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Medicine and Religion in American Society

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This course considers historical and contemporary conversations regarding religion and medicine in America. We examine the development of "scientific" medicine and healthcare while considering the engagement of religious communities in this transformation. Transitions in understandings and expectations of both medicine and religion as responses to suffering and illness are discussed and located as part of broader social and intellectual developments. The evolving nature of our notions of disease and the "therapeutic" in American society and their ethical implications as interpreted within religious traditions are examined. Issues considered within this context include pharmacotherapeutics, genomics, mental health, enhancement "therapies", medical research, and end-of-life care. Finally, we examine the current "religion and health" movement and its implications for both religion and medicine.