Seminar in Selected Topics in Psychology – PSYC 6397 – Science of Religion & Belief

Instructor
Instructor – Dr. Adam Fetterman

Required Texts and Resources
- All reading material will be available on Blackboard.

Course Description
- This course is focused on the psychological science of religion and belief. The course readings will survey important topics related to the theory and empirical study of religion and belief. Specifically, the course will focus on what religion and spirituality are, why people believe (and why some don't), how religion develops, and how religion and belief influences cognition, emotion, and behaviour, and vice versa. Each class period will take an in depth look at theoretical and/or empirical articles that exemplify a different topic in the science of religion and belief. Notice that there is no mention of exploring different religious beliefs. Although specific religious beliefs will come up as useful examples, examining and comparing specific religious beliefs is not a goal of this course. The course will culminate in a research or review paper that students can expand upon and, possibly, submit for publication, with their advisor and/or [instructor].

Course Objectives
- Understand the issues and current state of theory and empirical research on religion and belief
- Be able to form thoughtful and creative empirical ideas related to religion and belief
- Lead thoughtful and critical discussions of theory and research on religion and belief
- Be able to participate in discussions on theory and research on religion and belief
- Conduct a literature search for relevant work on chosen topic
- Analyse existing data to test a hypothesis or synthesize an area of research
- Have knowledge of the process of writing a research or review paper

Course Expectations
- This course is not like an undergraduate class with lectures, tests, and a textbook. It requires a deeper level of engagement with the material and classroom contributions.
- This course is aimed at students who plan to or are pursuing a PhD in empirical psychology. As such, the quality of work is expected to be high and the discussions will be empirical in nature. However, this does NOT preclude the inclusion of terminal MA students nor discussions of an applied nature (e.g, clinical, education, social work).
- While this course appears intense, it shouldn't be. We will have lively, natural, and interesting discussions, which should be intrinsically rewarding. It is my hope that students will leave this class excited about the science of religion and belief, not worrying about a grade.
- While it does appear that the workload is high, it shouldn't be. The weekly reactions should come easily and are not graded on content, grammar, or style. The only way a student will have trouble is if they write nonsense. The research or review paper seems large, but students have freedom here too. With luck, it will turn into an eventual publication.

Course Requirements
- Reaction/Thought Papers   25%
- Discussion and Leadership   25%
- Research or Review Paper   50%

Reaction/Thought Papers (1 page MAX; Graded: 0 = unacceptable; 1 = acceptable.)
- Before the beginning of every class students must turn in a reaction/thought paper based on the assigned readings for that week via Blackboard. This is an opportunity to show critical reasoning skills and engagement with the material. The papers can take any form (e.g., critique, inspired ideas, reflection, or reaction).
- Late assignments will not be accepted.

Discussion and Leadership (Graded on a normal A, B, C, D, F scale)
- Class discussion is required. While students may not always have something to say, they will be expected to participate most of the time. That is, no student can sit through the semester without contributing.
- The discussion leader should give a BRIEF **(two minute max)** overview, then have a concrete plan for discussion.
- Each class period will be assigned to one or two students. It is their responsibility to make sure that discussion continues. As such, to get other students to talk, discussion leaders should generate interesting discussion questions related to the articles.
- Discussion leaders can also request discussion questions from the other students ahead of time.

Research or Review Paper (Graded on a normal A, B, C, D, F scale)
- Students have a choice for the major assignment for this class. They can either write a full research or review paper. The research paper will involve analysing existing data from numerous open access datasets. The purpose of this assignment is to give students experience in formulating and testing hypotheses or synthesizing theoretical ideas based on specific readings, topics, and issues of interest to them that we will cover this semester. Ultimately, the goal of the project is to eventually submit a paper for publication (actual submission not a requirement for this assignment) with the students' advisor and/or [instructor]. Target journals include *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, etc.
- The length requirement is 2,500-5,000 words (**not** including references, tables, figures, or abstract) for either paper.
- Papers should be written in APA (7th edition) format
- Research papers should be prepared as if they are a manuscript. Use the submission guidelines of *Social Psychological and Personality Science* as a guide. This includes Introduction, Methods, Results, General Discussion. One figure or Table is required, neither included in the word count
  - Students will not be graded based on the actual results of the analyses!
- Review papers should be prepared as if they are a manuscript. Use the submission guidelines of *Current Directions in Psychological Science* as a guide. One figure or Table is required, neither included in the word count.
- Papers must be written specifically for this class. No part of the paper can be "recycled" from another class or from work done with a faculty mentor
- Due 05/13/2021 by 5pm. No extensions or late assignments.
- See *Paper Guidelines* at the end of the syllabus for more information

