

# PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION (PSY 498/591)

## COURSE INFORMATION

Course meets Tues Thur 3-4:15

Instructor: Prof Adam Cohen  
Room 276 Psychology Building  
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Office hours: By appointment

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

This course is aimed at creating a constructive, respectful dialogue about psychology and religion, often a touchy subject. We will as much as possible attempt not only to discuss what psychology can offer as far as understanding religion, but what religion can offer psychology; for example, why religious people are a little healthier and happier than nonreligious people.

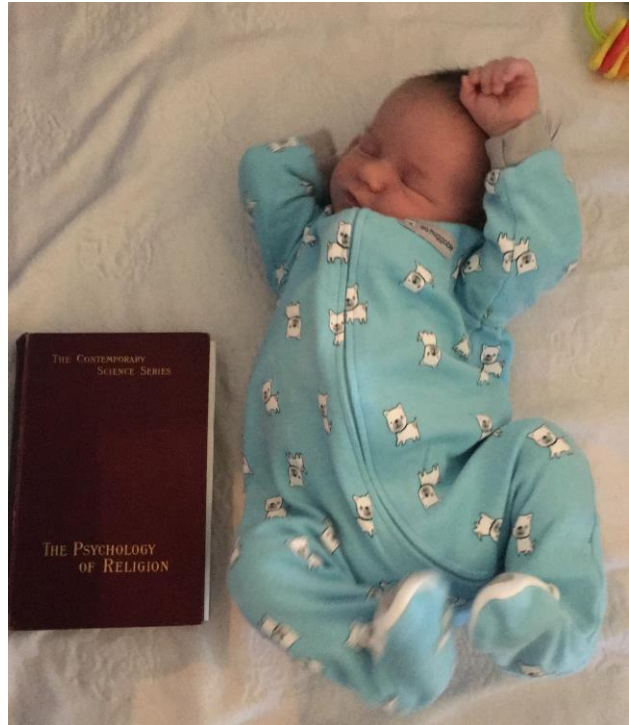
At the conclusion of this course, we should have a sense of the kinds of questions that religion raises for psychologists; in increased appreciation of different religious traditions; and a good sense of how psychologists interested in religion can proceed.

Religion obviously affects many, if not all, domains of psychology. Because I am a social and cultural psychologist, my interests, background, and research programs that touch on religion are colored by my interests in social processes and cultural contexts. This course will then have as one major focus the social and cultural aspects of religion, though I have tried to design the course broadly to appeal to people of different backgrounds and interests.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course will be most successful, and grades will be assigned, on the basis of several factors. All of these requirements are designed to maximize the experience for all course participants, and to help the class be most relevant to developing (and ongoing) research programs.

1. Attendance and participation are obviously critical in a seminar.
2. Next, for every reading, I will ask you to provide a thoughtful discussion question, and an explanation about why this is an important question or issue. Each question and explanation will be about a few sentences or a paragraph long and are due with enough time for me to read and digest them all before class—let's say Sunday at 5 PM.
3. The third requirement is a sort of mini conference, in which every student will present and discuss their idea for their final paper.



4. Last, each student will be asked to write a final paper which will be a thoughtful literature review and discussion, and proposal for a project related to your main research interest (approx 10-15 pages or so). 10-15 pages, for PSY591; 5-7 pages, for PSY498. Please meet with me to discuss over the semester.

Ideally, I would also like to meet with each person individually (encouraged but not mandatory) over the course to learn about your research and brainstorm about how research related to religion can enrich it, partly out of my intrinsic interest in you and partly to help steer final projects.

### **Note regarding course recording**

The contents of this course, including lectures and other instructional materials, are copyrighted materials. Students may not share outside the class, including uploading, selling or distributing course content or notes taken during the conduct of the course. Any recording of class sessions by students is prohibited, except as part of an accommodation approved by the Disability Resource Center.

