

COURSE SYLLABUS
Psychology and Religion
PSY 390/EAST 390/COUN 591—Spring 2008—DMH 201
Professor: Jim Nelson **Office:** Dickmeyer 209
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Office Hours: TR 2:45--4:00, or by appointment

Required Texts for All Students:

Nelson, J. (anticipated 2008). *Psychology, religion and spirituality*. New York: Springer. Available electronically on CourseVU.
Guenther, Margaret. (1992). *Holy listening*. Cowley.
James, William. (1999). *The varieties of religious experience*. Modern Library.
Note: any edition of the James book is acceptable for the class.
May, Gerald. (1991). *Addiction and grace*. HaperSanFrancisco.

Required Texts for the Christian Perspectives reading group:

Kavanaugh, Kieran. (1988). *Teresa of Avila: The interior castle*. Paulist.
Merton, Thomas. (1972). *New seeds of contemplation*. New Directions.
Miesel, A. & del Mastro, M. L. (1975). *The rule of St. Benedict*. Image.
Mottola, Anthony. (1964). *Spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius*. Image.

Required Texts for the Buddhist Perspectives reading group:

Clearly, Thomas. (1997). *Unlocking the Zen koan*. North Atlantic.
Feuerstein, Georg. (1989). *The yoga-sutras of Patanjali*. Inner Traditions.
Tanahashi, Kazuaki. (1995). *Moon in a dewdrop*. North Point.
Harvey, Peter. (1990). *An introduction to Buddhism*. Cambridge (Optional for students who already have a basic resource on Buddhism).

Required Additional Text for graduate counseling students:

Frame, M. (2002). *Integrating religion and spirituality into counseling: A comprehensive approach*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Introduction

Since the early history of psychology, there has been a mutual fascination between those that adhere to spiritual/religious beliefs and psychologist researchers/practitioners. At times this relationship has been highly conflictual; in other situations, there has been mutual dialogue and shared learning. The purpose of this class is to explore the current status of this relationship with special focus on several issues that have been key points of conversation. Through this examination it is hoped that you will have an opportunity to work out your own position on these issues and better understand the point of view that others have taken.

The purposes of this course are thus:

- to introduce you to the dialogue between psychology and religion
- to introduce you to the vast spiritual resources available in religious traditions, especially by reading some spiritual classics and thinking about them from both a spiritual and a psychological perspective
- to give you personal resources that will help you build your own spiritual and religious life in positive ways
- for those of you who are building a career in the helping professions, resources for helping people with religious and spiritual questions or problems

In other words, I hope that this will be a class that is not only useful and interesting but personally rewarding for each of you. Assignments for the course will reflect this: they will mostly be reading, reaction paper and discussion requirements, as well as a personal project.

Course Structure

We will meet one a week on Tuesday afternoons for general study and discussion. Then on Thursdays we will split up into two groups: those reading Christian texts and those reading Buddhist texts. I also hope the meet separately with graduate counseling students enrolled in the course to discuss clinical issues. Classes will consist of lecture, discussion and in-class exercises. Tuesday classes will always include some lecture, while Thursday meetings will focus more on discussion of the Christian or Buddhist texts you are reading.

Notes on Readings

Our primary text will be a draft of a textbook I'm currently writing entitled Psychology, Religion and Spirituality. We will read drafts of chapters from this book. This is free and will be posted on our CourseVU website. You will however need to buy some supplementary books. The list will seem long but don't be concerned—we generally will read selectively in the books and the material should be interesting.

Because of the interactive nature of this course, it may be necessary to alter the reading list by adding, substituting or removing scheduled reading assignments. Modifications to the reading list will be announced in class, generally the week prior to when the affected reading assignment is due.

Assignments: Four types of assignments will be required as part of this course:

1. Class attendance and discussion. Class attendance and participation in discussion are expected. They are a courtesy to your colleagues and especially important in this class due to the nature of the material.
2. Study questions. Each week I will distribute a set of questions for you to focus on in your reading. This will help you structure your time and get more out of the material. Most weeks I will ask that you submit answers to the study guide questions. Questions may also ask you to integrate material gathered from lectures. Late question assignments will generally not be accepted.
3. Book report. You will be asked to read a primary theological/religious text and to write a 5-8 page paper which will analyze the author's ideas on spiritual experience and development as well as religious practices. You may do an in-depth study of one of the regular texts we are reading, or you may choose a different book. The following is a list of Christian and Buddhist texts that would be good choices as a subject for your report. Try to choose a text from this list, although it may be possible to read another text with approval of the instructor.

Desert Fathers and Orthodox Spirituality

- Ward, B. (Tr.). (1975). *The sayings of the Desert Fathers: The alphabetical collection*. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications.
- Climacus, John. (c. 600/2001). *The ladder of divine ascent*. Boston: Holy Transfiguration Monastery.
- Pentkovsky, A. (Ed.). (1999). *The pilgrim's tale*. T. Smith (Tr.). New York: Paulist.