Course Policies
- Participation – As noted, participation is a large factor in this class. One cannot expect to get higher than a C without participating in class discussions. The use of cameras is required.
- Attendance – To participate in this class, students must be there. As such, this class has a strict attendance policy. See Excused Absence Policy below.
- Electronic Devices – This is going to be online, so of course electronic devices will be used. However, use of OTHER electronic devices is discouraged. Improper use of laptops and phones disrupts your learning and those in the discussion. This will not be tolerated.

- Grades - Questions about grades should be addressed in a timely manner. After 10 days, grades are considered final. Challenging a grade is equivalent to requesting a re-grade. Therefore, should you want to challenge a grade, you are to carefully construct a written sound and logical reason for asking for a re-grade.
- Disruptive Behavior - Disruptive behavior can take many forms. Some examples are disrupting class discussions, improperly using electronic devices, making rude comments to other students or the instructor, dominating discussions, etc. This type of behavior will be dealt with accordingly. If anyone feels distracted or uncomfortable by what they believe is disruptive behavior, please inform the instructor.
- Discrimination - This class is a safe environment and discrimination will not be tolerated. Anyone discriminating against another classmate regarding their race, ethnicity, culture, gender, religious affiliation, sexual preferences or political ideology will be dealt with accordingly. Likewise, if anyone feels they are being discriminated against within this class, or anywhere, they are encouraged to report such behavior to the proper campus authorities. The instructor is available to help direct victims to the proper authority.
- Academic Honesty- DO NOT CHEAT! Any **suspicion of cheating** will be reported to the Departmental Academic Affairs Office. There are no excuses for cheating.
    - All assignments must be the original work of the student, not used for any other course, and completed in a manner consistent with UH's code of conduct. You are expected to be familiar with these standards and policies; in the event of a violation, ignorance will not be accepted as an excuse. The UH Academic Honesty Policy can be found at https://uh.edu/provost/policies-resources/honesty/_documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf.
    - Plagiarism, copying assignments, cheating on the exams, exam sharing – or any other form of academic dishonesty – will result in an automatic F for the course and could result in suspension, expulsion, and a violation notation on your permanent record.
    - Plagiarism - (from the Modern Language Association of America Handbook, 1988, New York; 21-23)**:** Plagiarism is the act of using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else.
        - *For more on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the following websites:* http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html
        - http://www.lemoyne.edu/library/plagiarism/
- Academic Accommodations - The University of Houston complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students who have a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UH strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe you have a disability requiring an adjustments/auxiliary aids, please contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES at 713-743-5400 or http://www.uh.edu/csd/
- Counseling Services - Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or somebody you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html
- Mandatory Reporting - In accordance with the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy, your instructor is a "responsible employee" for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and must report incidents of sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking) about which they

become aware to the Title IX office. Please know there are places on campus where you can make a report in confidence. More information can be found on the UHS sexual misconduct prevention and awareness website, Salutations, at http://uhsystem.edu/salutations/title-ix-contacts/.

- Excused Absence Policy - Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy and Graduate Excused Absence Policy for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Additional policies address absences related to military service, religious holy days, pregnancy and related conditions, and disability.

