

**Cultural and Social Foundations of Religion: The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (PSYC4389.040 / PSYC6389.040)**

Summer I 2014: June 2 – July 3, 2014

Mondays and Thursdays 5:00-9:00 PM, MB3251

**Instructor:** Kevin A. Harris, Ph.D., NCC

**Office:** MB 3114

**Phone:** (432) 552-2346

**E-mail:** kevinharris100@yahoo.com (best email) or harris\_k@utpb.edu (best way of getting in touch with me)

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Thursdays 2:30-5:00 PM

**Description:**

This course is a seminar providing an overview of the psychology of religion and spirituality, with an emphasis on *social, cultural, and family issues*. We will cover the psychology of religion and spirituality from a multicultural perspective, with emphasis on *the studies of change, ethnic groups, gender studies, family systems, urban and rural societies, population patterns, cultural patterns, and differing life styles* – and how they relate to the psychology of religion and spirituality. We will cover the history and seminal issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality, including foundations of the psychology of religion, religion through the developmental lens, religion and basic psychology subdisciplines, the construction and expression of religion and spirituality, and the psychology of religion and applied areas. Topics include defining religion/ religiosity/ spirituality/ faith/ the sacred/ transpersonal, extrinsic/ intrinsic/ quest religiosity, exploring cultural issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality, current trends in research and measurement, and issues of clinical competency. Multiple religious backgrounds will be covered, including Christianity, Protestantism, Catholicism, Greek Orthodox, Latter Day Saint, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Paganism, as well as Atheism, Agnosticism, and spiritual but not religious traditions.

**Prerequisites:**

None.

**Required Textbooks:**

Paloutzian, R. F., & Park, C. L. (2013). *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Guilford. ISBN: 978-1462510061.

Fowler, J. W. (1981). *Stages of faith: The psychology of human development and the quest for meaning*. New York, NY: HarperCollins. ISBN: 978-0060628666.

**Optional Textbook:**

Richards, P. S., & Bergin, A. E. (2000). *Handbook of psychotherapy and religious diversity*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1557986245.



### **Student Learning Goals:**

- To gain a comprehensive understanding of issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality
- To understand the social, cultural, and family issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality from a multicultural perspective, with emphasis on the studies of change, ethnic groups, gender studies, family systems, urban and rural societies, population patterns, cultural patterns, and differing life styles
- To understand the foundations of the psychology of religion: core issues, defining terms, measurement issues, research methods, psychodynamics, evolutionary psychology, and sacralities
- To learn about religion through the developmental lens: faith development theory and development in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and maturity
- To discuss religion and basic psychology subdisciplines: neuropsychology, cognitive science, goals, valuation theory, personality, social psychology, and cross-cultural psychology
- To explore the construction and expression of religion and spirituality: meaning, struggle, conversion, mystical experiences, ritual and prayer, fundamentalism and prejudice, forgiveness, and self-control
- To learn about the psychology of religion and applied areas: health, mental health, coping, mindfulness, evidence-based practice, workplace research, and terrorism
- To understand the clinical issues involved in addressing religion and spirituality in counseling
- To explore definitions of the terms religion, religiosity, spirituality, faith, the sacred, and transpersonal
- To discuss extrinsic, intrinsic, and quest religiosity
- To understand current trends in research and measurement in the psychology of religion
- To understand the importance of religious diversity and the cultural implications of religion and spirituality
- To understand faith development theory

### **Class Philosophy:**

I love psychology. It is truly rewarding to love something, but to share something I love with others is even more gratifying. Perhaps this is why I love to teach so much. I am a committed and enthusiastic teacher, and more than anything else, this defines who I am as a professional. Brazilian liberatory actor/director Augusto Boal once said, “You cannot teach if you do not learn from those you are teaching” (Schechner & Chatterjee, 1998, p. 87). My teaching style is informed by this philosophy, and by Team Based Learning ([www.teambasedlearning.org](http://www.teambasedlearning.org)). In my teaching, I try to strike a balance between a participatory form of teaching, which is phenomenological, collaborative, and based on a participant-actor model, and a more traditional form of teaching, which is positivist, lecture-oriented, and based on an instructor-as-expert model. Many students learn better when they are a part of the teaching process – when they take part in teaching themselves, participate in active discussions, do creative projects to enhance their learning, and engage in the learning process. I take a developmental systemic approach to teaching, informed by Piaget’s stages of cognitive development,

Erickson's stages of social development, classical Behavioral theories of reinforcement and learning, Social Learning theory, Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, and even Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. My goals in my teaching are both to foster critical thinking and to help cultivate a love of learning, using diverse techniques for students from different backgrounds with different learning styles.

