<table>
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<tr>
<th>COURSE CODE:</th>
<th>HUM 2101</th>
<th>COURSE TITLE:</th>
<th>Psychology of Spiritual Experience</th>
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<td>CREDITS:</td>
<td>3cr.</td>
<td>sessions</td>
<td>Winter 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROFESSOR(S):</td>
<td>Ramón Martínez de Pisón</td>
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**DESCRIPTION**

This course presents the interconnectedness between psychology and spirituality, the principal trends in the psychology of spiritual experience, with a special focus on psychodynamic, humanist and existential theories, and on the difference between healthy and unhealthy spirituality, that is, between spirituality and psychopathologies.

**OBJECTIVES**

1) To discover the interconnectedness between psychology and spirituality.
2) To examine the varieties of spiritual experience and their psychological interpretations, i.e., within a psychodynamic, humanist and existential theoretical framework.
3) To realize how psychology can help discern between healthy and pathological spiritualities, that is, between spiritual empowerment and fundamentalist, intolerant, violent spiritual attitudes.

**WORKLOAD**

1) Mandatory readings and participation in class. Students shall provide to the Professor a brief reading report for each session of the course consisting of a one-page personal summary for each reading.
2) Research Paper. A paper 10 pages in length to be based on one of the objectives of the course. To be submitted to the Professor by Tuesday, March 5, 2013. The student who thinks he or she is unable to meet this deadline must obtain a delay from Ms. Chantal Gagné (Academic Assistant, Faculty of Human Sciences, Office 161 C) prior to the date set for the submission. **Otherwise, no paper submitted after the deadline will be accepted.**
3) Final exam (written).

**ASSESSMENT**

1) Mandatory readings and participation in class: 25%. This dimension of the course will be assessed by the Professor with each student (self-assessment)
2) Research paper: 50%
3) Final exam (written): 25%

**MANDATORY READINGS**

A course pack will be available at the Bookstore

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Identified in the Syllabus
HUM 2101 - Psychology of Spiritual Experience

Prof. Ramón Martínez de Pisón, Ph.D.(Th.), Psy.D.

Description:

This course presents the interconnectedness between psychology and spirituality, the principal trends in the psychology of spiritual experience, with a special focus on psychodynamic, humanist and existential theories, and on the difference between healthy and unhealthy spirituality, that is, between spirituality and psychiatric problems.

Hermeneutical Presuppositions:

Both psychology and spiritual (religious) experience look upon the person as a whole, that is, in a holistic way. In this regard, human experience is the nexus where spirituality and psychology meet. However, both of them collaborate in fostering the well-being of the person without losing their own boundaries, namely, their own particularities. Psychology looks more in particular to the human dimension (without discarding the spiritual one) while spirituality takes more into consideration the transcendent dimension (without losing sight of the human one).

Human experience is personal, that is, an intransferable dimension of each one of us: each person lives his or her own life in a particular way. This particularity is also the case for the “human experience of the Divine.” Each one relates to God in a personal way. Thus, spiritual experiences constitute a variety of expressions. In the same vein, there is not only “one” psychological interpretation of these religious experiences, but a variety of them, i.e., from psychodynamic, humanistic, and existential perspectives.

Finally, psychology helps make the difference between what we could call a “pathological” spirituality, that is, one that destroys freedom, autonomy, responsibility, basically empowerment, and one that gives rise to a spirituality enriching us personally and socially in our growth and development, in a word, a spirituality that empowers the person.

Objectives:

4) To discover the interconnectedness between spirituality and psychology.
5) To examine the varieties of spiritual experience and their psychological interpretations, i.e., within a psychodynamic, humanistic, and existential theoretical perspectives.
6) To realize how psychology can help discern between healthy and pathological spiritualities, that is, between spiritual empowerment and fundamentalist, intolerant, violent spiritual attitudes.

Format of the Course:

1) Each session will begin
a) with a presentation of the Professor regarding the themes (objectives) of the course according the Syllabus;
b) followed by a round table discussion of all the participants in the course. This discussion will be based on the Professor’s presentation, on the mandatory readings and on the experience of the students.

2) Finally, toward the end of the course, each student will be invited to make a presentation of the research papers that were prepared.

Workload and Evaluation:

1) Mandatory readings and participation in class: 25%. To enrich classroom sharing, mandatory readings will be indicated for each chapter. Students shall provide to the Professor a brief reading report for each session of the course consisting of a one-page personal summary for each reading. This session of the course will be assessed by the Professor with each student (self-assessment).