Medieval Spirituality

- Hilton, W. (c. 1390/1991). *The scale of perfection*. Tr. J. Clark & R. Dorward. New York: Paulist.
- Julian of Norwich. (c. 1393/1978). *The flowing light of the Godhead*. New York: Paulist.
- Unknown. (c. 1370/1981). *The cloud of unknowing*. J. Walsh, Ed. New York: Paulist.
- William of St. Thierry. (1144/1971). *The golden epistle*. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian.

Carmelite and Post-Reformation Spirituality

- Teresa of Avila. (1588/1991). *The way of perfection*. Tr. E. Peers. New York: Image Books.
- John of the Cross. (1582/1987). *The ascent of Mt. Carmel*. In K. Kavanaugh (Ed.), John of the Cross: Selected writings (pp. 55-153). New York: Paulist.
- de Sales, F. (1608/2002). *Introduction to the devout life*. New York: Vintage.
- Law, W. (1728/1978). *A serious call to a devout and holy life*. In P. Stanwood (Ed.), William Law (pp.39-352). New York: Paulist.

Modern Christian Spirituality (many other authors are possibilities)

Merton, T. (1948/1999). *The seven storey mountain*. New York: Harvest.

Merton, T. (2003). *The inner experience: notes on contemplation*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Therese of Lisieux, St. (1898/2001). *The story of a soul: The autobiography of Saint Therese of Lisieux*. Tr. J. Beevers. New York: Image Books/Doubleday.

Weil, S. (1951). *Waiting for God*. Tr. E. Craufurd. New York: Perennial Classics.

Classical Buddhist, Zen Buddhist and Taoist Texts

Conze, Edward. (2001). *Buddhist wisdom: The Diamond Sutra and the Heart Sutra*. New York: Vintage.

Palmer, Martin (tr.). (1996). *The book of Chuang Tsu*. London: Arkana/Penguin.

Suzuki, Shunryu. (1999). *Zen mind, beginner's mind* (rev. ed.). New York: Weatherhill.

4. Term projects. All students are required to complete one of the following:

(a) a two-hour final essay exam that will be given at the conclusion of the semester during the final exam period. Possible questions will be distributed in advance.

(b) a personal project that will involve in-depth personal exploration of the issues discussed in this course. The details of this project must be approved in advance by the instructor. Students may request that the personal project be graded on a pass-fail basis. Assignment of a letter grade requires that I read some of the contents of the journal, so those interested in strict confidentiality may wish to consider pass-fail grading.

Students are required to finalize a term project contract prior to the end of January.

5. Seminar (graduate students only): A presentation that discusses practical application of the material/issues from the course in your professional setting, e.g. applications to counseling. Seminars are expected to be professional-quality presentations and include (1) oral presentation of material, (2) appropriate visual aids, (3) a handout which should include an outline or summary of important information covered in the talk, (4) a time for class discussion and (5) a bibliography of sources used in preparation of the presentation. Powerpoint or other professional presentation method is preferred.

Grading:

You will receive letter grades for attendance/participation, overall study question performance, book report, term project and (for graduate students) overall seminar quality. If you do the personal term project and request pass-fail grading, passing scores on the project will be excluded from final grade computation. Presentations and papers are graded on both content and style, while study questions and exams are graded primarily on content. Final course grades will be based on an average of these grades. In general, I use the following standards for grading assignments:

- A: Superior work that is without significant defects and is particularly insightful and creative in its content and presentation
- B: Good work with no significant defects, or work that is superior at times but also has significant problems in content or presentation
- C. Work that fulfills the assignment, but has some deficiencies in style and content
- D: Incomplete assignment
- F. No assignment submitted

Final grade distributions for undergraduate students vary from semester to semester. In general, about half of graduate students in my courses receive grades of A or A-, with most of the remaining half receiving grades of B+, B or B-. Grades of C+ or lower are considered to indicate performance that is not at the graduate level, and are only given in circumstances where the student's work exhibits serious problems due to quality or lack of completeness. Graduate students in danger of receiving a grade of less than B in the course will be contacted by the instructor to attempt to work out a plan to complete the course in a satisfactory manner.

Please note that I reserve the right to reduce the final grade of any student who is chronically absent or has large amounts of incomplete work. Except in extraordinary circumstances, I define chronically absent as missing more than 2 course sessions without prior approval. Occasionally, I will raise the grade of a student who I feel has made exceptional improvement over the course of the term.

Questions about grading policy or scores on individual assignments are welcome, feel free to speak with the instructor outside of class.

Class Ground Rules:

Spirituality is an extraordinarily sensitive topic. All of you will have strong personal feelings about some or all of the issues that we discuss in class. Many of you will choose to share personal information about yourself during discussions. Accordingly, we need to make explicit several ground rules.

