

PSYCH 348x: Psychology of Religion

Fall, 2007

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Office Hours: Tuesday 10:45 - 12:45

Wednesday 1:00 - 2:00

Course web site:

www.psychology.iastate.edu/~nwade/348x.htm

Course Description:

This course is a survey of psychological theory and research investigating religious beliefs, experiences, and practices. We will focus on those parts of the religious life that can be described and understood from a psychological perspective. We will attempt to explore the psychology of universal religion, although we will not comprehensively survey the beliefs and practices of different religious traditions. Also, we will not be attempting to prove or disprove religious claims. Instead, our main focus will be on the psychological elements of religious life.

Texts:

1. Paloutzian, R. F. (1996). Invitation to the psychology of religion. Allyn and Bacon: Boston, MA.
2. James, W. E. (1985). The varieties of religious experience. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA. (Also available on the Internet: ****http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/james/toc.htm****)
3. Frankl, V. E. (1985). Man's search for meaning. Washington Square Press: New York.
4. Wulff, D. M. (1997). Psychology of religion: Classic and contemporary. John Wiley & Sons: New York. [Optional]

Course Goals

I will . . .

1. Present an overview of how psychologists study religion and related topics through lectures, discussion, and assigned projects.
2. Provide the forum and opportunity to think deeply and critically about religion, psychology, and the psychology of religion.
3. Encourage hard work within a relaxed and collegial environment.

Students will . . .

1. Explore facets of religion from a psychological perspective, and learn the theories and conclusions psychology has proposed about religion.
2. Complete reading and writing assignments, presentations, and participate in class discussion to critically evaluate the material.
3. Acquire skills for thinking independently and critically and apply those to the course material.

Course Expectations

1. Attendance:

Attendance is an important part of this learning experience. The reading will only cover a portion of the material learned in this course. In addition, there will be many opportunities for discussion and interaction. Your presence is needed to make these successful. However, I will not be recording or specifically grading your attendance. You are responsible for any information or material that was covered in class on a day you were absent.

2. Participation:

Participation in class discussions, activities, and presentations is also an important part of the learning you will accomplish this semester. I will provide different opportunities for participation to try to include everyone, but you may need to stretch yourself some to take part in the class fully. In addition, we all need to work to make the atmosphere in the class respectful and open. This means that personal beliefs and opinions need to be owned as such, and differences need to be heard and respected.

3. Feedback:

To make the class as beneficial as we can, we will need to give each other feedback. I welcome any and all thoughtful suggestions for our time together, via email, in person, or on anonymous slips of paper. I will provide formal feedback to each of you via graded assignments (see "Grading Criteria" below) and in person should anyone request it.

Grading Criteria

Your grade in this course will be determined by a point system. You have the opportunity to acquire 500 total points in this class. Based on this total point value, grades will be assigned as follows:

465 - 500 pts = A	400 - 419 pts = B-	335 - 349 pts = D+
450 - 464 pts = A-	385 - 399 pts = C+	320 - 334 pts = D
435 - 449 pts = B+	370 - 384 pts = C	300 - 319 pts = D-
420 - 434 pts = B	350 - 369 pts = C-	below 300 pts = F

Assignments. You will complete four (4) assignments with different point values. The assignments, with point values, are listed below and due dates are listed in the course schedule. More information about each assignment can be found online. The assignments are worth 200 total points.

1. Personal Reflections on Religion	20 pts
2. Religious Conversion Interview	100 pts
3. Analysis of a Mystical Experience	40 pts
4. Experiencing a Religious Service	40 pts

Reaction Paper. You will write a 4-5 page reaction paper after reading the book Man's Search for Meaning. The reaction paper should only briefly discuss the contents of the book (less than one page). The bulk of the paper should contain your reactions to the material, what you liked and did not like, and why. Write about connections with other material we have discussed, read, and studied. Connect the material with your own past experiences. Take a creative angle, this paper doesn't have to be a formal essay. Don't just summarize the book.

The Reaction Paper will be worth 100 points of your final grade.

Exams. There will be two exams and one final. They will cover the material we talk about in class and material from the required reading. They will contain multiple choice, short answer, and/or essay questions. Each exam will be worth 50 points and the final will be worth 100 points, for a total of 200 points of your final grade.

Exam 1: September 25th
 Exam 2: October 30th
 Final: December 14th (7:30 am)

NOTE: In order for me to return your work quickly, assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be deducted five (5) points for each day late. "Days" will be counted as weekdays only.

Class Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>WORK DUE</u>
8-21	Introduction to the Class		
8-23	Brief History of the Field	IPR, Ch 1 and 2 <i>PP:CC, Ch 2.</i>	
8-28	Philosophy of Science & Research Methods	VRE, Lecture I	Assign. 1
8-30	Science – Religion Debate	IPR, Ch 3 (55-68) Online reading	
9-4	Religion Expressed in Myth and Culture		
9-6	Religion, Myth, and Culture (continued)		
9-11	Religious Development	IPR, Ch 4 & 5 <i>PP:CC, Ch 9</i>	
9-13	Religious Development (continued)		
9-18	Religion and Attachment		
9-20	TBA		
9-25	EXAM 1		Exam
9-27	Religious Conversion	IPR, Chapter 6 VRE, Lecture IX	
10-2	Religious Conversion (continued)		
10-4	Religious Orientation	IPR, Chapter 8 <i>PP:CC, p.220-242</i>	
10-9	Religious Orientation (cont)		
10-11	Mysticism within Religious Contexts	IPR, Chapter 7 VRE, Lect. XVI & XVII	Assign. 2
10-16	Mysticism (cont)		
10-18	Religion, Health, and Well-Being	IPR, Chapter 9	Assign. 3
10-23	Religion and Coping		
10-25	TBA		
10-30	EXAM 2		Exam

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>WORK DUE</u>
11-1	Religion and the Four Forces of Psychology	<i>PP:CC, p.199-39, 269-85, 582-626</i>	
11-6	Psychology of Forgiveness		
11-8	New Religious Movements		
11-13	Religion and Evil		
11-15	TBA		Assign. 4
11-20	No Class---Thanksgiving		
11-22	No Class---Thanksgiving		
11-27	Religion and Counseling		
11-29	Religion and Counseling: Guest Panel		
12-4	Religion and the Pursuit of Meaning	<u>Man's Search for Meaning</u>	Reaction Paper
12-6	Course Conclusion Exam Review	IPR, Chapter 10 <i>PP:CC, p. 641-45</i>	
12-14	<u>Final Exam</u> (Friday, 7:30 - 9:30 am)		

Note: "IPR" = *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion*, Paloutzian.
 "VRE" = *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James.
 "PR:CC" = *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, Wulff. [Optional]

Academic Dishonesty

We are colleagues, together in this learning endeavor. I trust that each of you will do your own work, that what you present to me is a product of your time and effort, not someone else's. However, should there be any suspected academic dishonesty, I will follow the policies and procedures laid out by the Dean of Students Office. For more information see the Student Information Handbook, Policies and Practices, section XIII or come speak with me.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 calls for ISU to provide a "reasonable accommodation" to any individual who advises us of a physical or mental disability. If you have a physical or mental limitation that requires an accommodation or an academic adjustment, please arrange a meeting with me at your earliest convenience.