

Course Syllabus
Psychology 440-1
Psychology of Religion

Spring 2019

Wednesday 4:15-7:50pm in Taylor 314

Semester Units: 4

Instructor: *G. Michael Leffel, PhD, Professor of Psychology*

Office: *Culbertson Hall*

Office Phone: *(619) 849-2278*

E-mail: *michaelleffel@pointloma.edu*

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND DESIGN

This course is, first, a survey of some of the “hot topics” and “great debates” in the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (Division 36, American Psychological Association). Second, it is a more focused study of a sub-field within the psychology of religion known as the *psychology of spiritual transformation*.

The purpose of each class session is to highlight selected topics from the required readings and to supplement this material with related ideas. *Students are responsible for all assigned readings, whether or not discussed in class.* A “graduate style” discussion format will be used in the course. *Each student is expected to have read the assigned reading for class discussion (Reading Schedule below), and be prepared to think together about the reading in class.*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

A. Attendance and Weekly Reading Responses (40%)

For Weeks 2-7 you will complete and turn-in two (2) Reading Responses (explained in class). These reading responses help you prepare for class discussion and for the Mid-term Exam. They are also a record of your attendance. *Attendance* each time is 5 pts; your *Discussant Reading Response* is graded 0-10 pts; and your non-discussant Reading Response is graded 0-5 pts. Please see Attendance Policy below.

B. Mid-term, Final, and Virtue Paper (60%)

There will be a take-home Mid-Term Exam, take-home Final, and a group project Virtue Paper/Presentation (explained in class).

Mid-Term: _____

Final: Wednesday, May 1 at 4:30

Virtue Paper: _____ **Virtue Presentation:** _____

2.

Attendance Policy and Contribution to Grade

Please come to class. When you are not present, the class dynamic changes. Inconsistent class attendance/tardiness impacts your final grade in the following way:

1. In a once-a-week course, following **ONE (1) unexcused** absence, *beginning with the second unexcused absence*, five (5) points will be deducted from your Final Total for each absence. In this class this deduction usually has a substantial impact on your grade.
2. In addition: "Whenever the number of accumulated absences in a class, **for any cause**, exceeds 10% percent of classes (equivalent to one and one-half weeks in a 15-week semester course), the faculty member sends a written report to the Associate Provost for Academic Administration which may result in de-enrollment" (Catalog, p. 37). In this course, *that would be after two (2) absences in this class.*

PLNU Attendance Policy and Reporting

What is an "Unexcused" Absence?

1. "There are no allowed or excused absences except when absences are necessitated by certain University-sponsored activities and are approved in writing by the Provost" (Catalog).
2. In addition, the Professor will excuse (legitimate) illness only with MD note. No exceptions please.
3. Medical (check-ups) and Dental appointments ARE NOT excused absences.

OFFICE HOURS

To schedule an appointment with me: Either (i) arrange a time with me in person, or (ii) write me a note with your available times and telephone number. *It's easier if we try to schedule a time in person before or after class than by email.* Making an appointment will insure that you have the uninterrupted amount of time you wish.

Office phone: (619) 849-2278
E-mail: michaelleffel@pointloma.edu

FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination on its scheduled day. The final examination schedule is posted on the Class Schedules site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

Point Loma Nazarene University
Psychology Department
Academic Guides

DEPARTMENT FACULTY NORMAL CURVE GUIDES

Z Score

| | | | | |
|----|--------|--------|-------|-------|
| A | 1.33 | 0.0918 | 9.2% | |
| A- | 1 | 0.1587 | 6.7% | 15.9% |
| B+ | 0.67 | 0.2514 | 9.3% | |
| B | 0.33 | 0.3707 | 11.9% | |
| B- | 0 | 0.5 | 12.9% | 34.1% |
| C+ | -0.33 | 0.6293 | 12.9% | |
| C | -1 | 0.8413 | 21.2% | |
| C- | -1.33 | 0.9082 | 6.7% | 40.8% |
| D+ | -1.67 | 0.9525 | 4.4% | |
| D | -2 | 0.9772 | 2.5% | |
| D- | -2.33 | 0.9901 | 1.3% | |
| F | <-2.33 | 1 | 1.0% | 9.2% |

Percentage Score

| | | |
|-----|---------|--------------|
| A = | 93-100% | Total points |
| A - | 90-92% | |
| B + | 88-89% | |
| B | 84-87% | |
| B - | 80-83% | |
| C + | 77-79% | |
| C | 70-76% | |
| C - | 65-69% | |
| D + | 62-64% | |
| D | 55-61% | |
| D - | 50-54% | |
| F | 49% | or below |

A minimum of 50 % is needed to pass the course.

DEPARTMENT FACULTY STUDY AND ATTENDANCE GUIDES

STUDY TIME: A faculty member should design courses with the expectation that a student would spend an average daily study time of two (2) hours outside class for each hour of time spent in classroom.

STUDY SCHEDULE: It is not the faculty member's responsibility to schedule the two hours of outside study. A student should learn to use this time without explicit direction nor coercion. It takes most students this much time to do regular assignments.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required for all classes. If a faculty member establishes the student as responsible for his/her attendance, it does not mean that absences are excused. The catalog lists the only excused absences.

Required Texts:

The Human Condition by Thomas Keating
University Reader for SP19 PSY440

4.