- Recording of Class - Students may not record all or part of class, livestream all or part of class, or make/distribute screen captures, without advanced written consent of the instructor. If you have or think you may have a disability such that you need to record class-related activities, please contact the Center for Students with DisABILITIES. If you have an accommodation to record class-related activities, those recordings may not be shared with any other student, whether in this course or not, or with any other person or on any other platform. Classes may be recorded by the instructor. Students may use instructor's recordings for their own studying and notetaking. Instructor's recordings are not authorized to be shared with *anyone* without the prior written approval of the instructor. Failure to comply with requirements regarding recordings will result in a disciplinary referral to the Dean of Students Office and may result in disciplinary action.

- Syllabus Changes - Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, please note that the instructor may need to make modifications to the course syllabus and may do so at any time. Notice of such changes will be announced as quickly as possible through email and Blackboard.

Communication with the Instructor
- Communication with the instructor is encouraged.
- Acceptable communication with the instructor and teaching assistant includes emails, office hour visits, before and after class, and appointments.
- Email is my preferred method of communication. I will attempt to respond to emails within 48 hours of receipt. Students are encouraged to use their official UH email accounts. Emails from questionable addresses (example: kinkychick18@hotmail.com or hotdude69@yahoo.com) may be ignored.
- The instructor's role is to not only convey the information to the class, but also to guide students in their education. Any questions, comments or concerns are encouraged.

Date	Topic/Reading	Leaders
Jan. 21	Introductions	
	WEEK 1: PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY, & BELIEF	
Jan. 28	1. William James – Varieties of religious experience: Lecture 1 (25 pgs) 2. Emmons, R. A., & Paloutzian, R. F. (2003). The psychology of religion. *Annual review of psychology*, *54*(1), 377-402. (17 pgs) 3. Hood et al. – Chapter 1 (24 pgs) 4. Gibson, N. J. (2017). Recruiting and pursuing Big Questions in the scientific study of religion. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, *7*(4), 354-360. (5 pgs)	
	WEEK 2: HOW DO WE STUDY RELIGION & BELIEF (aka: Methods)	
Feb. 4	1. Hood et al. – Chapter 2 (29 pgs) 2. Zinnbauer, B. J., Pargament, K. I., Cole, B., Rye, M. S., Butter, E. M., Belavich, T. G., ... & Kadar, J. L. (1997). Religion and spirituality: Unfuzzying the fuzzy. *Journal for the Scientific study of Religion*, 549-564. (15 pgs) 3. Hill, P. C. (2013). Measurement assessment and issues in the psychology of religion and spirituality. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (2nd ed., pp. 48 –74). New York, NY: Guilford Press. (18 pgs) 4. Jong, J. (2013). Implicit measures in the experimental psychology of religion. *A New Science of Religion, 1*, 65-78. (16 pgs)	
Feb. 11	**NO CLASS SPSP**	
	WEEK 3: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	
Feb. 18	1. Hood et al. – Chapter 3 (23 pgs) 2. Spilka, B., Shaver, P., & Kirkpatrick, L. A. (1985). A general attribution theory for the psychology of religion. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 24*, 1-20. (16 pgs) 3. McIntosh, D. N. (1995). Religion-as-schema, with implications for the relation between religion and coping. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 5*(1), 1-16. (14 pgs) 4. Atran, S., & Norenzayan, A. (2004). Religion's evolutionary landscape: Counterintuition, commitment, compassion, communion. *Behavioral & Brain Sciences 27*:713-730. (17 pgs) 5. Barrett, J. L. (2000). Exploring the natural foundations of religion. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences, 4(1)*, 29-34. (5 pgs)	
	WEEK 4: BELIEF	
Feb. 25	1. Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., McGregor, I., & Nash, K. (2010). Religious belief as compensatory control. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14(1), 37-48. (10 pgs) 2. Inzlicht, M., Tullett, A. M., & Good, M. (2011). The need to believe: a neuroscience account of religion as a motivated process. *Religion, brain & behavior*, *1*(3), 192-212. (17 pgs) 3. Fetterman, A. K., Juhl, J., Meier, B. P., Abeyta, A., Routledge, C., & Robinson, M. D. (2020). The path to God is through the heart: Metaphoric self-location as a predictor of religiosity. *Self and Identity, 19*(6), 650-672. (20 pgs) 4. Laurin, K. (2017) Belief in God: A cultural adaptation with important side effects. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 26*, 458-463. (4 pgs) 5. Mercier, Kramer & Shariff (2018). Belief in God: Why people believe and why they don't. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 27*, 263-268. (5 pgs)	
	WEEK 5: FUNCTIONS	
Mar. 4	1. Granqvist, P., Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2010). Religion as attachment: Normative processes and individual differences. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14(1)*, 49-59. (10 pgs)	

