

Psy 3112 Psychology of Religion (3 Cr.)
Section 001 (Web based online instruction)
Summer 2010

Instructor: Dr. Ajit Das Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychology
Office 346 Boh Hall
Office Hrs.: Mon 11:00-12:00
Phone: (218) 728-3557
E-mail: adas@d.umn.edu
Contact Information: Please use my e-mail to contact me
Online course: <http://webvista.umn.edu>
The course starts on May 18 and ends on August 14

Syllabus and Requirements

Introduction: The course is about the scientific study of religion using psychological theories and methods. It explores how religious beliefs and practices are acquired and modified, and the role they play in an individual's life. This is a web based course. There will be no class meetings, although there will be opportunities to interact with other students via an electronic bulletin board. The course content comprises of 16 units to be completed over a period of 13 weeks from May 18 to August 14, 2009. The learning objectives along with reading and writing assignments for each unit are included in separate folders

Course Content

Week 1 Unit 1: Psychological study of religion.

Unit 2: How religious beliefs and practices are acquired

Week 2 Unit 3: The relationship between personality and religion

Unit 4: The extent and varieties of religious experience

Week 3 Unit 5: The causes and effects of religious experience

Unit 6: Types of religious beliefs

Week 4 Unit 7: Explanation of religious beliefs and practices offered by Freud and Jung

June Test 1

Week 5 Unit 8: Psychological significance of worship and prayer

Week 6 Unit 9: Psychological functions of rituals

Week 7 Unit 10: Psychological benefits and costs of religion

Week 8 Unit 11: The effect of religion on mental and physical health

Week 9 Unit 12: Religion and morality

Week 10 Unit 13: The effect of religion on certain behaviors

Week 11 Unit 14: The effect of secular trends on religion

Week 12 Unit 15 The growth of new religious movements

Week 13 Unit 16: General conclusions from the psychological study of religion

Final Exam August 14

Note: Learning objectives and assignments for each unit are included in separate folders. Each unit is self-contained and carries 5 points. Each unit begins with a pretest, which is designed to help you determine what you already know about the topic discussed in the unit. You are not required to submit your answers. You are required to submit your writing assignments for grading. Tests 1 and Test 2 carry 30 points each. The Final Exam carries 40 points. There will be 2 topics for discussion, each carrying 10 points, 5 points for posting a response and 5 for responding to another student's posting.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of achievement levels as stated below:

180+ A
160-179 B
140-159 C
120-139 D

Text Book: Argyle, Michael (2000) Psychology and Religion

New York: Routledge

Supplementary Readings

Fuller, A.E. (1987) Psychology and Religion: Eight Points of View

New York: University Press of America

Jonte-Pace, D. & Parsons, W.B. (2001) Religion and Psychology:

Contemporary Dialogue and Future Prospects

New York: Routledge

Spilka, B & McIntosh, D.N. (1997) The Psychology of Religion:

Theoretical Approaches

Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press

The textbook will be available for purchase at the UMD bookstore. The supplementary readings will be put on reserve for this course in the UMD Library and can be checked out for two hours at a time

Academic Integrity Policy: this course will adhere to UMD's Student Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found at www.d.umn.edu/assl/coduct/integrity. This policy sanctions students engaging in academic dishonesty with penalties up to and including expulsion from the university.

Student Conduct Code: Appropriate conduct including use of proper language is as important in an electronic environment as it is in a classroom situation.

Individual who have a disability, which might require some special adjustment are encouraged to inform the instructor at the start of the semester.

FERPA Compliance: In this class our use of technology will sometimes make student's names and U of M internet IDs visible within the course website, but only to other students in the same class. Since we are using a secure, password-protected course website, this will not increase the risk of identity theft or spamming for any one in the class. If you have any concerns about the visibility of your internet ID, please contact me