PLNU COPYRIGHT POLICY

PLNU, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU ACADEMIC HONESTLY POLICY

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment, examination, or the course, depending on the seriousness of the offense. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

“All students are expected to meet the standards for this course as set by the instructor. However, students with learning disabilities who may need accommodations should discuss options with the Academic Support Center (ASC) during the first two weeks of class. The ASC will contact professors with suggestions related to classroom needs and accommodations. Approved documentation must be on file in the ASC prior to the start of the semester.”

Note: This syllabus is not a contract. The Professor reserves the right to modify the syllabus to accomplish the learning objectives of the course.

PLNU Mission

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

5.

PSY 440

Course-at-a-Glance

Hot Topics and Great Debates in the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality

Part 1

What 'On Earth' is Religion For?

Contrasting Views of Religion and Spirituality

Major Themes: How religion may be good for you (and why); the difference between religiousness and spirituality; the relationship between morality and spirituality; re-conceptualizing spirituality in the paradigm of flourishing; the concept of *natural spirituality* and relationship to the moral emotions.

Part 2

A Fruitful Darkness

A "Forgotten" Way of Spiritual Transformation

Major Themes: Rethinking the purpose, problem, and process of spiritual transformation; the concept of *developmental spirituality*; a typology of Christian spiritual *telos*; importance of virtues and vices in the "dark night" journey; the difference between *kataphatic* and *apophatic* spiritual practices; the purgative process of spiritual transformation.

Part 3

Embodied Virtue

Spiritual Transformation in the Age of Virtue Science

Major Themes: How the contemporary science of virtue could help us construct a new approach to virtue and virtue practices; the capacity to love as central *telos* of spiritual maturity; why the psychology of spiritual transformation needs a virtue approach; what is a virtue; which virtues and why; a new model of virtuous caring.

6.

PSY 440
Psychology of Religion and Spirituality
Class Topics and Reading Schedule

Introduction: Week 1 (Jan 11)

Intro to the Course

“Hot Topics” and “Great Debates” in the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (PRS)

*Major Theme of the Course

Integrating Morality in the Psychology of Spirituality

Note: For Weeks 2-7, please read both readings in preparation for class discussion. Each week you will write two (2) Reading Responses related to the readings. While you will turn-in both Reading Responses, you will be a class discussant for only one of the Reading Responses/articles (described below and in class).

Part 1

What ‘On Earth’ is Religion For?

Contrasting Views of Religion and Spirituality

Major Themes: How religion may be good for you (and why); the difference between religion and spirituality; the relationship of moral “goodness” to spirituality; multiple “levels” of personality; moral emotions as a “natural” basis of spirituality.

Week 2 (Jan 16)

Is Religion “Good” for You?

Surprising Findings and Unresolved Questions

Read: Myers, *Religion and Human Flourishing*

(Last name A-L are discussants)

Is There a Difference Between Religiousness and Spirituality?

Why the Distinction May Matter

Read: Vieten & Schammell, *Understanding Spirituality and Religion*

(M-Z are discussants)

***Overview of Virtue Paper Project and Groups**

Week 3 (Jan 23)

Beyond Belief

Why Religion is Not (Merely) About God

Read: Armstrong, *Wish for a Better World*

(A-L discussants)

The Moral Heart of “Mature Religion” and “True Spirituality”

The Relation between the Moral and the Spiritual

Read: Symington, *Emotion and Spirit*

(M-Z) discussants)

7.

Week 4 (Jan 30)

Spirituality and "Project Eudaimonia"

A New Direction for the Psychology of Spirituality

(A-L discussants)

Read: Vaillant, *The Difference Between Religion and Spirituality*

Spirituality "Naturalized"

Hidden Relational "Goods" of the Moral Emotions

Read after Class: Class Handout and Notes

(M-Z) discussants)

Part 2

A Fruitful Darkness

A "Forgotten" Way of Spiritual Transformation

Major Themes: Why the psychology of spiritual transformation needs theology; rethinking the problem, purpose, and process of spiritual transformation; the concept of *developmental spirituality*; a typology of Christian spiritual *telos*; importance of virtues and vices in the "dark night" of the soul; the difference between *kataphatic* and *apophatic* spiritual practices; the purgative process of spiritual transformation.

Week 5 (Feb 6)

***Distribution of Mid-Term Take-home Exam**

Overview of the "Dark Night" Journey (Part 1)

Rediscovering a Forgotten Way of Spiritual Transformation

Read: Coe, *Musings on the Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 293-302 (only)

(A-L discussants)

"Glittering Vices"

Overview of the Virtue-Vice Tradition in Christian Spirituality

Read: De Young, *Glittering Vices*, Ch. 1

(M-Z) discussants)

Week 6 (Feb 13)

Dark Night Journey (Part 2)

"Purpose" and "Problem" of the Dark Night Journey

Read: Coe, *Musings on the Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 302-304 (only)

(A-L discussants)

"The Human Condition" (Part 1)

On the Origin of the Glittering Vices

Read: (Book) Keating, Ch. 1 (only)

(M-Z) discussants)

8.

Week 7 (Feb 20)

Dark Night Journey (Part 3)

The "Process" of Healing (in Light of Contemporary Relational Neuroscience)

Read: TBD

"The Human Condition" (Part 2)

More about the "Purgative" Process of Healing

Read: (Book) Keating, Ch. 2 (only)

Week 8 (Feb 27)

•**Turn-in Mid-Term Exam beginning of class**

Dark Night Journey

Good Advice for Walking in the Dark

Read: Coe, *Musings on the Dark Night of the Soul*, pp. 304-307

Week of (Mar 6)

Happy Spring Break

Note: Remainder of Syllabus to be distributed.