	2. Park, C. L. (2005). Religion as a meaning-making framework in coping with life stress. *Journal of social issues, 61(4)*, 707-729. (16 pgs) 3. Batson, C. D., & Stocks, E. L. (2004). Religion: Its core psychological function. In J. Greenberg, S. L. Koole, & T. Pyszczynski (Eds.), *Handbook of experimental existential psychology* (pp. 141-155). New York: Guilford. (13 pgs) 4. Vail, K. E., Rothschild, Z. K., Weise, D. R., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2010). A terror management analysis of the psychological functions of religion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14(1)*, 84-94. (7 pgs)	
	WEEK 6: CULTURE AND MORALITY	
Mar. 11	1. Norenzayan, A., Shariff, A. F., Gervais, W. M., Willard, A. K., McNamara, R. A., Slingerland, E., & Henrich, J. (2016). The cultural evolution of prosocial religions. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 39*. (18 pgs) 2. Johnson, K. A., White, A. E., Boyd, B. M., & Cohen, A. B. (2011). Matzah, meat, milk, and mana: Psychological influences on religio-cultural food practices. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 42*, 1421-1436. (12 pgs) 3. Cohen, A. B., & Rozin, P. (2001). Religion and the morality of mentality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*, 697-710. (13 pgs) 4. Yilmaz, O., & Bahçekapili, H. G. (2015). Without God, everything is permitted? The reciprocal influence of religious and meta-ethical beliefs. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 58*, 95-100. (5 pgs) 5. Morewedge, C. K., & Clear, M. E. (2008). Anthropomorphic God concepts engender moral judgment. *Social Cognition, 26*(2), 182-189 (7 pgs)	
Mar. 18	**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS** *****IRB PROPOSALS ARE DUE (SUBMITTED) MARCH 22nd***** *****REVIEW PAPER ABSTRACTS ARE DUE MARCH 22nd*****	
	WEEK 7: SELF, IDENTITY, & SELF-REGULATION	
Mar. 25	1. Ysseldyk, R., Matheson, K., & Anisman, H. (2010). Religiosity as identity: Toward an understanding of religion from a social identity perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 14*(1), 60-71. (8 pgs) 2. Laurin, K., Kay, A. C., & Fitzsimons, G. M. (2012). Divergent effects of activating thoughts of God on self-regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102*, 4-21. (15 pgs) 3. Han, S., Mao, L., Gu, X., Zhu, Y., Ge, J., & Ma, Y. (2008). Neural consequences of religious belief on self-referential processing. *Social Neuroscience, 3*(1), 1-15. (13 pgs) 4. Epley, N., Converse, B. A., Delbosc, A., Monteleone, G. A., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2009). Believers' estimates of God's beliefs are more egocentric than estimates of other people's beliefs. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *106*(51), 21533-21538. (6 pgs) 5. Gervais, W. M., & Norenzayan, A. (2012). Like a camera in the sky? Thinking about God increases public self-awareness and socially desirable responding. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *48*(1), 298-302. (5 pgs)	
	WEEK 8: GOD CONCEPTS	
Apr. 1	1. Barrett, J. L., & Keil, F. C. (1996). Conceptualizing a nonnatural entity: Anthropomorphism in God concepts. *Cognitive Psychology, 31*(3), 219-247. (25 pgs) 2. Meier, B. P., & Fetterman, A. K. (2020). Metaphors for god: God is high, bright, and human in implicit tasks. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*. (7 pgs) 3. Johnson, K. A., Okun, M. A., Cohen, A. B., Sharp, C. A., & Hook, J. N. (2019). Development and validation of the five-factor LAMBI measure of God representations. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 11*, 339–349. (10 pgs) 4. Jackson, J. C., Hester, N., & Gray, K. (2018). The faces of God in America: Revealing religious diversity across people and politics. *PloS one, 13*(6), e0198745. (10 pgs)	
	WEEK 9: COPING, WELL-BEING, & EMOTION	

