

Summer, 2008
Course PG 833: Psychology of Religion
Course Syllabus

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I. Course Description

An overview of the major theories, issues, data, and research methodologies of the psychology of religion. This course is highly recommended as a supplement to the integration curriculum, especially for those who plan undergraduate teaching careers.

II. Course Objectives

1. Students will be exposed to a variety of approaches to the psychology of religion. By the end of the course, they will be able to discuss and critique important differences between these approaches to the psychological investigation of religion and spirituality.
2. Students will develop a better understanding of their own approach to the psychology of religion and they will be able to clearly articulate this position.
3. Students will be able to apply their knowledge about the theoretical, epistemological, and empirical issues to relevant problems in the psychology of religion. This includes the ability to develop a basic research agenda to explore a specified problem.
4. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the important language, theory, and research relevant to the psychology of religion.

III. Relationship to School and Seminary Learning Outcomes

Students will develop competence in utilizing, critiquing, and conducting psychological research, particularly as it pertains to religious and spiritual issues and will be able to develop and articulate a clear approach to the psychology of religion and scientific study of religion which is consistent with their faith, values, and beliefs.

IV. Assignments and Evaluation

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend and participate in all class meetings. Participation should demonstrate an active engagement with lecture and reading material. Consideration is given to quality of participation which includes depth of thought, preparedness, and respectful communication. Participation is also understood to mean completion of the required reading for the course. A reading log should be turned in at the end of the course indicated how much reading you have completed from the different required reading sources.

Psychology of Religion Theory Paper: Students will complete a 6-8 page position paper delineating their approach to the psychology of religion. The paper should address their epistemology/philosophy of science, approach to dealing with personal beliefs and biases, and implications for integrating their approach to the psychology of religion into practice. Papers must be completed in accordance with APA style.

Scholarly Paper: Students will complete a 10-15 page scholarly paper researching a particular topic relevant to the psychology of religion. This should include: 1) A critical review of the literature, 2) Implications for practice and 3) Implications for future research. Papers must be completed in accordance with APA style. It is recommended that students discuss their topic with the instructor prior to beginning their scholarly paper.

Attendance & Participation	100 points
Psychology of Religion Theory Paper	100 points
Scholarly Paper	200 points
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Total	400 points
A	368-400
A-	360-400
B+	348-400
B	328-347
B-	300-327
C	299 & below

V. Resources

Required Text:

Spilka, B., Hood, R. W., Jr., Hunsberger, B., & Gorsuch, R. (2003). *The psychology of religion: An empirical approach* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Cox, R. H., Ervin-Cox, B., & Hoffman, L. (Eds.). (2005). *Spirituality and psychological health*. Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado School of Professional Psychology Press.

* Course Reader

* Additional Reading Available Online

Recommended Texts:

Hill, P. C. & Hood, R. W., Jr. (Eds.). (1999). *Measures of religiosity*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.

Kirkpatrick, L. A. (2005). *Attachment, evolution, and the psychology of religion*. New York: Guilford.

Moriarty, G. (2006). *Pastoral care of depression: Helping clients heal their relationship with God*. New York: Haworth Press.

Witham, L. (2005). *The measure of God: Our century-long struggle to reconcile science and religion. The story of the Gifford Lectures*. New York: HarperCollins.

Wulff, D. M. (1997). *Psychology of religion: Classic and contemporary* (2nd ed). New York: Wiley.

Integration Resources:

* See above texts. Additional integration resources available through the web site below.

Other Resources:

Additional courses resources are available at www.louis-hoffman-virtualclassroom.com

VI. Policies

Attendance: Classroom and small group attendance is mandatory.

Academic Integrity: At the beginning of this course we, as faculty and students, reaffirm our commitment to be beyond reproach in our academic work as a reflection of Christian character. We commit to honesty in all aspects of our work. We seek to establish a community which values serious intellectual engagement and personal faithfulness more highly than grades, degrees, or publications. Students are expected to review and understand the commitments to academic integrity as printed in the Student Handbook and the Seminary catalogue. Some infractions can be addressed by personal confrontation and corrective counsel. The following violations of these commitments will be firmly addressed formally:

- Submitting the same work in whole or in part in more than one course without the permission of the professor(s);
- Submitting as one's own work paper(s) obtained from another source;

- Plagiarism, i.e., large and/or multiple unattributed quotations or paraphrases of ideas from published or unpublished sources;
- Unpermitted collaboration in preparing assignments;
- Cheating on exams by any means;
- Aiding another student on papers and tests in violation of these commitments.