1. No student is expected to share personal information about themselves in class or in work submitted to the instructor, (except of course when a student opts to complete an optional assignment that requires this, such as a personal journal).
2. When personal information is shared, it is expected that all students will keep this information confidential. Please note that unauthorized sharing of personal information about another student is considered a violation of the Honor Code. If you have some concerns about this issue, discuss the matter with your instructor.
3. In class discussions, it is expected that all individuals will remain respectful of the opinions (and differences) of others. Inappropriate behavior may result in reduction in your participation grade, or in extreme cases a reduction in your overall course grade or exclusion from discussion participation.

Communications:

Outside of class and individual meetings, email is the primary means of communication for the course. It is expected that all of you will check your VU email accounts on a regular (preferably daily) basis. A class website will be maintained on the CourseVU system that will have syllabus information, class gradebook, and links to readings, some lecture notes and other materials. Go to <https://coursevu.valpo.edu> to access the site. While my scheduled office hours are limited to Tuesday afternoons, I am available at many other times during the week for appointments. Please contact Terri Hendle at Terri.Hendle@Valpo.edu or 464-5440 to schedule a time.

Honor Code Policy:

Since 1943, all academic work at Valparaiso University has been done within the context of an honor system. This honor system is part of the way the University attempts to assist both students and faculty to do work and live lives characterized by integrity. According to this policy, examinations and quizzes are not proctored by faculty. Instead, each student must write out and sign on every piece of written work submitted the Honor Code, which reads as follows: **“I have neither given or received nor have I tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid.”** In this course, the following will be considered violations of the Honor Code:

1. Unauthorized giving, receiving, or use of material or information while writing examinations or quizzes (questions directed to the instructor are encouraged).
2. Fraudulent or deceptive generation of data or the knowing use of data gathered in such a manner, e.g. quoting sources that do not exist.
3. One person taking a quiz or examination, or producing a paper, for another.
4. The use of ideas, data or specific written passages of others that are unacknowledged or falsely acknowledged (plagiarism).
5. Theft or destruction of library materials or other materials which are meant to be accessible to all other students and faculty.
6. Knowingly presenting false accusation or testimony before the Honor Council.
7. Presenting a draft and/or paper that is someone else’s work.
8. Submitting work that has previously been submitted to meet the requirement of another course without permission of the instructor.
9. The sharing of person information about a fellow student outside of class without their approval.
10. Tolerance of any of the above.

Please ask the instructor questions about what is considered authorized aid, as some kinds of aid and collaboration are strongly encouraged and are NOT violations of the Honor Code in this course. These include:

1. Discussion or brainstorming about assignments and readings.
2. Getting student/faculty reactions to work prior to submitting or presenting it.
3. Working with classmates to revise drafts of assigned papers or presentations.

If you believe that the Honor Code has been violated, you should contact the instructor or the Valparaiso University Honor Council, which administers the Honor Code and assigns penalties for violations. Penalties can include failure of the course or expulsion from the University. If you become aware that someone has made plans to use unauthorized aid on an examination, you may request that the examination be proctored.

Reading Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Main Read</i>	<i>Chr Reading</i>	<i>Budd Reading</i>
Jan 15 17	Introduction Religious concepts	Chapt 1 Chapt 3	Merton, 1-2	
Jan 22 24	Science & religion	Chapt 2	Merton, 3-7	Patanjali, Int, Chapt 1
Jan 29 31	Rel experience	Chapt 4	Merton 8-12, 14	Patanjali, Chapt 2-4
Feb 5 7	Rel experience	James 4-8, 16-17	Merton, 13, 16-17	Tipitaka Suttas
Feb 12 14	Psychodynamic	Chapt 5	Merton, 15 Teresa 1-84	Visuddhimagga virtue, samatha
Feb 19 21	Development	Chapt 7	Merton, 18-19 Teresa 85-171	Visuddhimagga sati, vipassana
Feb 26 28	Development	Chapt 8-9	Merton, 20, 23 Teresa 172-196	Diamond Sutra Heart Sutra
SPRING BREAK				
Mar 18 20	New Directions	Chapt 6	Merton, 21-22 Ignatius, 11-63	Wumenguan Intro, 1-20
Mar 25 27	Techniques	Chapt 12-13	Merton, 24 Ignatius, 67-142	Wumenguan 21-48
Ap 1-3	Rel & Health	Chapt 10	Frame (grad only)	Frame (grad only)
Ap 08 10	Rel & Ment Health	Chapter 11	Merton, 25-30 Luther, Prayer	Dogen Intro, Part One
Ap 15 17	Rel & Ment Health	May, AG	Merton, 31-33 Rule of St. B	Dogen Part Two
Ap 22 24	Help Relationships	Chapter 14	Merton, 34-39	Dogen Part Four
Apr 29 May 1-6	Help Rel (grad)	Guenther	Frame (grad only)	Frame (grad only)