**Course Expectations:**

This course will be collaborative, discussion-oriented, and based on class discussion. There will be no lectures. Instead, classes will focus on group discussions of the readings and various topics. As such, it will be important for you to come to class prepared, having read the readings. The more you participate in class discussions, the more fun class will be. So participation is expected and strongly encouraged.

**Attendance and Participation:**

You are expected to attend class and be an *active participant* in class activities. Participation is required, and those who actively participate in class almost always receive higher grades than those who do not. Attendance is required. You are expected to have completed assigned readings prior to the class period in which they will be discussed. You are also strongly encouraged to ask questions at any point during the class, as discussion generally allows students to learn better (and tends to make the class a lot more fun, too).

**Assigned Readings:**

You are expected to have completed assigned readings prior to the class period in which they will be discussed. Please come to class having read the readings. It is also very helpful to highlight the readings, take notes, or otherwise interact with the reading (rather than just passively reading them).

**Student Behavior:**

High personal and professional standards are expected of you, as reflected in the objectives of the University of Texas of the Permian Basin and the professional ethics of the American Psychological Association. Academic integrity and honesty will characterize all of your work. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and instances of such behavior will be handled in accordance with UTPB's policy on academic dishonesty. So don't cheat. Cheating is bad.

**Withdrawals:**

To withdraw from this class, you must complete a withdrawal form with the Registrar or forward an email from the instructor to the Registrar's office. Students will not be automatically dropped from the class for any reason. In other words, if you haven't done the paperwork, you are still enrolled in the class. The last day to drop a course is June 20. The last day to drop a course with a refund is June 5.

**Cell Phones and Electronic Devices:**

Please do not text, talk on cell phones, or browse the Internet while in class, unless you are working on a class-related project during designated times with my permission. You may use laptops or tablets to take notes at my discretion, as long as you are not disruptive as you are

using them – and as long as you are still able to pay attention. I can ask you not to use an electronic device at any time. If, for some reason, you must use a certain device (like to answer a phone call), please leave the room.

**Students with Special Needs:**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact Leticia Madrid, Director of the PASS office in the Mesa Building Room 1160, at (432) 552-2631 or madrid\_l@utpb.edu. Students are required to provide documentation of disability to the PASS Office prior to receiving accommodations. The PASS Office refers some types of accommodations requests to the University Counseling Center, which provides diagnostic testing for learning and psychological disabilities. For information about testing, contact Suzanne Rathbun in the University Counseling Center at (432) 552-2365 or rathbun\_s@utpb.edu.

**Grading for Undergraduate Students:**

Assessment	Points/Percentage
Attendance	20%
Participation	20%
Leading Class Discussions (5 points x 4)	20%
Informal Presentations (15 points x 2)	30%
Final Exam	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading for Graduate Students:**

Assessment	Points/Percentage
Undergraduate Assignments	80%
Research Paper	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Course Requirements:

**Attendance and Participation:** You will be participating in class discussion every day. It is a lot more engaging and helpful for your professional development if you engage in active learning through dialectics – through group discussion – rather than just learning through lecturing, reading assignments, and PowerPoint presentations. I genuinely want to know your questions about the course, your opinions, and your reactions to various issues I will bring up in class or which you will read about. So speak up! I will tailor the class to your questions, your interests, and level of thinking, but I can only do this when you participate. I do not want the class to be dominated by only a few outgoing students – I would like everyone to participate. Therefore, you will be evaluated on your level of participation in class discussions. Consequently, you will also be graded on your attendance in class.

**Leading Class Discussions:** Four times throughout the course, you will lead class discussion on a topic of your choice. You will volunteer to lead a discussion on a topic that you have a lot to say about, and you will encourage the class to discuss this topic in depth. Your job is to get the discussion going and keep it going for the duration of the topic.