### **ASSIGNMENT OF GRADES**

Course grades will be assigned on the following scale:

100-97	A+
96-93	A
92-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-83	B
82-80	B-
79-77	C+
76-70	C
69-60	D
≤ 59	E

### **Course/Instructor Evaluation**

The course/instructor evaluation for this course will be conducted online 10-14 days before the last official day of classes. Your response(s) to the course/instructor are anonymous and will not be returned to your instructor until after grades have been submitted. The use of a course/instructor evaluation is an important process that allows our department to (1) help faculty improve their instruction, (2) help administrators evaluate instructional quality, (3) ensure high standards of teaching, and (4) ultimately improve instruction and student learning over time. Completion of the evaluation is not required for you to pass this class and will not affect your grade, but your cooperation and participation in this process is critical. About two weeks before the class finishes, watch for an e-mail with "Course Evaluations" in the subject heading. This email will be sent to your official ASU e-mail address, so make sure ASU has your current email address on file. You can check this online at the following URL:<https://webapp4.asu.edu/epo-web/forwarding>."

You will receive an email when the course evaluations are available for you to review.

### **Contact Information**

It is necessary that you have an ASU email address and that you check your email frequently, as some course communication is done this way. We expect students to be able to access these emails within 1 business day, and we will offer you the same courtesy in return by keeping on top of our email. When you email us, please be sure to sign your name and don't assume we will recognize you from your email address!

### **Academic Integrity**

ASU expects and requires all its students to act with honesty and integrity, and respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. For more information on academic integrity, including the policy and appeal procedures, please visit <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity> and the *Student Conduct Statement* below.

### **Title IX Information**

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling> is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>.

### **Scholastic Dishonesty**

Scholastic dishonesty of any kind is dealt with harshly by the University, and can lead to a student's expulsion. I consider plagiarism to be a serious violation of integrity and will deal with such issues seriously. The SafeAssignment software compares your paper submission to every paper ever submitted anywhere in the country or online.

### **Student Conduct Statement**

Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual Chapter V – Campus and Student Affairs: Code of Conduct ([http://www.abor.asu.edu/1\\_the\\_regents/policymanual/chap5/5Section\\_C.pdf](http://www.abor.asu.edu/1_the_regents/policymanual/chap5/5Section_C.pdf)), ACD 125: Computer, Internet, and Electronic Communications (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/acd/acd125.html>), and the ASU Student Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/srr/index.htm>).

Students are entitled to receive instruction free from interference by other members of the class. If a student is disruptive, an instructor may ask the student to stop the disruptive behavior and warn the student that such disruptive behavior can result in withdrawal from the course. An

instructor may withdraw a student from a course when the student's behavior disrupts the educational process under USI 201-10 <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/usi/usi201-10.html>.

### **Special Needs and Accessibility Statement**

If there is a particular condition of which we should be aware (e.g., visual or auditory impairment, learning disability, accessibility), let us know about it immediately so that arrangements can be made to accommodate your needs. In compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, professional disability specialists and support staff at the Student Accessibility Center (SAC) facilitate a comprehensive range of academic support services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. SAC staff coordinate transition from high schools and community colleges, in-service training for faculty and staff, resolution of accessibility issues, community outreach, and collaboration between all ASU campuses regarding disability policies, procedures, and accommodations. Students who wish to request an accommodation for a disability should contact the SAC for their campus.

#### Tempe Campus

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>

480-965-1234 (Voice)

480-965-9000 (TTY)

#### West Campus

<http://www.west.asu.edu/drc/>

University Center Building (UCB), Room 130

602-543-8145 (Voice)

#### Polytechnic Campus

<http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/>

480.727.1165 (Voice)

480.727.1009 (TTY)

#### Downtown Phoenix Campus

<http://campus.asu.edu/downtown/DRC>

University Center Building, Suite 160

602-496-4321 (Voice)

602-496-0378 (TTY)

### **Technical Support Contact Information**

For technical assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please contact the University Technology Office Help Desk:

Phone: 480-965-6500

Email: [helpdesk@asu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@asu.edu)

Web: <http://help.asu.edu/>

For information on systems outages see the ASU systems status calendar, please visit <http://syshealth.asu.edu/> and <http://systemstatus.asu.edu/status/calendar.asp>

### **Drop and Add dates**

If you feel it is necessary to withdraw from the course, please see <http://students.asu.edu/drop-add> for full details on the types of withdrawals that are available and their procedures.

