



Texas A&M
UNIVERSITY
Central Texas

RELS 4312
Psychology of Religion
Fall 2020

Class Location: Online
Class Hours: Thursdays 6:00-8:45 p.m.
Instructor: Floyd Berry, PhD
Office: HH 204 S (not used during pandemic)
Email: (prefer Canvas message) fberry@tamuct.edu
NOTE: If contacting instructor outside of Canvas, students must use their official TAMUCT emails.

1.0 Course Description

Examines the major issues, theories, and psychological approaches to the study of religion. Explores the formation of meaning systems, motivation for behaviors, and psychological accounts for religious impulses and phenomena.

2.0 Accessing Canvas

This is an online course that meets once each week in Canvas. The student accesses Canvas at <https://tamuct.onecampus.com/> and locates the “card” for the Canvas platform.

3.0 Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to discuss the concepts and contributions of various classic psychologists regarding religious phenomena.
2. Students will be able to explain religious phenomena from the findings of neuroscience.
3. Students will submit prose reactions to material and topics covered in class discussions.
4. Students will submit acceptable essays for mid-term and final exams. To be accepted, the student shall discuss all aspects of an essay question, using standard English prose and grammatical construction.

4.0 Textbooks

Fuller, A. R. (2008). *Psychology and religion* (4th ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
Newberg, A., D’aquili, E., & Rause, V. (2002). *Why God won’t go away*. New York: Ballantine.

5.0 Course Requirements

5.1 Exams (400 pts)

The student shall take two exams, a mid-term and a final. The exams are “take-home” exams in that the student has a week to answer the questions that are presented. Students type on a Microsoft Word document and submits the exam by attaching it to an email (message in Canvas), sent to the instructor. Each exam is valued at 200 points. Students are encouraged to review their work before submission. The mid-term exam will receive comments from the instructor and will be returned to the student. The following rubric will guide the instructor:

| Qualities & Criteria | Poor | Good | Excellent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of topics to be addressed • Information is correct • Coherency <p>(Weight: 70%)</p> | Not objective and poorly addresses the issues. Information is unnecessary or insufficient to discuss the issues. (0-109 pts) | Mostly objective and addresses most of the issues. Information is mostly necessary and sufficient to discuss the issues. (110-131 pts) | Objective and addresses all the issues. Information is necessary and sufficient to discuss the issues. (132-140 pts) |
| Quality of Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity • Grammar and English usage • Organization and coherence <p>(Weight: 30%)</p> | Poorly written and contains flagrant spelling and grammatical errors. Poorly organized, lacks clarity, and is incoherent. (0-40 pts) | Mostly well-written, without egregious spelling or grammatical errors. Organized, clear, and ideas are presented in coherent ways. (41-55 pts) | Well-written, without egregious spelling or grammatical errors. Well organized, clear, and ideas are presented in coherent ways. (56-60 pts) |

A week before each exam, the instructor will provide students with two exam questions. This practice provides the student with a week’s worth of preparation.

NOTE: Upper-level students are expected to have adequate knowledge of the essentials of grammar, writing style, and essay organization in accordance with writing manuals. If the student does *not* have adequate knowledge in these areas, then the purchase and use of additional books are highly recommended. Failure to provide written work in accordance with the essentials of acceptable, English writing style will result in poor grades. Examples of non-standard English usage include, among other things, sentence fragments, run-ons, dangling modifiers, lack of agreement between pronouns and their antecedents or subjects and verbs, bulleted items, slashes, flagrant misuse of punctuation, slang or abbreviated expressions, “etc.,” and excessive use of metaphorical language. In Modules, there is a Power Point on “Typical Problems with Essay Exams.”

5.2 Class Participation (300 pts)

Students are expected to participate in online class discussions, indicating an understanding of the reading material and how to apply it. Students are to read assigned material before class. Students earn a point for each of two questions that are posted by the instructor. Thus, the student earns 0-2 points on each class day (total of 13 days), which correspond to the following, class participation grade:

| Points | Grade | Points | Grade | Points | Grade |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------|
| 26 | 300 | 17 | 197 | 8 | 93 |
| 25 | 289 | 16 | 185 | 7 | 82 |
| 24 | 277 | 15 | 174 | 6 | 70 |
| 23 | 266 | 14 | 162 | 5 | 59 |
| 22 | 254 | 13 | 151 | 4 | 47 |
| 21 | 243 | 12 | 139 | 3 | 36 |
| 20 | 231 | 11 | 128 | 2 | 24 |
| 19 | 220 | 10 | 116 | 1 | 12 |
| 18 | 208 | 9 | 105 | 0 | 0 |

5.3 Academic Integrity Document

During the first week of class, the student is to read the section in the syllabus on Academic Integrity (§ 8.0) and the link provided in that section regarding plagiarism. Students must read the document (also in Canvas, under Modules) pertaining to Academic Integrity and send emails to the instructor that they understand Academic Integrity. **NOTE: Students will not be allowed to continue in the course without notifying the instructor of their comprehension of this material.** Examples of academic dishonesty in this course might be having someone do the student's work or plagiarizing from internet sites.

