## Psychology 341K: Psychology and Religion (43795)

Spring 2011, MWF 2-3, Seay 2.108

**Instructor:** Dr. Wendy Domjan, Seay 3.234 (475-8495) and WCH 4.104 (471-1442)

Office hours: in WCH 4.104: MWF 8:30-9:45 and T 11:30-1; in SEA 3.234: MF 3-3:50, or by appointment E-mail: wdomjan@gmail.com.

#### **Texts:**

Psychology, Religion and Spirituality by Fontana

Why We Believe What We Believe by Newberg & Waldman

*Terror in the Name of God* by Stern

#### **Other Resources:**

UT students can use the library at the Presbyterian Seminary, 100 East 27<sup>th</sup> Street (this is on the other side of 27<sup>th</sup> from the student services building); they have many journals that are useful in this class that the UT library system doesn't carry.

GREAT WebSite: <a href="http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/index.htm">http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/index.htm</a>

#### **Course Prerequisites:**

The Psychology Department will drop all students who do not meet the following prerequisites:

- (a) PSY 301 with a C or better
- (b) PSY 418 (or an equivalent listed in the course schedule) with a C or better
- (c) Upper-Division standing (60 hours completed)

Please note: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

<u>Course Orientation:</u> This course is designed to examine the interaction between psychology and religion from a dual perspective. One focus will explore how psychology can illuminate our understanding of religion. A second focus will consider the ways in which religion influences psychological functioning, by impacting upon beliefs, behaviors and both mental and physical health. Psychology approaches the study of religion from an empirical, not a philosophical or theological, perspective. Please note that the course will investigate global aspects of religion, such as the development and influence of faith; it is not intended to analyze, contrast, or evaluate specific religious beliefs. The bulk of theory and research in this area concerns the three major monotheistic religions, thus these religions will provide the class context.

<u>Course Requirements:</u> A major portion of this class involves discussion; students are expected to actively participate in class discussions.

There are two options for the written requirements for this class. The basic option is to write a series of four short (about 4-5 pages) essays on topics relating to the material being covered in class. I will post a set of potential questions two weeks before each essay is due; each student will respond to one of these questions. It is always possible, and even preferable, for a student to write on an alternative question of particular interest. These are thought pieces, not research papers. If you have a special interest in some topic, a second option is to do a long (about 15-20 pages) *research* paper.

### **E-mail Submission of Papers:**

Topics for the short papers will be distributed two weeks before the papers are due. Papers must be turned in by email as WORD files, by midnight on the due dates. For the long papers, the drafts will be due on April 16<sup>th</sup>; the final papers will be due on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Grades:**

Short Essays: 72% (18% each) or Research paper: 72% (draft 22%, final version 50%)

Discussion Essays 15% (5% each)

Participation (which requires attendance): 13%

Final course grades will be assigned on the following basis: A 92-100, A- 90-91, B+ 88-89, B 82-87, B- 80-81, C+ 78-79, C 72-77, C- 70-71, D+ 68-69, D 62-67, D- 60-61, F 0-59

# Course Outline

Date Reading **Topic** January 19 - February 2 Basic Issues Fontana 1, 2, 4 February 4 - 18 Development Fontana 6 Newberg & Waldman Part 2 February 21 - March 7 Adult Life Fontana 5 March 9 - 30 Religious Experience Fontana 3, 7, 8.10, 11 Newberg & Waldman Parts 1 & 3 April Conversion April 1 - 8 Coping Fontana 12 April 11 - 22 Mental Health Fontana 11 April 25 – May 6 Violence Stern

**Assignment** Due Date February 18<sup>th</sup> Short Paper 1 Short Paper 2 March 11<sup>th</sup> April 8<sup>th</sup> Short Paper 3 May 6<sup>th</sup> Short Paper 4 Or

April 22<sup>nd</sup> Draft Research Paper May 6<sup>th</sup> Final Research Paper