

**SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY**  
**Psychology Department**  
**Fall 2015**

**PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY (PSYC 193)**

**Instructor:** Thomas G. Plante, Ph.D., ABPP  
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**Office Hours:** Before and after class or by appointment  
**Course Meeting Room:** O'Connor 206  
**Course Meeting Times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm – 3:40pm.

**Required Text:**

1. Hood, R. W., Hill, P., & Spika, B. (2009). *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*. New York, NY: Guilford. ISBN: 9781606233030
2. Plante, T. G. (Ed.). (2012). *Religion, Spirituality, and Positive Psychology: Understanding the Psychological Fruits of Faith*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger/ABC-CLIO. ISBN: 9780313398452
3. Plante, T. G. (2009). *Spiritual Practices in Psychotherapy: Thirteen Tools for Enhancing Psychological Health*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 9781433804298

Additional readings may be provided during the class.

**Course Evaluation:**

Class Quizzes		100 points	LAP* 1, 2
Midterm Learning Adventure 1:	Oct 20	100 points	LAP 1, 2
Midterm Learning Adventure 2:	Nov 17	100 points	LAP 1, 2
Final Learning Adventure:	XXX	200 points	LAP 1, 2
Spiritual Formation Paper Project:	Dec 3	100 points	LAP 3
Class Participation, Behavior, Scholarly Enthusiasm, and Attendance:		+/-	LAP 1, 2, 3

+/- can improve or decrease your course grade.

**Course Description:**

*Psychology of religion and spirituality* involves the discipline and principles of psychology and human behavior in understanding religion and spirituality. Class topics include empirical research and theory on religious and spiritual behavior and transformation from the various religious, spiritual, and historical wisdom traditions. Contemplative practices and spiritual tools from the various religious/spiritual wisdom traditions for psychological and physical health will be highlighted. A spiritual formation project will help students experience a hands-on activity to examine their own spiritual formation and development. The class is inclusive in that no particular religious/spiritual tradition or any tradition affiliation is assumed or required. It also highlights evidence based empirical approaches as well. Prerequisites include PSYC 1 or 2 and a RTC 1 class. The course fulfills the religious studies core (RTC 2) and vocations pathway requirements.

- Course Goals:**
- (1) To provide a basic and broad based overview of the field of the psychology of religion and spirituality.
  - (2) To provide a practical and experiential understanding of the challenges involved in spiritual formation and transformation.
  - (3) To provide the foundation for students taking additional courses and advanced training in psychology and religion.



**\*Learning Assessment Plan (LAP; from the University Core Curriculum)**

1. Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).
2. Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.
3. Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.

**Sequence of Topics and Readings:**

Week 1 (Sep 22 & 24):	Introduction to the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (LAP 1, 2) <u>1</u> : 1 & 2, <u>3</u> : 1*
Week 2 (Sep 29 & Oct 1):	Biological Foundations and Benefits of Religious/Spiritual Practices (LAP 1, 2) <u>1</u> : 3, <u>2</u> : 1-5
Week 3 (Oct 6 & 8):	Religious and Spiritual Development, Youth (LAP 1, 2) <u>1</u> : 4 & 5, <u>2</u> : 6-9
Week 4 (Oct 13 & 15):	Religious and Spiritual Development, Adult (LAP 1, 2) <u>1</u> : 6 & 7, <u>2</u> : 12, 15
Week 5 (Oct 20 & 22):	<b>Midterm Learning Adventure 1 (Tues Oct 20)</b> Religious Conversion and Transformation (LAP 1-3) <u>1</u> : 8
Week 6 (Oct 27 & 29):	Morality & Prejudice (LAP 1-3) <u>1</u> : 9, 12, <u>3</u> : 6
Week 7 (Nov 3 & 5):	Religion and Health (LAP 1-3) <u>1</u> : 13 & 14
Week 8 (Nov 10 & 12):	Religion, Spirituality, and Contemplative Practices (LAP 1-3) <u>1</u> : 10-11, <u>2</u> : 10-11
Week 9 (Nov 17 & 19):	<b>Midterm Learning Adventure 2 (Tues Nov 17)</b> Tools for Spiritual Development (LAP 3) <u>3</u> : 2, 4-5
Week 10 (Dec 1 & 3):	Future Directions, Ethics, Career Issues and Conclusions (LAP 1-3) <u>2</u> : 16-17, <u>3</u> : 7-9 <b>Paper Due: Thursday, Dec 3 at 2pm.</b>

\* Please have readings completed during the first class session of each week. Numbers before the colon refer to book used (**1-3**, see first page of syllabus for each of the 3 books). After the colon refers to chapter number within each book.

*Final Learning Adventure Scheduled: Tues, Mar 17 at 9:10am.*

**Additional Items:**

**Empirical approach.** Although the topic of religion and spirituality can be very personal and based on highly personal and subjective institutional sets of beliefs and practices, the class will emphasize an empirical, evidence based and research approach to the topic that is endorsed and highlighted within the American Psychological Association and affiliated groups (e.g., Division 36, the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality). Thus, traditional research approaches will be highlighted.

**Spiritual formation project:** The goal of the spiritual formation project is not to endorse any particular religious/spiritual organizations, beliefs, or practices and no assumptions about personal beliefs or practices will be made. The project seeks to help you evaluate and consider your own sense of spiritual formation, very broadly defined, that may or may not have anything to do with organized religious/spiritual traditions.