Any of these violations will result in a failing grade on the assignment and possibly in the course, and will be reported to the Academic Integrity Group (see below) which may impose further sanctions in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy. Evidence of repeated violations will result in a formal disciplinary process. (For the full statement on Academic Integrity see The Student Handbook 2001-2002 pages 58-60.)

Accommodations: If you need disability accommodations in this class, if you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class or in my office.

VI. Course Schedule and Activities

* Course Schedule & Topics subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Course due dates not subject to change.

** Please note that due to the intensive format of the class, the instructor does not expect all the reading to be completed for each class period. Some of the reading will be completed after the in-class portion of the class. The listed readings are those most relevant to the topic for the day.

PRE: *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*

SPH: *Spirituality & Psychological Health*

Class 1a, July 7, 2008 (morning)

Topics:	Course Overview Epistemology & the Philosophy of Science Overview of Important Issues in the Psychology of Religion
Reading:	PRE - Chapter 1 SPH - Chapters 1-2 Reader: Nelson Article
Activities:	None
Course Objectives:	2, 3, 4

Class 1b, July 7, 2008 (afternoon)

Topics:	Theoretical Issues in the Psychology of Religion Postmodernism & the Psychology of Religion Critical Psychology and the Psychology of Religion Religions and Science Models
Reading:	PRE – Chapters 1, 12 SPH – Chapters 1-2, Epilogue Online: Modern & Postmodern Ways of Knowing
Activities:	Philosophy of Science/Epistemology Discussion
Course Objectives:	2, 3, 4

Class 2a, July 8, 2008 (morning)

Topics:	Survey of Research on Religion, Spirituality, and Psychological Health and Physical Health Terror Management & the Psychology of Religion
Reading:	PRE – Chapters 2, 3, 16 SPH – Chapter 16 (Handout – Updated Version)
Activities:	Critiquing Prayer Research
Course Objectives:	1, 3, 4

Class 2b, July 8, 2008b (afternoon)

Topics: Developmental Issues in the Psychology of Religion
Reading: PRE – Chapters 4-7
SPH – Chapters 3-7
Activities: None
Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4

Class 3a, July 9, 2008 (morning)

Topics: Humanistic & Existential Perspectives on the Psychology of Religion
Transpersonal Psychology Approaches to the Psychology of Religion
Reading: PRE – Chapter 8
SPH – Chapters 8, 9, 12
Reader: Existential Chapter - Hoffman
Activities: None
Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4

Class 3b, July 9, 2008 (afternoon)

Topics: Psychodynamic Perspectives on the Psychology of Religion
The God Image, the God Concept, and Attachment
Reading: PRE – Chapters 9, 10, 11
SPH – Chapter 8
Reader: Grimes Chapter
Online: [Research on the experience of God: Rethinking epistemological assumptions](#)
Activities: God Image Research Critique
Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4

Class 4a, July 10, 2008 (morning)

Topics: Diversity Issues in the Psychology of Religion
Faith and Coping
Reading: PRE – Chapter 14
SPH – Chapters 10, 11, 13, 15
Activities: Diversity Issues Discussion
Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3

Class 4b, July 10, 2008 (afternoon)

Topics: Evidence-Based Practice, Spirituality, and Religion
The Psychology of Evil: Demon Possession or Daimon Possession
Reading: PRE – Chapter 13
SPH – Chapter 12
Online Reading: [The Psychology of Evil: Devils, Demons, & the Daimonic](#).
Reader: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Need in the Psychology of Evil
Reader: Existential-Integrative Perspectives on the Psychology of Evil
Activities: None
Course Objectives: 1, 2, 3

Class 5, July 11, 2008 (morning)

Topics: From Science and Psychology to Integration
Reading: PRE – Epilogue
SPH – Chapter 14 & 15 (update; see handout)
Suggested Online Reading: [Transcendence, suffering, and psychotherapy](#)

Activities: Final Wrap Up & Discussion
Course Objectives: 2, 3, 4

Assignment Due Dates:

All papers must be turned in electronically via Email unless otherwise approved by the instructor. The final due date for both papers is September 15. It is recommended that the Psychology of Religion Theory Paper be completed by August 15. If it is completed by this time, the student will receive a graded paper returned prior to the final due date for the Scholarly Paper. This will allow students to integrate feedback from their first paper to improve the quality of their final paper.

A final reading log should be submitted by September 15.