Apr. 8	1. Exline, J. J., Park, C. L., Smyth, J. M., & Carey, M. P. (2011). Anger toward God: Social-cognitive predictors, prevalence, and links with adjustment to bereavement and cancer. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 100*, 129-148. (18 pgs) 2. McIntosh, D. N., Poulin, M. J., Silver, R. C., & Holman, E. A. (2011). The distinct roles of spirituality and religiosity in physical and mental health after collective trauma: a national longitudinal study of responses to the 9/11 attacks. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 34*(6), 497-507. (9 pgs) 3. Exline, J. J., Yali, A. M., & Sanderson, W. C. (2000). Guilt, discord, and alienation: The role of religious strain in depression and suicidality. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 56*(12), 1481-1496. (13 pgs) 4. Ritter, R. S., Preston, J. L., & Hernandez, I. (2014). Happy tweets: Christians are happier, more socially connected, and less analytical than atheists on Twitter. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 5*(2), 243-249. (6 pgs) 5. Krause, N. (2003). Religious meaning and subjective well-being in late life. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 58(3), S160-S170. (9 pgs)	
	WEEK 10: SOCIAL BEHAVIOR	
Apr. 15	1. Preston, J. L., Salomon, E., & Ritter, R. S. (2014). Religious prosociality: Personal, cognitive, and social factors. In V. Saroglou (Ed.), *Religion, personality, and social behavior* (pp. 149–169). New York, NY: Psychology Press. (16 pgs) 2. Johnson, M. K., Rowatt, W. C., & LaBouff, J. P. (2012). Religiosity and prejudice revisited: In-group favoritism, out-group derogation, or both?. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 4*(2), 154-168. (12 pgs) 3. Ladd, K. L., & Spilka, B. (2013). Ritual and prayer: Forms, functions, and relationships. In R. F. Paloutzian & C. L. Park (Eds.), *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality* (2nd ed., pp. 441–456). New York: Guilford. (11 pgs) 4. Bushman, B. J., Ridge, R. D., Das, E., Key, C. W., & Busath, G. W. (2007). When God sanctions killing: Effect of scriptural violence on aggression. *Psychological Science*, 18, 204-207. 5. Fetterman, A. K. (2016). On god-belief and feeling clean: daily experiences are related to feeling clean, particularly for those high in god-belief. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 7(6), 552-559. (6 pgs)	
	WEEK 11: ATHEISM & NON-BELIEVERS	
Apr. 22	1. Gervais, W. M., Najle, M. B., & Caluori, N. (2020). The Origins of Religious Disbelief: A Dual Inheritance Approach. (14 pgs) 2. Schnell, T., & Keenan, W.J.F. (2011). Meaning making in an atheist world. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion, 33*, 55-80. (21 pgs) 3. Gervais, W. M., Shariff, A. F., & Norenzayan, A. (2011). Do you believe in atheists? Distrust is central to anti-atheist prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 101*(6), 1189. (15 pgs) 4. Van Tongeren, D. R., DeWall, C. N., Chen, Z., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. (2020). Religious residue: Cross-cultural evidence that religious psychology and behavior persist following deidentification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. (18 pgs)	
	WEEK 12: SECTS, CULTS, FUNDAMENTALISM & EXTREMISM	
Apr. 29	1. Hood – Chapter 9 (34 pgs) 2. Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, quest, and prejudice. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 2*(2), 113-133. (16 pgs) 3. Sanada, T., & Norbeck, E. (1975). Prophecy continues to fail: A Japanese sect. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 6*(3), 331-345. (14 pgs) 4. Kruglanski, A. W., Jasko, K., Chernikova, M., Dugas, M., & Webber, D. (2017). To the fringe and back: Violent extremism and the psychology of deviance. *American Psychologist, 72*(3), 217. (11 pgs)	
May 13	Papers due by 5pm	

*This course schedule and reading list should be considered tentative. Changes are likely. If changes do occur, students will be notified in a timely manner.

