum of Natural History in association with University of Washington Press, 2009.

Nov. 12–14, Thailand & Southeast Asia

Required readings:

- Daniel Reid, "Jom Ratchan: Shiva's Voice in Northern Thailand," blog post from <<http://www.danreid.org/daniel-reid-articles-jom-ratchan-thailand-shiva-oracle-shaman.asp>>, retrieved Aug. 17, 2009.
- Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja, "The Cosmological and Performative Significance of a Thai Cult of Healing Through Meditation," *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 1 (1977), pp. 97–132.
- ★Mettānando Bhikkhu, "Meditation and Healing in the Theravāda Buddhist Order of Thailand and Laos," Ph.D. Diss. Hamburg, University of Hamburg, 1999 [excerpt].

Supplemental readings:

- Jindasa Liyanaratne. *Buddhism and Traditional Medicine in Sri Lanka*. Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: University of Kelaniya, 1999.
- Kieth Rethy Chhem, "Bhaiṣajyaguru and Tantric Medicine in Jayavarman VII Hospitals." *Sikṣācakr: Journal of the Center for Khmer Studies* 7 (2005), pp. 8–18.
- Ruth-Inge Heinze, *Trance and Healing in Southeast Asia Today* (Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 1997), Excerpts.

Unit 5: Asian religion & medicine in the modern world

Nov. 19–21, Buddhism & biomedicine

Required readings:

- Jason Ānanda Josephson, "An Empowered World: Buddhist Medicine and the Potency of Prayer in Meiji Japan," in Jeremy Stolow (ed.), *Deus in Machina: Religion, Technology, and the Things in Between* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

- David Gosling, "Thailand's Bare-Headed Doctors," *Modern Asian Studies* 19, no. 4 (1985), pp. 761–96.
- Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim, "Tibetan 'wind' and 'wind' illnesses: towards a multicultural approach to health and illness," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 41 (2010), 318–324.

Supplemental readings:

- 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).
- Damien Keown, *Buddhism & Bioethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

Dec. 3–5, Globalization of Asian traditions

Suggested assignment due date: Outline of final project (paragraph-level or equivalent)

Required readings:

- Joseph Alter, "Modern Medical Yoga: Struggling With a History of Magic, Alchemy and Sex," *Asian Medicine* 1: 1 (2005): 119-46.
- Linda Barnes and Susan Starr Sered, *Religion and Healing in America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapters 3, 21, 26 [choose 2].
- ★New York Times article on Hmong shamanism in a California hospital.

Supplemental readings:

- Mark Singleton, *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

All final projects must be submitted electronically by the end of the scheduled time for the final. See below for submission information.

THE ASSIGNMENTS

Project Building Assignment #1: Preliminary Reading List

We have discussed in class several potential paper topics. You have been introduced to the various databases and other resources available through the university library. Now, you will have the opportunity to use those resources to select and hone your topic.

If you are still looking for a topic, begin with a few broad and general ideas that you are interested in learning more about, and do some preliminary "quick and dirty" research online using Wikipedia and Google. This is not scholarly research, but it's a good way to brainstorm and get ideas. You should also look through the syllabus for ideas. And, please reach out to me either through email or in office hours to discuss your interests.

When you have honed in on an area of potential interest, you're ready to take the plunge into serious academic research. The first step is to use the library guide we have created for this class to find primary sources (i.e., historical literature, scriptures, collections of images, and

other materials from inside the tradition) and secondary sources (i.e., books and journal articles written by scholars about that tradition) that relate to your topic. You should start by looking up your topic in one of the encyclopedias or general reference books listed in the guide (most will have a bibliography at the end of each entry). You should also search the databases you have been shown. You may check out the references at the end of a Wikipedia article or use Google Scholar, but all of the items you collect for your reading list must be solid academic works from reputable sources.

