

Course Outline for: PSYC 2400 Psychology of Religion and Spirituality**A. Course Description:**

1. Number of credits: 3
2. Lecture hours per week: 3
3. Prerequisites: PSYC 1110
4. Corequisites: None
5. MnTC Goals: Goal #5 - History and the Social and Behavioral Sciences
Goal #7A - Human Diversity, Race, Power, and Justice in the United States

Religion and spirituality can be powerful sources of personal struggle, resilience, prejudice, and compassion. In the United States, more people are identifying as spiritual rather than religious, raising questions about what drives these beliefs and practices. We'll examine relevant psychological research from multiple perspectives (e.g., social, cultural, biological, psychological, developmental) to better understand why individuals and groups differ in religious and spiritual behavior. By exploring cases, sites, and personal encounters with the Sacred, students gain insight into the rich varieties of religious and spiritual experience within the United States and across the world.

B. Date last reviewed/updated: February 2025**C. Outline of Major Content Areas:**

1. Ways of knowing and research methods in Psychology
2. Similarities and differences between "religion" and "spirituality"
3. Psychosocial differences across religious traditions (e.g., Buddhism, Christianity, Islam)
4. Individual differences in personal religiousness (i.e., Extrinsic, Intrinsic, Quest, Fundamentalism)
5. Social and cultural explanations of personal religiousness and/or spirituality
6. Biological explanations of personal religiousness and/or spirituality
7. Psychological and developmental explanations of personal religiousness and/or spirituality
8. Evolving identities of religious and/or spiritual groups in the United States (e.g., the religiously unaffiliated)
9. Stereotyping, prejudice, and violence perpetrated by, and directed toward, religious and non-religious groups
10. Religion, health, and well-being
11. Awe
12. Prayer and mindfulness

D. Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Critically evaluate religious and spiritual behavior, using psychological science. (Goal 2a, 2c, 5a, 5c)
2. Explain the evolution of religious and spiritual group identities (e.g., Christian, Muslim, non-religiously identified) in United States' history and culture, using psychological science. (Goal 2b, 5a, 5c, 7Aa)
3. Discuss experiences and behaviors of those who come from religious and spiritual backgrounds that benefit American society, using psychological science, and giving particular attention to groups who have suffered discrimination and exclusion. (Goal 5a, 7Ad)
4. Explain contemporary social issues related to religion and spirituality, using psychological science. (Goal 2a, 2b, 5d)
5. Demonstrate communication skills needed to respectfully participate in a society with tremendous religious and spiritual diversity. (Goal 7Ae)
6. Analyze their own religious and spiritual beliefs and behaviors as they relate to diversity, prejudice, hatred, and racism. (Goal 2a, 2d, 7Ac)

E. Methods for Assessing Student Learning:

Methods for assessment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Exams
2. Application projects
3. Discussions
4. Projects requiring students to observe and reflect on religious and/or spiritual events different from what they would normally attend
5. Reflective writing assignments.

F. Special Information:

None