### **Syllabus Disclaimer**

The instructor views the course syllabus as an educational contract between the instructor and students. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. Students will be notified in a timely

manner of any syllabus changes face-to-face, via email or in the course site Announcements. Please remember to check your ASU email and the course site Announcements often.

### **Subject to Change Notice**

All material, assignments, and deadlines are subject to change with prior notice. It is your responsibility to stay in touch with your instructor, review the course site regularly, or communicate with other students, to adjust as needed if assignments or due dates change.

## **TENTATIVE TOPICS DATES AND READINGS**

### **Jan 12-14, Introductions, organizational sessions**

#### **Jan 19-21, Defining, Operationalizing**

Durkheim, E. (1912/1995). *Elementary forms of religious life* (trans. K. E. Fields). (pp. 33-39). New York: Free Press.

Hill, P. C., & Pargament, K. I. (2003). Advances in the conceptualization and measurement of religion and spirituality: Implications for physical and mental health research. *American Psychologist*, 58, 64-74.

James, W. (1902/1997). *Varieties of religious experience* (lecture II). New York: Touchstone.

Saroglou, V. (2011). Believing, bonding, behaving, and belonging: The big four religious dimensions and cultural variation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 42, 1320-1340.

Saucier, G., & Skrzypin´ska, K. (2006). Spiritual but not religious? Evidence for two independent dispositions. *Journal of Personality*, 74, 1257-1292.

#### **Jan 26-28, Fundamentalism, Prejudice**

Gervais, W. M. & Norenzayan, A. Distrust is central to atheist prejudice. JPSP.

Brandt, M. J., & Van Tongeren, D. R. (In press). People both high and low on religious fundamentalism are prejudiced toward dissimilar groups. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Allport, G. W., & Ross, J. M. (1967). Personal religious orientation and prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 5, 432-443.

Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. E. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, quest, and prejudice. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 2, 113-133.

Hood, Jr., R. W., Hill, P. C., & Williamson, W. P. (2005). *Psychology of religious fundamentalism*. New York: Guilford. (pp 11-46)

Rowatt, W., & Al-Kire, R. L. (In press). [Dimensions of religiousness and their connection to racial, ethnic, and atheist prejudices](#). *Current Opinion in Psychology*.

#### **Feb 2-4, Conflict**

Atran, S., & Axelrod, R. (2008). Reframing sacred values. *Negotiation Journal*, 24, 221-246.

Cherfas, L., Rozin, P., Cohen, A. B., Davidson, A., & McCauley, C. (2006). The framing of atrocities: Documenting and exploring wide variation in aversion to Germans and German-related activities among Holocaust survivors. *Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, 12, 65-80.

Ginges, J., Hansen, I., & Norenzayan, A. (2009). Religion and support for suicide attacks. *Psych Science*, 20, 224-230.

- Ginges, J., Sheikh, H., Atran, S., & Argo, N. (2015). Thinking from God's perspective decreases biased valuation of the life of a nonbeliever. *PNAS*.
- Neuberg, S.L., Warner, C.M., Mistler, S.A., Berlin, A., Hill, E.D., Johnson, J.D., Filip-Crawford, G., ..., & Schober, J. (2014). Religion and intergroup conflict: Findings from the Global Group Relations Project *Psychological Science*, 25 (1), 198-206  
DOI: [10.1177/0956797613504303](https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797613504303)

