

RELI 226

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION



SCHOOL OF ART HISTORY, CLASSICS & RELIGIOUS STUDIES

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Trimester 2, 2007

RELI 226

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Course co-ordinator: Dr Joseph Bulbulia
Joseph.bulbulia@vuw.ac.nz

Tutor: David Murphy
david.murphy99@yahoo.com

Where and when: Lectures: HU 220
 Thursday 3:10 – 5:00pm
 Tutorials: tba

Religious Studies is in the Hunter Building. The programme administrator, Alik Kalliabetos, is in room HU 318 (ext 5299). **Notices regarding the course or any information on changes will be posted on the notice board outside her office.**

Office Hours: The main office is open Monday - Friday, 9.30 – 12:00 and 2:30 – 4:30pm. You can arrange to meet with Dr. Bulbulia during his office hours, WEDNESDAY 2-3pm

Course outline

1 The course and its objectives:

This paper provides a basic introduction to the psychology of religion. It samples some important approaches, including developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, evolutionary psychology, social psychology, transpersonal psychology, and cognitive neuroscience. Prior coursework in either religious studies or psychology is helpful but not necessary. We aim to acquaint you with some important ideas and debates in the psychology of religion, and to prepare you for more advanced study in any one of these areas.

By the end of the course you will:

- Understand the work of important researchers in the psychology of religion
- Understand current debates in a number of different subfields.
- Be able to evaluate the arguments animating these debate.
- Be able to better read and evaluate any argument, especially arguments based on empirical evidence.
- Be able to reflect more clearly and creatively about the relationship between scientific research and spirituality.
- Be able to research using the latest tools in library science.

- 2 Course objectives:** To introduce students to a range of different subfields within the psychology of religion and to prepare students for further work in any one of those areas. To instil critical thinking and writing skills, and to impart an understanding of how to conduct research.
- 3 The lecture programme** follows. Lectures may be varied from time to time. As much notice as possible will be given when changes occur and, if necessary a revised programme will be issued at lectures. The lecture programme does not cover the entire course content. Lectures are important, but they must be viewed as complementary to your own reading in the field and to tutorial discussions.
- 4 Tutorials are held weekly.** Tutorials deal with topics which complement the lecture programme and they provide an opportunity to discuss aspects of the course in a small group and develop the ability to contribute to discussions. Please note: tutorials will cover reading material prior to the lecture that covers that material.
- 5 RELI 226 is internally assessed** by means of a class test, two written assignments and four quizzes.
- **One research outline** (approx. 800 words) worth **30% DUE SEPTEMBER 3rd, 4pm** to HU 318 (please sign the sheet indicating submission)
 - **One research essay** (approx. 3000 words) worth **40%** of the final grade, **DUE OCTOBER 12th, 4pm** to HU 318 (please sign the sheet indicating submission)
 - **5 multiple-choice quizzes** given randomly at the beginning of class, only the top 4 count. These are collectively worth 10% of the final grade.
 - **Class test** (two hours) worth 20% on the final day of class, **OCTOBER 11th.**
 - **The mandatory course requirements are:**
 1. **Attendance at 80% of tutorials**
 2. **Passing mark on class test**
 3. **Passing mark on final essay**
- 6 The assessment of this course relates to these objectives in the following ways:**

The tutorial assignments are designed to facilitate student reflection on the required readings, and to allow students to develop skills in critical reading and analysis necessary for essay writing and continued study.

The essays will encourage students to pursue their own interests in Indian religions through formulating their own research question(s) in an exploration of primary sources and secondary sources. By focussing on primary sources, students will be exposed first-hand to the issues raised in scholarly analysis and will develop the knowledge and the skills necessary to critically evaluate scholarly studies of materials they have studied for themselves.

The differing percentage value for the essays is designed to allow students the opportunity to improve their skills without negative repercussions for their final grade.

The class test allows students to demonstrate their grasp of the material covered in the course and their understanding of the themes addressed, and creates an opportunity to review and reflect on what they have learned in the course as a whole.

Mandatory course requirements: the submission of two essays, 8 tutorial assignments and sitting the class test. Attendance at 80% of tutorials.

7 Required Text: All of the readings are contained in the Course Reader to be purchased from the Student Notes Shop at a cost of approx \$40.00.

8 Work-load (Recommendation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences)

For 200-level 22 points one trimester courses, the working party on workloads and assessments recommends 15 hours per week. An average student should spend 12 hours per week for preparation, reading and writing in addition to attendance at lectures and tutorials.

[200 – level 1 trimester 22 points 15 hours]

9 General University policies and statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar available in hard copy or under 'About Victoria' on the VUW home page at www.vuw.ac.nz.

10 Student and staff conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps are to be taken if there is a complaint. For information about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor or refer to the statute on the VUW policy website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct

The Policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/staffconduct

11 Academic grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned; class representatives may be able to help you in this. If you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the relevant Associate Dean; VUWSA Education Coordinators are available to assist in this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievance Policy which is published on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/academicgrievances

12 **Students with Impairments** (see Appendix 3 of the Assessment Handbook)

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities the same opportunity as other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the course coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively, you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services (DSS) to discuss your individual needs and the available options and support on a confidential basis. DSS are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

telephone: 463-6070 email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the School Office or DSS.