PSYC 6397 Research Paper Guidelines

Overview

Throughout the semester you will formulate a hypothesis based on variables found in publically available data, submit an IRB proposal, analyse the data, and write up the results as a short-report manuscript. To get ideas for your study, think of unanswered questions in the literature, conflicting findings, limiting conditions, competing hypotheses, or new areas of application. Lay the groundwork by reviewing the relevant research and present your idea. Make sure that you always back up your claims with relevant theory and research. In addition, try to clearly emphasize what is gained by your study (i.e., implications).

Instructions

1. Identify publically available datasets. Below are some resources:
   a. https://osf.io/mbvk4/
   b. [instructor] - - I have dozens of datasets, including one with 3,000 participants and dozens of questions.
   c. Your advisor or lab
   d. Faculty members
   e. Baylor Religion Survey – you may use only 1 wave if you want. Here's a codebook with list of variables
2. Identify variables that you'd like to use to test a hypothesis. Please do not create overly complicated designs, but not too simple. A correlation matrix of at least 5 variables would be minimum. Preferably you would test relations between variables while controlling for others (e.g., a simple multiple regression). Moderation or mediation is probably the maximal complicatedness. If you have a manipulation, an ANOVA or ANCOVA is probably the maximal complicatedness.
   a. See [instructor] if you have concerns, need help, or would like to discuss your project.
3. Send your hypotheses, variables, and analysis plan to [instructor] for approval. Literally, three incomplete sentences is fine.
4. Submit your proposal to the IRB. Yes, they require a proposal for existing data. If people want to double up on their IRB submission, that is fine.
5. Create an Open Science Framework project. Include [instructor] so that he has access. You can keep your project private.
6. Preregister your analyses on the Open Science Framework. Instructions here and portal here. You can keep your preregistration private.
7. Once approved by the IRB, run your analyses
   a. See [instructor] for help, if needed.
8. Write your paper.

[INSTRUCTOR] IS HERE FOR YOU AT EVERY STEP!

Format

Sections should include: Title page, abstract, introduction, method, results and general discussion, references, and a figure or table. Papers must be written in APA (7th edition) format and should be 2,500 to 5,000 words (not including title, abstract, references, figure or table) in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-pt font, with 1-inch margins.

Title page: Title, name, running head

Abstract: In 150 words or less, summarize your investigation.

Introduction: The heading for the introduction section should be the title of your paper. You may use subheadings within the introduction to help organize things, but you will still need to include narrative transitions. Start by introducing the topic in a compelling way. Using previous research (including papers covered in class), build a case for your study. Describe what is already known, what is lacking, and how your study will contribute to the literature. End with a lead-in to your study and your specific hypotheses.

Method: Describe your study using past tense. Include detail on participants, design, procedure, manipulations, and measures. Provide enough detail so I can evaluate the quality of your design and procedures. For measures, give the wording of questions and response scales. For established measures, describe conceptually what they assess, include sample items, give the number of items and response scales (number and labels), and describe any special instructions. Provide means, standard deviations, and Chronbach's alpha for all variables. For manipulations, make it clear what each participant was exposed to.

Results: Detail the statistical tests performed and how they test your hypothesis. Provide the inferential statistics for your analyses and indicate whether they supported your hypotheses. Remember to keep the narrative flowing.

General Discussion: Reiterate your research question and hypothesis. Describe how the results do or do not support your hypotheses. Then, have a section on the implications of your findings. How does your results impact the literature? Are their any applied implications? Describe the limitations and future directions to your study. Include a nice punchy conclusion.

References: Include references for everything you cite in your paper. The number of references you have will depend on your topic. Anywhere from 1-5 pages of references may be appropriate. You may seek outside articles, but read what you cite. Use APA (7th edition) style throughout.