### **SPSP conference: Feb 9-11 – no class**

#### **Feb 16-18, Personhood**

- Barrett, J., & Keil, F. (1996). Conceptualizing a nonnatural entity: Anthropomorphism in God concepts. *Cognitive Psychology*, 31, 219-247.
- Boyer, P. (2001). Why Gods and Spirits? In *Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought*. New York, NY: Basic Books (pp 137-167).
- Demoulin, S., Saroglou, V., & Van Pachterbeke, M. (2008). Infra-humanizing others, supra-humanizing gods: the emotional hierarchy. *Social Cognition*, 26 (2), 235-247.
- Epley, N., Waytz, A., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2007). On seeing human: A three-factor theory of anthropomorphism. *Psychological Review*, 114, 864-886.
- Johnson, K. A., Li, Y. J., Cohen, A. B., & Okun, M. (2013). Friends in high places: The effects of authoritarian and benevolent God concepts on social attitudes and behaviors. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5,15-22.
- Morewedge, C. K., & Clear, M. E. (2008). Anthropomorphic God concepts engender moral judgment. *Social Cognition*, 26 (2), 182-189.

#### **Feb 23-25, Culture**

- Cohen, A. B., & Hill, P. C. (2007). Religion as culture: Religious individualism and collectivism among American Catholics, Jews, and Protestants. *Journal of Personality*, 75, 709-742.
- Cohen, A. B., & Rozin, P. (2001). Religion and the morality of mentality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 81, 697-710.
- Keller, R. R. (2000). Religious diversity in North America. In P. S. Richards & A. E. Bergin (Eds.), *Handbook of Psychotherapy and religious diversity* (pp. 27-55). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Saroglou, V., & Cohen, A. B. (2013). Cultural and cross-cultural psychology of religion. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology and religion and spirituality* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 330-354). New York: Guilford.
- Silverman, G., Johnson, K. A., & Cohen, A. B. (In press). To believe or not to believe, that is not the question: The complexity of Jewish beliefs about God. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*.

#### **Mar 2-4, Evolution, Genes, and Culture, and Co-Evolution**

- Boyer, P. (2003). Religious thought and behaviour as by-products of brain function. *Trends in Cognitive Science*, 7, 119-124.
- Buss, D. M. (2002). Sex, marriage, and religion: What adaptive problems do religious phenomena solve? *Psychological Inquiry*, 13, 201-203.

- Hall, D., Cohen, A. B., Meyer, K. K., Varley, A., & Brewer, G. A., Jr. (2015). Costly signaling increases trust, even across religious affiliations. *Psychological Science*, *26*, 1368-1376.
- Norenzayan, A., et al. The cultural evolution of prosocial religions. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.
- Sosis, R. & Alcorta, C. (2003). Signaling, solidarity, and the sacred: The evolution of religious behavior. *Evolutionary Anthropology*, *12*, 264-274.
- Wilson, D. S. (2002). *Darwin's cathedral: Evolution, religion, and the nature of society*. (chapters 1 and 2). Chicago: University of Chicago.

### **Mar 9-11, Gender and sexuality**

- Li, Y. J., & Cohen, A. B. (2013). Religion, sexuality, and family. In V. Saroglou (Ed.), *Religion, personality, and social behavior* (pp. 213-229). Psychology Press.
- Moon, J. W., Krems, J. A., Cohen, A. B., & Kenrick, D. T. (2019). Is nothing sacred? Religious beliefs and reproductive strategies. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *28*, 361-365.
- Cragun, R. T., Merino, S. M., Nielsen, M., Beal, B. D., Stearmer, M., & Jones, B. (2016). Predictors of Opposition to and Support for the Ordination of Women: Insights from the LDS Church. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *19*(2), 124-137.
- Whitehead, A. L., & Perry, S. L. (2019). Is a 'Christian America' a more patriarchal America?
- Haggard, M. C., Kaelen, R., Saroglou, V., Klein, O., & Rowatt, W. C. (2018, May 21). Religion's Role in the Illusion of Gender Equality: Supraliminal and Subliminal Religious Priming Increases Benevolent Sexism. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*.

