2014

214-01A Religion and Society

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the issues and significant points of integration and difference between religion and psychology in the context of their common interest. It involves study of the dynamics of human experience and spirituality. The course also investigate the human experience of growth, relationship, love, purpose in the light of various psychological approaches and the role that this experience plays in the formation of frameworks of meaning and development. Such frameworks assist the human person in creating a sense of identity, to entering into social relations and developing a coherent response to life situations.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

(1) Attendance and Participation
It is imperative that students: (a) complete all reading assignments before class, (b) attend and prepare for questions, and (c) participate at all class sessions. A 2% point will be deducted for every late arrival. Excuses will be accepted only for grave emergency situations (e.g., major illness with proper written documentation, or death in family) or university-approved activities off-campus (e.g., varsity sports) and only at the instructor’s discretion. More than two absences will result in a failing grade.

(2) Examinations
Examinations are non-cumulative. All examinations must be taken on the assigned date and time. As a rule, substitute examinations will not be given. Exceptions may be made for grave emergency reasons (e.g., major illness with proper written documentation, or death in family) or university-approved activities off-campus (e.g., varsity sports), but only if: (i) the request was made before the examination, and (ii) at the professor’s sole discretion.

(3) Class Presentations
A 20-minute-powerpoint presentation on topics related to religion and psychology.
(4) **Responses to Weekly Questions**
Questions are assigned weekly on the assigned readings. Your responses to these questions are to be submitted via email by **midnight the day before** each class meets. All submissions that are **1-5 days late** will automatically received a **full letter grade reduction**. Please be warned that the instructor **will not accept any submission that is more than five (5) days late**, and will accordingly assign a **zero for non-submission** of that submission.

**III. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

Frankl, V. *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Beacon, 2006)


**IV. THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT’S GRADING GUIDELINES**

(approved by department: March 20, 2002)

The full version of the Theology Department’s Grading Policy is available on-line at: http://www.xu.edu/theology/grading_policy.html

Grades indicate *a professor’s assessment of a student’s academic performance* and not a student’s effort. **Grades are not an entitlement – you have to earn your grade for this course.**

In accordance with University policy and the Theology Department grading guidelines, letter grades in undergraduate theology courses mean the following:

- **A**=94-100
- **A-**=92-93
- **B+**=90-91
- **B**=87-89
- **B-**=84-86
- **C+**=82-83
- **C**=79-81
- **C-**=76-78
- **D+**=74-75
- **D**=71-73
- **D-**=68-70.

**The Grading of Objective and Essay Tests**

Grades reflect the accuracy, coherence, clarity, and completeness of answers and essays. In grading your answers, the following elements will be evaluated:

1. comprehension of the materials under consideration,
2. ability to articulate one’s understanding with clarity,
3. correct usage of standard English grammar, spelling and punctuation,
4. organization of material,
5. ability to establish relationships and synthesize ideas, and
6. ability to reflect on the material with an eye to raising serious, critical questions.

**V. COMPUTATION OF MIDTERM & FINAL GRADES**

- Class Participation (5%)
- Class Presentation (20%)
- Examination 1 (25%)
- Examination 2 (25%)
- Weekly Response Questions (25%)
VI. ACADEMIC HONESTY
The professor expects all work that appears under the student’s name to be that student’s own, and will follow up on evidence that a student has copied from another’s work or used notes in examinations. **If an incident of cheating is established, the instructor will give a grade of F for the entire course.**

VII. COURSE OUTLINE, SCHEDULE & READINGS

August 17th: Introduction and Overview of the Course
              Relationship between religion and psychology

August 23rd:  Logotherapy and Existentialism
              **Reading:** Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Preface and Part 1
              Discussion of the reading and response questions

August 30th:  Logotherapy and Spirituality
              **Reading:** Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, Part 2 and Postscript
              Discussion of the reading and response questions

Sept. 6th:    Exam 1
              Developmental Psychology and Faith
              **Reading:** Urgings of the Heart, chapters 1-2
              Discussion of the reading and response questions

Sept. 13th:   Psychoanalysis and Personality Theories
              **Reading:** Urgings of the Heart, chapters 3-4
              Discussion of the reading and response questions

Sept. 20th:   Death and Dying
              **Reading:** Urgings of the Heart, chapters 5-6
              Discussion of the reading and response questions

Sept. 27th:   Zen Buddhism
              **Reading:** Urgings of the Heart, chapters 7-8
              Discussion of the reading and response questions

Oct. 4th:     Exam 2
              Class Presentations

Oct. 11th:    Class Presentations
VIII. LIST OF TOPICS FOR YOUR CLASS PRESENTATION

1. Mental Health and Spirituality
2. Brain and mental health
3. The God Delusion
4. Religion and terrorism
5. Religion and healing therapies
6. Meditation and psychology
7. Religion and neuroscience
8. Religion and grieving
9. Religion and prosocial behaviors
10. Religion and depression
11. Psychology and religious experience
12. Psychology and mysticism
13. Five Stages of Sleep
14. Unconscious, Subconscious, Conscious

IX: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF PRESENTATION

Conceptual Content: 10%
- Accurate summary of the research materials, with specific references to important ideas, conclusions drawn, as well as their significance/implications
- Comprehension of the content of the material and its significance
- Understanding of the relevant concepts, key ideas and principles in the reading material
- Comprehensiveness and accuracy of presentation content in relation to the selected topic
- Evidence of original thought

Presentation: 10%
- Suitable preparation and presentation
- Creative and use of suitable visual aids and/or handouts
- Appropriateness of questions for discussion by the students
- Facilitation of discussion and ability to respond constructively to questions posed by students
- Good timing and level of enthusiasm