Due Date and Grading Guidelines

You must submit your IRB proposal by 5pm on March 18th to ensure that you are approved in time for the end of the semester.

Papers are due on May 13th by 5PM. Upload them to Blackboard.

Papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
1. You have designed a decent theory-based study that would make a contribution to either the religion and spirituality literature or some other literature by introducing a religion and spirituality framework or approach.
2. Your review of the relevant literature is accurate, thorough, concise, and focused.

3. It is clear how the different theoretical components fit together.
4. Your logic is clear throughout the paper.
5. Your methods allow a test of your research question.
6. Mapping between conceptual and operational variables is clear and appropriate.
7. Method is well thought out and careful attention was paid to internal and external validity.
8. Analyses are done correctly
    a. YOU WILL NOT BE EVALUATED BASED ON YOUR RESULTS
9. The implications, future directions, and conclusions are clear and concise.
10. All required elements are present.

Style Guidelines

- Follow the submission guidelines of *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.
- Write as if you are writing for an academic outlet, not as if you are writing a paper for a class. Do not explicitly refer to assignment guidelines or introduce personal commentary.
- Imagine your target audience as an educated person, familiar with psychology, but not with any of the specific theories or concepts you mention. When you introduce something new (i.e., a theory, concept, methodology, measure), explain it in general terms.
- Keep your paper focused. If you read an article, but it isn't relevant to your final idea, don't include it. Longer is not better. If several different lines of research are relevant, decide on a logical order and use transitions between ideas.
- If you find you don't have room to explain things in sufficient detail, your topic might be too broad. You may not go beyond the word limit (2,500 to 5,000 words).
- Limit use of jargon and acronyms. Overusing jargon when plain language can easily be substituted can hurt the clarity of your paper. Similarly, if you use too many acronyms, readers will forget what they stand for and understanding will likely be compromised.
- Limit use of direct quotes. These can interfere with the flow of the paper by introducing a different writing style or phrasing that is not consistent with the rest of the paragraph. I recommend using quotations only in the following cases:
  o You want to introduce the reader to your topic by opening with a famous or clever quote
  o The precise wording of a definition or argument is important because you are going to take issue with the specifics.
- Revisions are essential to good writing. Once you have a complete draft, go back and fine-tune your logic and ideas. Cut, add, and reorganize where necessary. Look for missing gaps in your logic and descriptions by adopting the perspective of an outside reader. Keep an eye out for repetition. Sometimes it helps to come back to your paper after a few days to get a fresh perspective. Even if you are describing something very complicated, there is always a way to make it clear. It is your responsibility as a writer to make things understandable to your audience.
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Tips on Literature Searches

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- Finding the right terms – try synonyms and variations of terms; read relevant papers and see what language they use
- Once you have a relevant article, determine what the authors cite in the introduction section and find those papers (be sure to read them!)
- See who has cited an earlier work (click on "Times cited in this database")
- Some of Religion and Spirituality's major empirical journals are:
  - *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*
  - *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*
  - *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*
  - *Religion, Brain & Behavior*
  - *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
  - *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*
  - *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*
  - *Social Psychological and Personality Science*
  - *Journal of Personality*
  - *European Journal of Personality*
  - *Journal of Research in Personality*
- Some of our major review/theoretical journals are:
  - *Personality and Social Psychology Review*
  - *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*
  - *Current Directions in Psychological Science*
- You will also find social psychologists publishing in multidisciplinary psychology journals. Some major journals are:
  - *Psychological Bulletin*
  - *Psychological Review*
  - *Psychological Science*
  - *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*

Overview

Throughout the semester you will identify a major area of research in the science of religion, spirituality, and belief, and synthesize a general review of the literature. To get ideas for you review, think of unanswered questions in the literature, conflicting findings, limiting conditions, competing hypotheses, or new areas of application. Lay the groundwork by reviewing the relevant research and present your idea. Make sure that you always back up your claims with relevant theory and research. In addition, try to clearly emphasize what is gained by your review. Are researchers missing a critical perspective that you can provide?