2) Research Paper: 50%. A paper 10 pages in length to be based on one of the objectives of the course. This is to be a research project flowing from a bibliography prepared by the student. To be submitted to the Professor by Tuesday, March 5, 2013. The student who thinks he or she is unable to meet this deadline must obtain a delay from Ms. Chantal Gagné (Academic Assistant, Faculty of Human Sciences, Office 161 C) prior to the date set for the submission. **Otherwise, no paper submitted after the deadline will be accepted.**

3) Final exam (written): 25%.

Guidelines for the Paper:

**First Page**
Student Name, Title of the Paper, Course Code and Professor’s name.

**Second Page**
Table of Contents

**Third Page and On**
Body of the Paper

**Last Page(s)**
References

The content of the paper has to be original, that is, it is not allowed to submit the same paper to more than one professor. In addition, plagiarism is absolutely forbidden!

Administrative Information:

1) Students may not be absent from more than 20% of the classes.
2) Persons with special needs are asked to get in touch at the beginning of the session with Mrs Chantal Gagné.
3) Finally, only those students who have previously submitted all mandatory written work can take the final exam.

Syllabus of the Course:
Introduction

Part I. The Interconnectedness between Spirituality and Psychology

Chapter 1. Human Experience as the Link between Psychology and Spirituality

1. Holistic Conception of the Person
2. Being of Alterity
3. Being in Search of Meaning and Finality
4. An Experience Rooted in Nature and Culture

Questions for class discussion:

a) Do you believe that Western society, with its insistence on individual performance and competition, promotes a holistic conception of the person?
b) Do you think that today’s people ask themselves questions regarding the meaning and finality of life?
c) Can we speak of human experience in a generalized way, that is, without taking into account nature and cultural differences?

Mandatory readings:


Selected bibliography:

Chapter 2. Conversion: Where Spirituality and Personality (Psychology) Collide

1. The Volitional Type of Personality
2. The Self-Surrender Type of Personality
3. Relationship between the Two Types of Personality

Questions for class discussion:

a) Do you believe that psychology can escape (ignore) spirituality (religion) and vice versa?
b) In what sense does conversion fulfill a person’s life?

Mandatory readings:


Selected bibliography:


Part II. The Varieties of Spiritual (Religious) Experience and their Psychological Interpretations

Chapter 3. The Psychology of Religion according to William James

1. An Introduction to his Thought
2. The Religion of Healthy-Mindedness and the Sick Soul
3. Religious Experience: From a Divided to an Unified Self

Questions for class discussion:

a) Do you believe that mystical experiences are reserved to a few, and privileged, believers?
b) Do you agree with the affirmation that spirituality, religion, and faith empower the person?

Mandatory readings:


Selected bibliography:


Chapter 4. Psychodynamic, Humanistic, and Existential Approaches to Spirituality

1. The Psychodynamic Approach
2. The Humanistic and Existential Approaches
3. The Importance of an Interdisciplinary Understanding of the Approaches

Questions for class discussion:
a) For Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the meaning of life consists in “the will to pleasure,” and for Alfred Adler (1870–1937) on “the will to power.” What do you think of their positions?
b) Do you agree with Victor E. Frankl (1905–1997)’s idea that “meaning is an objective reality”?
c) In what sense is an interdisciplinary approach a sine qua non condition for studying the psychology of spiritual experience?

Mandatory readings:


Selected bibliography:


Part III. Healthy and Pathological Spiritualities

Chapitre 5. The Verification of Spiritual (Religious) Experience by Psychology

1. The Danger of Religious Fundamentalism
2. A Pathological Spirituality (Religion)
3. A Spirituality Grounded in the Fullness of Life

Questions for class discussion:
a) Do you think that it is easy to verify the healthiness and/or unhealthiness of spiritual (religious) experiences from a psychological perspective?
b) What are the criteria that you would use in this process?
c) Why is religious tolerance an essential condition for living in peace?

*Mandatory readings:*


*Selected bibliography:*


Khader, J. (2007). Opportunities and threats for religions in conflict and violence: How (not) to use the name of God. In J. Haers, N. Hintersteiner, & G. De Schrijver (Eds.), *Postcolonial Europe in the crucible of cultures: Reckoning with God in a world of conflicts* (pp. 141-161). Amsterdam, Netherlands/New York: Rodopi.


**Chapter 6. Empowered by Healing**

1. Memory and Truth
2. To Forgive Oneself for Forgiving Others
3. From Victimizing Oneself to Healing
4. Practical Consequences for Clinicians and Pastoral Agents
Questions for class discussion:

1) In some Nazi concentration camps in Europe (1939–1945), after the liberation it was written: “Forgive but do not forget.” Do you agree with this expression?
2) How do you think that children should be educated to forgive?
3) According to you, what are some advantages of victimizing oneself?
4) Do you agree with the fact that healing is also a spiritual experience?

Mandatory readings:


Selected bibliography:


Conclusion

Bibliography (® = Books placed at the reservation section of the Library)


