

## **PSY321: Psychology of Religion Spring Semester**

Class Time: Tues 2:00 - 4:40

Instructor: Miron Zuckerman

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### General Information

The course is a seminar and, therefore, a collaborative process. You are expected to prepare for each class by doing the reading and formulating discussion questions/comments/suggestions in advance of class, and to attend each class prepared to discuss the assigned articles. No lecture will be given although I will contribute my own comments and questions to the discussion. Class participation will count toward 50% of the grade.

To help facilitate your preparation for the discussion, you need to post comments, suggestions, or questions, each week on the Discussion Forum in Blackboard. You must submit these postings by 6 pm on Mon before that week's class. Failure to post comments on more than a single week will cause you to move down one grade (e.g., from A to A-) for each weekly miss.

There are no exams. You are required to submit a final paper before the start of the exam period. The paper can be a literature review, a suggestion for a revision of one of the models that were discussed in class, an integration of several models, a critique of an approach or a model, a suggestion for a new study, etc. In short, the paper can be on just about any topic related to psychology of religion, as long as it is interesting. If unsure about a topic that you are considering, please consult with me. The length of the paper is between 10 and 20 pages, although these numbers are flexible. The paper will count toward 50% of your grade.

Information on participation in psychological research is provided after the reading list. The department's rule is that earning the maximum of eight (8) hours of extra credit is guaranteed to move a student from one passing grade to the next highest grade (e.g., B+ to A-)

## Reading list

### 1. Cognitive antecedents of religiosity

- Bloom, P (2007). Religion is natural. *Developmental Science*, 10, 147-151.
- Kelemen, D. (2009). The human function compunction: Teleological explanation in adults. *Cognition*, 111, 138-143.
- Norenzayan, A., Gervais, W. M., & Trzesniewski, K. H. (2012). Mentalizing deficits constrain belief in a personal god. *PLoS ONE*, 7(5), e36880.
- Crichter & Lee (2018). Feeling is believing... *Psychological Science*, 29, 723-737
- Willard, A. K., Cingl, L. & Norenzayan, A. (2019). Cognitive Biases and Religious Belief: A path model replication in the Czech Republic and Slovakia with a focus on anthropomorphism. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.

### 2. Analytic vs intuitive thinking, intelligence, and religiosity

- Pennycook et al. (2016). Atheists and agnostics are more reflective than religious believers: four empirical studies and a meta-analysis ... *Plos ONE*, 11.
- Stagnaro et al. (2019). Cross-cultural support for a link between analytic thinking *Judgement and Decision Making*, 14, 179-186.
- Zuckerman et al. (2020). The negative intelligence-religiosity relation: New and confirming evidence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*.46, 856-868
- Dutton, E., & Van del Linden, E. (2017). Why is intelligence negatively associated with religiosity? *Evolutionary Psychological Science*, 3, 392-403.

### 3. A functional approach to religion and its implications

- Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2004). Sacred and Secular: Religion and politics worldwide. Cambridge University Press. (Read 1-33)
- Laurin et al. (2014). Relationship with God? Connecting with the divine to assuage fear of interpersonal rejection. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*. 5. 777-785
- Zuckerman et al. (2018). Religion as an exchange system: The interchangeability of God and government in a provider role. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 44, 1201-1213.
- Sedikides, C., & Gebauer, J. E. (2010). Religiosity as self-enhancement: A meta-analysis of the relation between socially desirable responding and religiosity. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14, 17-36.

### 4. Religion and Morality

- Shariff, A. F. (2015). Does religion increase moral behavior? *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 108-113.
- Baumard and Boyer (2013). Explaining moral religion. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 17, 272-280.
- Boyer, P., & Baumard, N. (2016) The diversity of religious systems across history: An evolutionary cognitive approach. In T.K. Shackelford & J. R. Liddle (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of evolutionary psychology and religion*. Published online. Read pp. 1-14 (until Why religions never completely eliminate local cults).
- White et al. (2019). Supernatural norm enforcement: Thinking about Karma and God reduces selfishness among believers. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.

Purzycki et al. (2016). Moralistic gods, supernatural punishment, and the expansion of human sociality. *Nature*, 530, 327-330.

### **5. Theodiversity and the impersonal God in Judaism and spirituality**

Cohen, A. B., Hall, D. E., Koenig, H. G., & Meador, K. G. (2005). Social versus individual motivation: implications for normative definitions of religious orientation. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 9(1), 48–61.

Rynhold, D. (2011). Yeshayahu Leibowitz. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011). Retrieved from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/leibowitz-yeshayahu/>  
Read sections 2, 3, and 4 (p. 3-11)

Willard, A. K., & Norenzayan, A. (2017). “Spiritual but not religious”: Cognition, schizotypy, and conversion in understanding alternative beliefs. *Cognition*, 165, 137-146.

Calouri et al. (2020). Conflict changes how people view God. *Psychological Science*. 31. 280-292.

### **6. Atheists are stereotyped as immoral**

Gervais, W. M. (2014a). Everything is permitted? People intuitively judge immorality as representative of atheists. *PLoS ONE*, 9(4), e92302.

Norenzayan, A., & Gervais, W. M. (2015). Secular rule of law erodes believers’ political intolerance of atheists. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 5(1), 3–14.

Cook, C. L., Cottrell, C. A., & Webster, G. D. (2015). No good without God: Antiatheist prejudice as a function of threats to morals and values. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 7(3), 217–226.