Instructions

1. Identify an area of research that you are interested in, that you think could use a thorough theoretical treatment. Here are some examples:
   a. Are atheists at a detriment from having low meaning in life? Or do they not care about it?
   b. What is the state of cross-cultural research in religion and spirituality?
   c. What is the connection between religious beliefs, supernatural beliefs, and conspiratorial beliefs?
   d. This research on religiosity and free-will belief is getting it wrong!
2. Read a bunch of abstracts and get a sense of your area of interest.
   a. See [instructor] if you have concerns, need help, or would like to discuss your project.
3. Send your general idea to [instructor] for approval. Literally, one or two incomplete sentences is fine.
4. Submit a 500 word proposal to [instructor].
5. With approval, write your paper.

[INSTRUCTOR] IS HERE FOR YOU AT EVERY STEP!

Format

Sections should include: Title page, abstract, review, implications, future directions, conclusions, references, and a figure or table. Papers must be written in APA (7th edition) format and should be 2,500 to 5,000 words (not including title, abstract, references, figure or table) in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-pt font, with 1-inch margins.

Title page: Title, name, running head

Abstract: In 150 words or less, summarize your review.

Introduction: The heading for the introduction section should be the title of your paper. You may use subheadings within the introduction to help organize things, but you will still need to include narrative transitions. Start by introducing the topic in a compelling way. Using previous research (including papers covered in class), build a case for your review. Describe what is

already known, what is lacking, and how your review will contribute to the literature. End with a lead-in to the structure of your review.

Review: Expound upon the major points you are trying to make. Support your claims with concise but detailed examples of research on each point. Critically evaluate the research, in the context of your points, and make conclusions about it.

Implications: Detail the ways that your review will impact the literature. Based on your critical analyses, how will the literature be changed? What should researchers keep in mind as they move forward?

Future Directions: What are the next steps in this area of research? If your review leads to the development of new hypotheses, how should they be tested?

Include a nice punchy conclusion.

References: Include references for everything you cite in your paper. The number of references you have will depend on your topic. Anywhere from 1-5 pages of references may be appropriate. You may seek outside articles, but read what you cite. Use APA (7th edition) style throughout.

Due Date and Grading Guidelines

You must submit your 500 word proposal by 5pm on March 18th to [instructor], to ensure that you are on the right track. Email is fine.

Papers are due on May 13th by 5PM. Upload them to Blackboard.

Papers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
1. You have identified an important area of research that is in need of review and commentary, that will have an impact on the religion and spirituality literature or some other literature by introducing a religion and spirituality framework.
2. Your review of the relevant literature is accurate, thorough, concise, and focused.
3. It is clear how the different theoretical components fit together.
4. Your logic is clear throughout the paper.
5. The implications, future directions, and conclusions are clear and concise.
6. All required elements are present.

Style Guidelines

- Follow the submission guidelines of *Current Directions in Psychological Science* (of course, you must exceed the 2,500 word limit)
- Write as if you are writing for an academic outlet, not as if you are writing a paper for a class. Do not explicitly refer to assignment guidelines or introduce personal commentary.
- Imagine your target audience as an educated person, familiar with psychology, but not with any of the specific theories or concepts you mention. When you introduce something new (i.e., a theory, concept, methodology, measure), explain it in general terms.

- Keep your paper focused. If you read an article, but it isn't relevant to your final idea, don't include it. Longer is not better. If several different lines of research are relevant, decide on a logical order and use transitions between ideas.
- If you find you don't have room to explain things in sufficient detail, your topic might be too broad. You may not go beyond the word limit (2,500 to 5,000 words).
- Limit use of jargon and acronyms. Overusing jargon when plain language can easily be substituted can hurt the clarity of your paper. Similarly, if you use too many acronyms, readers will forget what they stand for and understanding will likely be compromised.
- Limit use of direct quotes. These can interfere with the flow of the paper by introducing a different writing style or phrasing that is not consistent with the rest of the paragraph. I recommend using quotations only in the following cases:
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