**Informal Presentations:** Throughout the semester, you will be introduced to a variety of different religions and denominations. On two different occasions, you will make a 15 minute informal presentation to the class on a religion or doctrine of your choice. Topics include: *Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Mainline Protestantism, Evangelical/ Fundamentalist Protestantism, Pentecostalism, Latter-Day Saints, Seventh-Day Adventism, Orthodox Judaism, Conservative/ Reform Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Paganism, Atheism/Agnosticism, African American Traditions, Latino(a) Traditions, Asian American Traditions, and Native American Traditions.* You will present on the day when this topic is introduced to the class. Although this is not required, it is suggested that you have some sort of handout for the class.

**Exams:** In lieu of a traditional Final Exam, you will do a creative assignment on the topic of the psychology of religion and spirituality. There are no rules for this assignment! You will create an assignment that relates to this course, and then you will complete this assignment and turn it in. So get creative with this! There are no other exams for this course. Plus the creative assignment that gets the most votes from your peers gets 5 points/5% extra credit.

**Research Paper (for Graduate Students only):** This is a combined undergraduate and graduate course. For graduate students only, you will write an APA style Research Paper on a topic of your choice in the psychology of religion and spirituality. This will be a literature review where you research a topic of your choice and present the research. This paper should be in APA format. There is no minimum length for the paper, but you should cover the topic sufficiently and include around 8-10 references (peer-reviewed journal articles).

**Homework Assignments:** There are no homework assignments for this course (other than reading assignments, preparing for the two formal presentations, and the creative assignment final exam listed above).

**Extra Credit Research Option:**

All students enrolled in Psychology courses have the option to complete research for extra credit. For each hour of research participation you complete, you will receive 1 point of extra credit (up to 10 points) to add to the points you earn for class (up to 110 points). Options for participation are as follows:

1. Participate in a research study conducted through the Psychology Subject Pool website or otherwise publicly posted. Projects are typically posted on the Psychology Subject Pool website as described below. Projects may also be announced in class by instructors during the semester. Projects may be worth between ½ and 2 hours of credit. If you participate through the Psychology Subject Pool website, the instructor will be notified as you participate in studies. Otherwise, you are responsible for providing the instructor with proof you obtain from the researcher verifying your participation.
2. Write a critique of a journal article that is relevant to your class. Each critique is worth one hour of credit. Select an article from a psychology journal (ask the instructor for examples of acceptable journals – if you are not sure if a journal is acceptable, *ask before you write the critique*). *Psychology Today* or any other magazine is not acceptable in this context. Your critique should include (1) a summary of the article (no more than one page), (2) a discussion of the relevance of this article to the course, (3) a discussion of the strong and weak points of the article (e.g., does it cover what it claims it will cover? Given your understanding of statistics, do the results make sense? Did the author(s) provide logical interpretations of the findings in the discussion section?), and (4) what would your suggestions be for further studies in this area, given the author's conclusions? These critiques should be 2-4 pages, typed, double-spaced APA style (ask your instructor for details). ***Include a copy of the reviewed article with your critique.***
3. Assist a faculty member or graduate student with his/her research during the semester. Faculty and graduate students periodically need research assistants to conduct surveys, enter data, locate articles, or perform other duties. Specific duties will be assigned by the researcher in need of an assistant. Speak with the course instructor to learn how to locate researchers in need of assistants. Note: This option, if available, will take considerably more than one or two hours. The benefit, however, is working in close proximity to someone who could, in turn, provide you with a recommendation letter for graduate school or a job post-graduation.

## PSYCHOLOGY SUBJECT POOL WEBSITE INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS WANTING TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Students in psychology courses may be required to earn credit or they may have the opportunity to earn extra credit in their courses by participating in research. To participate in these studies, you will need to create an account on the Psychology subject pool website Sona Systems. An account on Sona Systems allows you to see all the studies that are currently recruiting participants, learn more about these studies, and sign up for a time-slot to complete the a study. You may be able to complete some of these studies online (either through the subject pool website or on another website hosting online surveys, like SurveyMonkey). By using this system, experimenters will be able to award you credit for participating in their study and you will be able to assign your credits to the courses of your choosing. Your professors also will have access to this information to track your progress and include these points in your final grade. If you are not sure if a particular course requires or offers bonus points for participating in psychological research, you can use the system to check or you should ask your instructor.