Gervais et al. (2017). Global evidence of extreme intuitive moral prejudice against atheists. *Nature Human Behavior*. Read pp. 1-1 until Analytic strategy.

Brown-Lanuzzi, J. L., McKee, S., & Gervais, W. M. (2018). Atheist horns and religious halos: mental representations of atheists and theists. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 147, 292-297

### **7. Religion and the Group: Prejudice and trust**

Graham, J., & Haidt, J. (2010). Beyond beliefs: religions bind individuals into moral communities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14, 140–150.

Hall et al. (2010). Why don’t we practice what we preach? A meta-analytic review of religious racism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14, 84-94.

Neuberg et al. (2014). Religion and intergroup conflict: Findings from the Global Group Relations Project. *Psychological Science*, 25, 198-206.

Roberts et al. (2020). God as a white man: A psychological barrier to conceptualizing black people and women as leadership worthy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

### **8. Health benefits**

Zimmer et al. (2019). Religiosity and health: A global comparative study. *SSM-Population Health*, 1-9.

Leman et al. (2018). Secure attachment to God uniquely linked to psychological health in a national, random sample of American adults. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 28, 162-173.

Stavrova et al. (2013). Why are religious people happy? The effect of the social norm of

religiosity across countries. *Social Science Research*, 42, 90-105.

Ebert et al. (2020). Religious people only live longer in religious cultural contexts: A gravestone analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

### **9. Thinking of God: Goals, taking risks, income benefit**

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(1), 4–21.

Chan et al. (2014). Taking a leap of faith: Reminders of God lead to greater risk taking. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 5, 901-909.

Khenfer et al. (2017). When God's (not) needed: Spotlight on how belief in divine control influences goal commitment. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 70, 117-123.

Gebauer et al. (2012). The psychological benefits of income are contingent on individual-level and cultural-level religiosity. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 4, 569-578

### **10. Some distinctions (e.g., sex, dogmatism, alcohol, gender) between atheists and believers**

Uzarevic, F., Saroglou, V., & Clobert, M. (2017). Are atheists undogmatic? *Personality and Individual Differences*, 116, 164-170.

Stauner et al. (2019). Religious and spiritual struggles, religiousness, and alcohol problems among undergraduates. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, 47, 243-258.

Haggard, M. C., Kaelen, R., Saroglou, V., Klein, O., & Rowatt, W. C. (2019). Religion's role in the illusion of gender equality: Supraliminal and subliminal religious priming increases benevolent sexism. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 11, 392-398.

Blogowska, J., Lambert, C., & Saroglou, V. (2013). Religious Prosociality and Aggression: It's Real. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 52(3), 524–536.

### **11. Religious struggle**

Exline, J. J., Pargament, K. I., Grubbs, J. B., & Yali, A. M. (2014). The religious and spiritual struggles scale: Development and initial validation. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 6(3), 208–222.

Harris et al. (2012). Religious distress and coping with stressful life events: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 68, 1276-1286

Lucette et al. (2016). Spirituality and religiousness are associated with fewer depressive symptoms in individuals with medical conditions. *Psychosomatics*, 57, 505-513.

Wilt et al. (2017). Religious and spiritual struggles, past and present: Relations to the big-five and well-being. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 27, 51-64.

### **12. Religion and Science**

Farias, M., Newheiser, A. K., Kahane, G., & de Toledo, Z. (2013). Scientific faith: Belief in science increases in the face of stress and existential anxiety. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49, 1210-1213.

Rios et al. (2015). Negative stereotypes cause Christians to underperform in and disidentify with science. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 6, 959-967.

Ecklund et al. (2016). Religion among scientists in international context: A new study of scientists in eight regions. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, 2, 1-9.

- McPhetres et al. (2020). Religious Americans have less positive attitudes toward science, but this does not extend to other cultures. *Social Psychology and Personality Science*.
- Rutjens et al. (2013). Step by step: Finding compensatory order in science. *Current directions in Psychological Science*, 22, 250-255.

### **13. Religion and Sexuality**

- Rigo, C., Uzarevic, F., & Saroglou, V. (2016). Make love and lose your religion and virtue: Recalling sexual experience undermines spiritual intentions and moral behavior. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 55, 23-39.
- Rigo, C., & Saroglou, V. (2018). Religiosity and sexual behavior: Tense relationships and underlying affects and cognitions in samples of Christian and Muslim tradition. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion*, 40, 176-201.
- Hone et al. (2020). The sex premium in religiously motivated moral judgment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

### **14. Culture and religion**

- Joshanloo, M., & Gebauer, J.E. (2020). Religiosity's nomological network and temporal change: Introducing an extensive country-level religiosity index based on Gallup Poll data. *European Psychologist*, 25, 26-40.
- Joshanloo, M., (2019). Cultural religiosity as the moderator of the relationship between affective experience and life satisfaction: A study in 147 countries. *Emotion*, 19, 629-636
- Stavroava, O., & Siegers, P. (2014). Religious prosociality and morality across cultures: How social enforcement of religion shapes the effects of personal religiosity on prosocial and moral attitudes and behaviors. *Personality and social Psychology Bulletin*, 40, 315-333
- Hall et al. (2015). Costly signaling increases trust, even across religious affiliation. *Psychological Science*, 26, 1368-1376.