As you are look up your topic in these databases and other resources, take a look at the total number of references you are finding. If you can manage only ten sources or fewer, your topic is too narrow. If you find yourself in this situation, broaden out your topic a bit and start again (again, I am more than happy to help with this process). Or you may wish to move on another potential topic you have in mind instead. It is more likely the case, however, that your results will number far more than 20 items, which means your topic is still too broad. If so, think about how to narrow down your idea to concentrate on a more manageable number of references. (For example, you might limit yourself to a more specific historical period, a single geographical location, or a particular methodology.)

By the end of this week, you should have a topic that is focused but not too narrow, which you will be able to research throughout the rest of the semester. For the first project-building assignment, you should write a 2–3 sentence description of your proposed project as you see it at this moment in time (it can always change later). You also need to have a complete bibliography of about 15 sources you think you might read on the subject, cited properly according to APA, MLA, or CMS style. (You should also immediately start acquiring the sources you have identified as pertinent to your research through the library’s catalogue, databases, interlibrary loan, and other means.) Keep in mind that this is a reading list, and at this point you don’t need to have read your sources or even have acquired them yet. You’re just gathering a sense of what you might need to read in the coming weeks/months to better understand your topic. Hand it in in hard copy.

Project Building Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography

By now you should have read (or at least skimmed through) all of the materials you identified in the reading list you generated for PB#1, and gotten a sense of what they are all about and how they will help you in your final project. Perhaps you’ve found that some of the items on your reading list were too far afield, or maybe too narrow, for your project. Perhaps you’ve discovered a new source mentioned in the footnotes of one of your readings, and want to incorporate this into your project as well. Perhaps your readings have led you to refine your topic further, shift its focus, or perhaps even reject it altogether in favor of an entirely new one.

For this assignment, please revise the document you created for PB#1. Make adjustments as needed to the topic statement, and flesh it out a bit so it’s more detailed than last time. Add or remove any items from the bibliography so that it now contains the 10-12 sources that you

know you will be using for your project. (Remember, these all should be cited properly according to CMS, MLA, or APA style.) For each entry, provide an annotation. This is a 2-4 sentence comment that explains the main argument or summarizes the contents of the article or book, as well as how or why you are using it for your paper.

Hand it in in hard copy, formatting everything in single-spaced 10-point Times font to save paper.

Project Building Assignment #3: Project Prospectus

By now, your project is really taking shape. If you are doing historical research on primary sources, you have read these texts and have gotten a sense of the scholarly research on them as well. If you are doing ethnography, you have connected with the community you will be observing and have begun to develop your research questions.

For this assignment, you will again revise the document you created for PB #1 and 2. Make any revisions to the bibliography that you want to, adding or removing items and annotations as necessary. This time, though, you will replace the brief topic statement at the top of the page with a detailed project prospectus.

A project prospectus is a brief but detailed description of your project. If it's a term paper, the prospectus is essentially the thesis paragraph. If it's an ethnographic project, you'll want to describe the community you are working with and your research questions. If it's a documentary, podcast, website, or other online project, you'll want to describe what the end result will look like, and maybe share some of the technical details. You may not know all of the results of your research yet, but share as much as you currently know.

Aim for one solid paragraph, and format it in single-spaced 12-point Times. Under no circumstances should the prospectus paragraph go beyond a single page. Hand in the complete file—the prospectus plus your edited annotated bibliography—in hard copy.

Project Building Assignment #4: Project Outline

Construct a single document that includes (in this order):

1. Your title
2. Your prospectus from PB#3, with any corrections/edits/additions/deletions.
3. A detailed outline of your project. Whether your project is written, spoken, or filmed, your outline must include a separate Roman numeral for each major section, and under this, separate letters for each paragraph in each section. Each letter should be followed by the topic sentence of that paragraph. Then, briefly list your examples or subordinate points you will cover

in this paragraph with individual Arabic numerals. Also mention any images. It should look like this:

- I. Section One
 - A. Topic sentence of first paragraph
 1. Point/Example
 2. Point/Example
 - Image
 3. Point/Example
 - B. Topic sentence of next paragraph
 1. Point/Example
 - Image
 2. Point/Example
 3. Point/Example
- II. Section Two
 - ...etc.