### To create an account:

- Go to the Psychology subject pool website: <http://utpb.sona-systems.com>
- Click on “New Participant?” link on bottom left-hand corner of the screen.
- Create your account:
  - Provide your first and last name.
  - Create a unique User ID that you will remember (e.g., lastname\_firstinitial)
  - Enter an email address (that you actually use please, this is how you will be contacted by the system administrator and by experimenters)
  - Provide a telephone number where you can be reached (optional – leave blank if you do not wish to be contacted by phone)
  - Select your courses (highlight all of the courses you are currently enrolled in, be careful to check the section numbers where appropriate!).
  - Click on Request Account (this should go through right away).
- You will then receive confirmation of your user ID as well as your password to the email you provided (you can change your password once you’ve logged into the system).

### Using your account:

- You will first need to read over the Human Subjects and Privacy Policy Notice. If you agree with the terms, please click on “yes.”

### *Study Sign-Up*

- By clicking on the “study sign-up” icon, you should be able to view all of the studies that are recruiting participants. Note that if you are not eligible to participate in a study for any reason (e.g., only looking for participants in a particular age group, etc.), you will not be able to see this study on your list.
- Also, please note that as we get this system going, you may not see any studies listed on this screen. Please do not be concerned, new studies will be added to this list as researchers obtain ethical approval and start collecting data. In the coming weeks, you should have plenty of research opportunities available to you.

### *My Schedule and Credits*

- By clicking on the “my schedule and credits” icon, you will be able to track your progress and view all the upcoming time-slots you have signed up for.
- *My Credits* – this table will list the overall number of credits you have earned as well as the maximum number of credits you can earn (calculated by adding the maximum for each courses you are enrolled in).
- *Study Sign Ups* – this will list all of the studies you have signed up for.

### *My Profile*

- By clicking on the “my profile” icon, you can manage your account. Here, you can change your password, change your courses, etc.

If you have any questions about creating your account or using the subject pool website, please contact the system administrator, Dr. Emily Farris at [psycsubpool@utpb.edu](mailto:psycsubpool@utpb.edu) or by phone at (432) 552-2347.

### Schedule

PP = *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*

RB = *Handbook of Psychotherapy and Religious Diversity*

Date	Reading Assignment	Class Topic
<b>Week 1</b>		
6/02/14		Introduction and Selection of Topics Core Issues in the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality Defining Religion, Spirituality, and Faith
6/05/14	PP Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 23  <i>Optional: RB Chapters 3-6</i>	Measurement Issues, Research Methods, and Fundamentalism <i>Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Mainline Protestantism, Evangelical/ Fundamentalist Protestantism</i>
<b>Week 2</b>		
6/09/14	Skim all of Fowler's <i>Stages of Faith</i> PP Chapters 8, 9, 10	Stages of Faith and Faith Development
6/12/14	PP Chapters 21, 22 <i>Optional: RB Chapters 7-9</i>	Mystical Experiences, Ritual and Prayer <i>Pentecostalism, Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism</i>
<b>Week 3</b>		
6/16/14	PP Chapters 11, 15, 18, 19, 20	Neuropsychology, Personality, Meaning, Struggles, and Conversion
6/19/14	PP Chapter 32 <i>Optional: RB Chapters 10-13</i>	Terrorism <i>Orthodox Judaism, Conservative/ Reform Judaism, Islam, Buddhism</i>
<b>Week 4</b>		
6/23/14	PP Chapter 17 Paganism and Atheism Chapters	Cross-Cultural Psychology of Religion Paganism, Atheism, and Agnosticism
6/26/14	<i>Optional: RB Chapters 14-18</i>	<i>Hinduism and African, Latino(a), Asian, and Native American Traditions</i>
<b>Week 5</b>		
6/30/14	PP Chapters 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	Health, Mental Health, Coping, Mindfulness, and Evidence-Based Practice
7/03/14	PP Chapter 33	Future Directions in the Psychology of R/S <b>Final Exam</b>