**Laptops and cell phones.** Laptops and cell phones are not allowed to be used in class (unless you have a documented learning disability that requires the use of these technologies). Students typically use them more to check their email, Facebook, and surf the web more than they tend to use them for taking notes. They try to multitask (which doesn't work according to cognitive science research) and then wonder why they didn't do well on class learning adventures or don't recall what was said or not said in class. Research demonstrates that the grade performance for those using laptops tends to approximate the performance of those who don't attend class. I think that says it all.

**Class Quizzes** will occur weekly on the reading material. They will generally include 3 questions asked in class. You are expected to answer 2 of the 3 correctly to pass the quiz. Less than 2 correct answers will result in a fail for the week (10 points loss). Responses should be made on *index cards* and handed in to the professor. You should have 10 – 20 index cards available for the class. You cannot pass the quiz unless an appropriate index card is used.

**Attendance.** You'll be asked to sign in for each class period and attendance will be recorded. You are expected to be in class for at least 80% of the class sessions. Less than 80% (without doctor or coaches written statement) results in failing the class attendance and behavior portion of the grade.

**Expected classroom behavior.** Please note the following expectations regarding classroom behavior:

1. **Arrive on time.**
2. **Don't pack up books and such before class is completed.**
3. **Turn off cell phones.**
4. **Use restrooms before and after class and during the mid-class break.**
5. **Don't leave class once started (if you do, please don't return that day).**
6. **If you miss class get notes from other students.**
7. **Read the textbook as required.**
8. **Participate in class discussions.**
9. **Cheating in any form won't be tolerated and will result in being failed from the class.**

**Please note that make-up examinations are not possible.** If you miss one of the midterm learning adventures (note: excused miss only, an unexcused miss will result in a failing grade), the final learning adventure will count for 300 rather than 200 points. Missing both midterm learning adventures will result in the final being worth 400 points. Missing the final or failing to submit the term paper will result in being failed from the course. Learning adventures will primarily be multiple choice and perhaps short essay and graded using a curve if necessary. Learning adventures are meant to encourage critical thinking and will (hopefully) require that you stretch. They will hopefully challenge even the best students.

**The spiritual transformation project** should focus on a plan to assess and enhance your own spiritual engagement very broadly defined. Please note that you do not need to consider yourself religious or spiritual to participate in the project and class and that those maintaining an agnostic or atheistic perspective are perfectly fine. You should use the spiritual tools discussed in class and in the readings and connect with a spiritual model or advisor of your choice. You should write your paper that outlines your spiritual enhancement project (written in APA style). You should integrate theory and research presented in class and in the readings with experiential application to your own life and experience. Research findings have practical application which you should highlight in your paper. How to design such a project in particular will be discussed in class. Grades for late papers will reflect a 10 point per day reduction. Papers won't be accepted after the final. Please refer to the class handout on how to write a paper in APA style and helpful principles in developing a spiritual formation project. Note that the paper is due at the *beginning* of the last class.

We will review learning adventure results immediately after the administration of each in-class midterm. This will provide you with an opportunity to learn how you did and provide you with your chance to ask questions about the adventures.

**Please be prompt to class.** We will make every effort to begin and end each class on time. It is very disruptive to everyone and not appreciated when students come to class late or leave early.

If you would like to speak with me individually, please feel free to do so. Please make an appointment rather than an unscheduled visit if you can. Generally, before or after class works well.

In keeping with the mission of the university, relating the material to the "glory of God and to the common good" as well as helping to educate leaders with *competence, compassion, and conscience* will be integrated, where appropriate, in class discussions.

In order to make the most of this course (and your tuition dollar) please attend each class session, keep up with the assigned reading, and participate in class activities and discussions with scholarly vigor. To help you further in this noble endeavor, the following list of "Top 10 Ways to do Well in Class " are offered for your consideration.

### **Top 10 Ways to do Well in Class**

10. Start your paper early! Remember, the project must be written in APA style.
9. Try to apply the material to your life and the lives of your loved ones. Make it come alive.
8. Review the book chapters and your notes on a regular basis. Even 5 - 10 minutes each day to keep the material fresh is very helpful and minimizes stressful studying right before learning adventures.
7. Be a practicing psychologist and take care of your body. Don't cram or abuse caffeine (or other substances) and get enough sleep and food prior to learning adventures.
6. Don't even think of cheating (especially at a fine Jesuit university). Academic honesty and integrity is fundamental to our mission. Cheating (including plagiarism) will result in being dropped or failed from the course and will be referred to the university at large for disciplinary action.
5. For each topic, concept, highlighted issue, etc. ask yourself the questions, "What's the bottom line? Why is this important? What's the big picture here? If I were the professor, why would I want students to know this?"
4. Write organized, readable notes in class highlighting the major points and concepts.
3. Keep up with the readings. Mass learning (i.e., cramming) just doesn't work (remember the memory chapter in Intro Psych?). Reading and studying a little at a time works in the long run. Besides, you'll be way ahead of the game if you have done the assigned reading before class.
2. Be an active learner. It pays off. Participate in class discussions, ask questions freely, and engage in the process. There is no such thing as a "dumb question."
1. Attend class! Don't be tempted to skip class and just photocopy someone's notes. There is no substitute for being there.

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION POLICY:** To request academic accommodations for a disability, students must be registered with Disabilities Resources, located in Benson, room 216. In order to register, please go on-line to [www.scu.edu/disabilities](http://www.scu.edu/disabilities). You will need to register and provide professional documentation of a disability prior to receiving academic accommodations. It is best to read "Required Documentation" on the website before starting the registration process in order to determine what is needed. You may contact Disabilities Resources at [408-554-4109](tel:408-554-4109) if you have questions.

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*