4. Your finalized annotated bibliography, with any corrections/edits/additions/deletions.
5. A complete list of any other sources you are using that are not listed in the annotated bibliography. (Sources for your images, for example, or other websites.)

This will be my last chance to give you feedback on this project, so the more detailed your outline is, the better. Also note that since this is the last assignment before the paper is due, in order to receive a passing grade, your topic must be clearly articulated and your annotated bibliography must be 100% complete.

Note: This assignment can be printed in hard copy, emailed to me (I accept PDF format only!), or it can be posted to a website (email me the URL). If you are writing a brand-new Wikipedia entry from scratch, you can just submit the URL to me when you are finished. There is no need to follow the instructions below. If you are adding sections or editing a pre-existing Wikipedia entry, you must submit the assignment in the following manner:

- 1.) Sign in to Wikipedia using a username that is clearly identifiable as you. You don't have to use your full name, but some variant of your first or last name so that I can tell this is your work.
- 2.) Make your edits in one single session.
- 3.) When you have submitted your edits, click on the View History tab at the very top of the page.
- 4.) Select the first two edits on the list, which should be your most recent edit, plus the previous version of the page. Click the button that reads "Compare selected revisions"
- 5.) Verify that the page is showing your edits compared against the previous version of the page. Copy the URL from the browser window and submit it to me via email.

Grading Rubric for Final Projects

These are the standards I adhere to when I grade all projects. The letter grade is awarded on the following criteria. Pluses and minuses are given for shades of difference in the project's conception, quality of writing or speech, attention to detail, and professional appearance.

A — Excellent in every way (this is not the same as perfect). This is an ambitious, perceptive project that grapples with interesting, complex ideas, and explores well-chosen evidence or examples revealingly. The discussion enhances the reader/viewer/listener's knowledge. It is something more than a summary, and doesn't simply repeat what has been taught or read. There is a context for all the ideas, and someone outside the class would be enriched, not confused, by it. It opens up, rather than flatly announces, its thesis or argument. The language is clean, precise, often elegant. The creator's stake in the project is obvious.

B — A project that reaches high and achieves many of its aims. The ideas are solid and progressively explored but some thin patches require more, and/or some stray thoughts don't fit in. The language is generally clear and precise but occasionally not. The evidence is relevant, but there may be too little. The context or the evidence may not be sufficiently explored so that I have to make some connections that the writer should have made clear for me.

Or... A project that reaches less high than A-level work, but thoroughly achieves its aims. This is a solid effort whose reasoning and argument may nonetheless be rather routine or conceptually limited.

C — A project that has real problems in one of these areas: conception (there's at least one main idea, but it's fuzzy and hard to get to); structure (confusing or simplistic organization); use of evidence (weak evidence for argument, the connections are not made among the ideas and the evidence, ideas and evidence are presented without context, or add up to platitudes and generalizations); language (word choices are often unclear; the sentences are often awkward, dependent on abstractions, sometimes contradict each other). The project does not move forward, but instead continually repeats its main points, or touches upon many apparently unrelated ideas without exploring any of them in sufficient depth. Punctuation, spelling, grammar, paragraphing, etc., may be problems.

Or... A project that is largely a summary without major problems.

Or... A project that is chiefly a personal reaction to something. Well written, but scant intellectual content, mostly opinion.

D — A project that is largely incoherent or is extremely problematic in many of the areas mentioned above: focus, aims, structure, use of evidence, language, etc.

F — A project that does not come close to addressing the expectations of the assignment.

(The above was abridged and adapted from Maxine Rodburg's grading rubric in Kerry Walk, *Commenting and Grading: A Guide for Preceptors.*)