### **Mar 16-18, Food**

- Cohen, A. B. (In press). You can learn a lot about religion from food. *Current Opinion in Psychology*.
- Fessler, D.M.T. (2005) Never eat alone: The meaning of food sharing in a Sumatran fishing village. *People and Culture in Oceania* *20*:51-67.
- Johnson, K. A., White, A. E., Boyd, B., & Cohen, A. B. (2011). Matzo, meat, milk, and mana: A psychological analysis of religious cultural food practices. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *42*, 1421-1436.
- Meigs, A. S. (1991). *Food, sex, and pollution: A New Guinea religion*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. [Chapter 1, "Eating as a symbolic activity"]
- Rozin, P., Ruby, M., & Cohen, A. B. *Food and eating*. (2019). In D. Cohen & S. Kitayama (Eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Psychology (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)* (pp. 447-477). New York: Guilford.

### **Mar 23-25, Health and Happiness**

- Diener, E., & Clifton, D. (2002). Life satisfaction and religiosity in broad probability samples. *Psychological Inquiry*, *13*, 206-209.
- O'Connor, S., & Vandenberg, B. (2005). Psychosis or faith? Clinicians' assessment of religious beliefs. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *73*, 610-616.
- McCullough, M.E., Hoyt, W.T., Larson, D.B., Koenig, H.G. & Thoresen, C. (2000). Religious involvement and mortality: A meta-analytic review. *Health Psychology*, *19*, 211-222.
- Hadaway, C. K., P. L. Marler, and M. Chaves. 1993. What the polls don't show: A closer look at US church attendance. *American Sociological Review* *56*, 741-52.

Krause, N., Emmons, R. A., & Ironson, G. (2015). Benevolent images of God, gratitude, and physical health status. *Journal of Religion & Health, 54*, 1503-1519.

### **Mar 30-Apr 1, Politics, Values, Morality**

Cohen, A. B., Malka, A., Hill, E. D., Thoemmes, F., Hill, P. C., & Sundie, J. M. (2009). Race as a moderator of the relationship between religiosity and political alignment. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 35*, 271-282.

Malka, A., & Soto, C. J. (2011). The conflicting influences of religiosity on attitude toward torture. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 37*, 1091-1103.

Weeden, J., Cohen, A. B., & Kenrick, D. T. (2008). Religious participation and reproductive strategies. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 29*, 327-334.

Shweder, R., Much, N.C., Mahapatra, M. & Park, L. (1997). The “big three” of morality (autonomy, community, divinity) and the “big three” explanations of suffering. In A.M. Brandt & P. Rozin (Eds.), *Morality and health* (pp. 119-169). New York: Routledge.

Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., Napier, J. L., Callan, M. J., & Laurin, K. (2008). God and the government: Testing a compensatory control mechanism for the support of external systems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 95*, 18-35.

### **Apr 6-8, Personality**

McCullough, M. E., Enders, C. K., Brion, S. L., & Jain, A. R. (2005). The varieties of religious development in adulthood: A longitudinal investigation of religion and rational choice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89*, 78-89.

Paloutzian, R. F., Richardson, J. T., & Rambo, L. R. (1999). Religious conversion and personality change. *Journal of Personality, 67*, 1047-1079.

Saroglou, V. (2002). Religion and the five factors of personality: a meta-analytic review. *Personality and Individual Differences, 32*, 15-25.

Van Tongeren, D. R., DeWall, C. N., Chen, Z., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. (In press). Religious residue: cross-cultural evidence that religious psychology and behavior persist following deidentification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

### **Apr 13-15, Death and meaning in life**

Jong, J. (In press). Death anxiety and religion. *Current Opinion in Psychology*.

King, L. A., Heintzelman, S. J., & Ward, S. J. (2016). Beyond the search for meaning: A contemporary science of the experience of meaning in life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 25*, 211-216.

Park, C. L. (2013). Religion and meaning. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality, second edition* (pp. 357-379). New York: Guilford.

Vail, K. E., Arndt, J., & Abdollahi, A. (2014). Exploring the existential function of religion and supernatural agent beliefs among Christians, Muslims, atheists, and agnostics. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 38*, 1288-1300.

### **Apr 20-22, mini conference (presentations about final papers).**

### **Classes end 4-23**