5.4 Reaction Comments (300 pts)

At the conclusion of each class (except when exams are taken), students will submit a Reaction Comment (RC), due before midnight. *In Canvas, the student will send an email to the instructor, reacting to material discussed or experienced in class.* A paragraph or two is sufficient. Students express their reactions to something discussed or experienced in class. **A mere summary of material discussed in class, however, is insufficient for credit.** Students should make some comments on assigned readings or discussions, coupled with their reactions. Students shall identify their email with the headings of RC1, RC2, etc., as indicated in the course calendar (§ 7.0). Using headings other than RC1, RC2, etc. may result in no credit. **Obviously, students must attend class before they can react to material presented or discussed in class.** RC's correspond to the following grades:

| # of RC's | Grade | # of RC's | Grade |
|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|
| 13 | 300 | 6 | 139 |
| 12 | 277 | 5 | 116 |
| 11 | 254 | 4 | 93 |
| 10 | 231 | 3 | 70 |
| 9 | 208 | 2 | 47 |
| 8 | 185 | 1 | 23 |
| 7 | 162 | 0 | 0 |

6.0 Grading Matrix and Conversion

6.1 Matrix

| | Points |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Exams (2 @ 200) | 400 |
| Class Participation | 300 |
| Reaction Comments | 300 |
| Academic Integrity Acknowledgement | ----- |
| Total: | 1000 |

6.2 Conversion to Course Letter Grade

| Points | % | Grade |
|------------|----------|-------|
| 900 – 1000 | 90 – 100 | A |
| 800 – 899 | 80 – 89 | B |
| 700 – 799 | 70 – 79 | C |
| 600 – 699 | 60 – 69 | D |
| 0 – 599 | 0 – 59 | F |

7.0 Course Calendar¹

| Date | Topic | Readings | Assignments Due |
|---------|---|--|---|
| 8/27/20 | Syllabus Academic Integrity Religious Studies | Syllabus Academic Integrity/ plagiarism readings (§ 8.0 of syllabus) Power Point Discussions | RC1 due before midnight |
| 9/3/20 | Introduction James | F, preface and ch. 1 | Academic Integrity acknowledgement due before 6 pm RC2 due before midnight |
| 9/10/20 | Freud | F, ch. 2 | RC3 due before midnight |
| 9/17/20 | Jung | F, ch. 3 | RC4 due before midnight |
| 9/24/20 | Fromm | F, ch. 7 | RC5 due before midnight |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 10/1/20 | Frankl | F, ch. 8 | RC6 due before midnight |
| 10/8/20 | Wnnicott Pruyser Rizzuto Vergote | F, ch. 9, pp. 251-263 | RC7 due before midnight |
| 10/15/20 | Spilka Batson Grof | F, ch. 9, pp. 263-275 | RC8 due before midnight |
| 10/22/20 | Mid-term Exam | | |
| 10/29/20 | Neuroscience | F, ch. 11 | RC9 due before midnight |
| 11/5/20 | Neurotheology | N, chs. 1-2 | RC10 due before midnight |
| 11/12/20 | Nerotheology, cont | N, chs. 3-4 | RC11 due before midnight |
| 11/19/20 | Nerotheology, cont | N, chs. 5-6 | RC12 due before midnight |
| 11/26/20 | Holiday | | |
| 12/3/20 | Nerotheology, cont | N, ch. 7 | RC13 due before midnight |
| 12/10/20 | Final Exam | | |

¹ Events are subject to minor revision (see § 14.0).

² **pp** = pages, in textbook; **F** = Fuller's *Psychology and Religion*; **N** = Newberg et al., *Why God Won't Go Away*

8.0 Academic Integrity

TAMUCT expects all students to maintain high standards of personal and scholarly conduct. Students guilty of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, self-plagiarism ("recycling"), or collusion. The instructor shall initiate action for each case of academic dishonesty and report it to the Associate Director of Student Conduct. Zero points will be assigned for any course product that violates academic honesty. The student should access this link for more information: <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html>.

9.0 Disability Support

If students believe that this course may present barriers to learning due to a disability, they must contact Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831 in Warrior Hall, Ste. 212. For more information, students may visit their website at <https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html>. Any information that the student provides is private and confidential and will be treated as such. The instructor cannot accommodate students' disabilities unless they first communicate with Access and Inclusion.

10.0 Diversity in the Classroom

Respect for cultural and human biological diversity are core concepts within the social sciences. In this course, each voice in the classroom has value in contributing to class discussion. The student should respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values

expressed by one's fellow students and instructor, and refrain from derogatory comments about other individuals, cultures, groups, or viewpoints. In this course we welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, education, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experiences, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences.

11.0 Classroom Etiquette

Students shall show respect to other students and to the instructor in all communications, whether verbal or in writing (e.g., online). For example, arguing, complaining, and challenging that is not based on readings, rationality, and the course objectives are a violation of classroom etiquette.

12.0 Writing Center

The University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students. The UWC is located in Warrior Hall, Rm 416. One may contact Dr. Bruce Bowles at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu for more information.

13.0 Late Work

As a rule, make-up work for the two exams will not be accepted. The mid-term exam may be accepted late, but with a 20-point deduction for each day late. *In no instance will a make-up for the mid-term exam be given after two weeks from the original exam date.* To be considered as a prospect for making up the mid-term exam, the student must contact the instructor within 24 hours of having missed the exam for purposes of making it up. The final course grade will be posted within a few days of the final exam; therefore, *no incompletes will be awarded for this course.* If students foresee that they will be unable to complete the course, then they should either drop the course or accept the posted grade.

14.0 Modification of the Syllabus

This syllabus may be revised in minor ways at the discretion of the instructor. The student is responsible for noting any changes in the syllabus. More than likely, a change in the syllabus will pertain to typos or events in the course calendar (§ 7.0). If modified, a revised course calendar will be posted on Canvas and will replace § 7.0 of the syllabus.

15.0 Contact with the Instructor

The student should contact the instructor via the message feature of Canvas about any topic or issue that pertains to the course.

16.0 Announcements

The student is responsible for checking Canvas on a near-daily basis for ongoing announcements or messages pertaining to the course.