13 **Student Support**

Staff at Victoria want students to have positive learning experiences at the University. Each faculty has a designated staff member who can either help you directly if your academic progress is causing you concern, or quickly put you in contact with someone who can. In the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences the support contact is **Dr Allison Kirkman, Murphy Building, room 407**. Assistance for specific groups is also available from the Kaiwawao Māori, Manaaki Pihipihinga or Victoria International.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

This programme offers:

- Academic mentoring for all Māori & Pacific students at all levels of under graduate study for the faculties of Commerce & Administration and Humanities & Social sciences. Contact Manaaki-Pihipihinga-Programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 6015 to register for Humanities & Social Science mentoring and 463 8977 to register for mentoring for Commerce and Administration courses
- Post graduate support network for the above faculties, which links students into all of the post grad activities and workshops on campus and networking opportunities
- Pacific Support Coordinator who can assist Pacific students with transitional issues, disseminate useful information and provide any assistance needed to help students achieve. Contact; Pacific-Support-Coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone 463 5842.

Manaaki Pihipihinga is located at: 14 Kelburn Parade, back court yard, Room 109 D (for Humanities mentoring & some first year commerce mentoring) or Room 210 level 2 west wing railway station Pipitea (commerce mentoring space). Māori Studies mentoring is done at the marae.

Student Services

In addition, the Student Services Group (email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz) is available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

VUWSA employs Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office (tel. 463-6983 or 463-6984, email at education@vuwsa.org.nz) is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building.

- 14 Taping of Lectures:** All students in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies are welcome to use audio-tapes to record lectures. If you want to do this, please see your lecturer, tutor or the relevant programme administrator and complete a disclaimer form which advises of copy right and other relevant issues.
- 15 Class representatives:** Class representatives are elected in the first week or two of the term. They are supported by the VUW Students' Association, and have a variety of roles, including assistance with grievances and student feedback to staff and VUWSA. Contact details for your class rep will be listed on the Religious Studies notice board.
- 16 Aegrotat regulations apply** to internally assessed courses. Students who cannot submit or complete the course requirements due to illness or some other impairment may apply for an aegrotat pass. Applications may be submitted concerning tests or for other assessment items which are due at most three weeks before the day on which lectures cease for the course, and for which no alternative item of assessment could reasonably be substituted or extension time granted. (refer to aegrotat provisions in section 4.5 of the Assessment statute.
- 17 Student Learning Support Services:** A range of workshops, drop-ins and other assistance is provided by SLSS, covering such things as study techniques, essay writing, exam preparation and note taking skills. They are at 14 Kelburn Parade, tel: 463 5999
- 18 Supplementary Materials:** A website of materials related to RELI 205 is being maintained in Blackboard. You can find it by visiting <http://blackboard@vuw.ac.nz>. Your user name is the one issued to you by Student Computing Services. Your password is your Student ID Number. If in doubt, please contact the Student Computing Services Help Desk, 463-6666 (extension 6666 from VUW phones) or by email scs-help@vuw.ac.nz
- 19 Evaluation:** This course will be evaluated by **UTDC**.

Lecture Programme

Lecture Schedule, Required Readings, and Tutorial Questions

The required readings are essential background for the lecture/seminars and must be done **before each lecture**. The readings will be further discussed in the tutorials. The readings are all found in the Course Reader. Those marked **REQ** are required readings and must be done for each lecture and for participation in tutorials. Those marked **SUP** are supplementary readings and are provided so that each area may be expanded upon.

JULY 12:	Introduction/Overview
JULY 19:	The Subconscious Mind
JULY 26:	Social Psychology (Guest Lecture, 2nd Hour: Marc Wilson)
AUG 2:	Social Psychology and Suicide Terrorism
AUG 9:	Cognitive Neuroscience (James Duncan)
AUG 16:	Religion as Anthropomorphism

Mid trimester break (20th August – 2nd September 2007)

SEPTEMBER 3	ESSAY OUTLINE DUE
SEPT 6:	Behavioural Genetics (Guest Lecture, 2nd hour: David Murphy)
SEPT 13	Developmental Psychology
SEPT 20:	Meme Theory
SEPT 27:	Cognitive Psychology
OCT 4	Evolutionary Psychology (Guest Lecture, 2nd hour Andrew Mahoney)
OCT 11	TEST
OCTOBER 12th	FINAL ESSAY DUE

Essays

The essays should be a thoughtful treatment of a well-defined topic, based on your own thinking and research. The participants are encouraged to come up with their own essay topics, but it is essential that they first discuss their plans with the lecturer.

1 Essays and assignments must be placed in the locked assignment box located near the programme administrator's office (HU 318), and students must date and sign the essay register when submitting an essay. **No responsibility will be taken for assignments for which there is no record.** Students should keep a copy of all their work until it is returned.

2 Due dates:

The first essay to be submitted by **September 3rd 2007**

The second essay to be submitted by **October 12th 2007**

3 Penalties for late essays / assignments:

- 1 percent point per 24 hours will be deducted for late essays, up to 2 weeks from due date.
- to avoid these deductions, an extension may be sought with an explanation in writing. The reason for the extension does not need to be medical; in the event that it is, a medical certificate must be submitted.
- requests for extensions may be made to the tutor or the course co-ordinator.
- if an essay is handed in 2 weeks after the due date and an extension has not been sought the matter will be referred to the course co-ordinator who will make the final decision as to whether the essay shall be accepted for assessment or not.

4 Academic integrity and plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

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- suspension from class or university
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