

**SANTA CLARA UNIVERSITY**  
**Psychology Department**  
**Spring 2023**

**PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY**  
**(PSYC 193)**

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**Instructor:** Thomas G. Plante, Ph.D., ABPP  
**Office:** Alumni Science 203  
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Zoom – 358-201-2190  
**Office Hours:** Typically before class or by appointment  
**Course Meeting Room:** Alumni Science 220  
**Course Meeting Times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm-3:40pm

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**Required Text:**

Sisemore, T. (2016). *The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality: From the Inside Out*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley. ISBN 978-1-119-23972-7

Additional readings may be provided during the class.

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**Course Evaluation:**

Midterm Quest 1: End of Week 3  
Midterm Quest 2: End of Week 6  
Midterm Quest 3: End of Week 9  
Final Quest: Tuesday of exam week  
Spiritual Formation Paper Project: Last day of class  
Class Participation, Behavior, Scholarly Enthusiasm, and Attendance: +/- can improve or decrease your course grade.

Pass everything, get an “A.” Fail any one of 4 assigned tasks and get a “B.” Fail two of the tasks and get a “C”.....Two low passes equal one fail.

Additionally, you are expected to take and attend class with integrity (at least 80% of the time unless you have an excused absence due to sports, sickness, and so forth). Only those who meet the attendance requirement will be eligible for an “A” in the class. Finally, late assignments can receive a pass – after the Camino window closes.

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**Course Description:**

*Psychology of religion and spirituality* involves the discipline and principles of psychology and human behavior in understanding religion and spirituality. Class topics include empirical research and theory on religious and spiritual behavior and transformation from the various religious, spiritual, and historical wisdom traditions. Contemplative practices and spiritual tools from the various religious/spiritual wisdom traditions for psychological and physical health will be highlighted. A spiritual formation project will help students experience a hands-on activity to examine their own spiritual formation and development. The class is inclusive in that no particular religious/spiritual tradition or any tradition affiliation is assumed or required. It also highlights evidence

based empirical approaches as well. Prerequisites include PSYC 1 or 2 and a RTC 1 class. The course fulfills the religious studies core (RTC 2) and vocations pathway requirements.

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<b><u>Course Goals:</u></b>	(1) To provide a basic and broad based overview of the field of the psychology of religion and spirituality.
	(2) To provide a practical and experiential understanding of the challenges involved in spiritual formation and transformation.
	(3) To provide the foundation for students taking additional courses and advanced training in psychology and religion.

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**Learning Assessment Plan** (LAP; from the University Core Curriculum)

1. Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).
2. Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.
3. Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.

**Sequence of Topics and Readings:**

Week 1 (Apr 4 & 6):	Intro to the Psych of Religion and Spirituality	(LAP 1, 2)	1 *
Week 2 (Apr 11 & 13):	Bio Found & Benefits of Relig/Spirit Practices	(LAP 1, 2)	2, 3
Week 3 (Apr 18 & 20):	Youth Religious & Spiritual Development	(LAP 1, 2)	4 & 5
Week 4 (Apr 25 & 27):	Adult Religious & Spiritual Development, Adult	(LAP 1, 2)	6 & 7
Week 5 (May 2 & 4):	Relig & Spiritual Transformation & Conversion	(LAP 1-3)	8
Week 6 (May 9 & 11):	Religious Experience & Morality	(LAP 1-3)	9 & 10
Week 7 (May 16 & 18):	Religion, Coping, Health, and Treatment	(LAP 1-3)	11,
Week 8 (May 23 & 25):	Religious Communities & Cultures	(LAP 1-3)	12 & 13
Week 9 (May 30 & Jun 1):	Tools for Spiritual Development	(LAP 3)	TBA
Week 10 (Jun 6 & 8):	Future Directions, Ethics, Career Issues	(LAP 1-3)	14

***Paper Due: Thursday, Dec 2.***

\* Please have readings completed during the first class session of each week (where 2 chapters are assigned expect the first chapter on Tues and the second on Thur).

***Final Learning Adventure Scheduled: Tuesday exam week.***

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### **Additional Items**

***Empirical approach.*** Although the topic of religion and spirituality can be very personal and based on highly personal and subjective institutional sets of beliefs and practices, the class will emphasize an empirical, evidence based and research approach to the topic that is endorsed and highlighted within the American Psychological Association and affiliated groups (e.g., Division 36, the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality). Thus, traditional research approaches will be highlighted.

***Spiritual formation project:*** The goal of the spiritual formation project is not to endorse any particular religious/spiritual organizations, beliefs, or practices and no assumptions about personal beliefs or practices will be made. The project seeks to help you evaluate and consider your own sense of spiritual formation, very broadly defined, that may or may not have anything to do with organized religious/spiritual traditions.

***The spiritual formation project*** should focus on a plan to assess and reflect upon your own spiritual engagement very broadly defined. Please note that you do not need to consider yourself religious or spiritual to participate in the project and class and that those maintaining an agnostic or atheistic perspective are perfectly fine. You should write your paper that outlines your spiritual formation project (written in APA style). You should integrate theory and research presented in class and in the readings with experiential application to your own life and experience. Research findings have practical application that you could highlight in your paper. How to design such a project in particular will be discussed in class. Grades for late papers will reflect a 10 point per day reduction. Papers won't be accepted after the final.

## What to Expect in your SCU Psychology Courses, 2022-2023

1. **Mutual Respect.** The faculty in the psychology department are committed to an environment of mutual respect. Please be courteous in your communications with us and your fellow students, get to class on time, do not pack up your belongings when class is still in session, and if possible, use the restroom before coming to class. It's our intent to show you similar levels of respect—it's a two-way street!
2. **Cell Phones and other Devices.** Please turn off or silence your cell phone during class. If you need to take an important call, e.g., you have a family member in surgery, please let your professor know at the start of class. Not all professors allow use of laptops in classes—please ask us!
3. **In Person Classes.** Almost all of our classes in psychology are scheduled as fully In Person classes. This means that there will be no way to participate via Zoom. If you have to miss a class, refer to your professor's policies for details on how to handle that.
4. **Responses to Email.** In the interest of valuing work-life balance, and respecting that your professors have both professional and personal responsibilities beyond your class, faculty may not reply to your emails during certain hours of the day. This depends on the course time and your professor, of course. Please ask us what our policies are!
5. **The Final Exam.** When a final exam is required in a course, you must take it on the day and time it is scheduled. The schedule is established by the University and we as professors do not control it. If you know in Week 1 that you will not be able to attend the final exam in a course, you should consider taking a different course or discussing your conflict with your professor.
6. **Late Policies, Extensions, and Incompletes.** Please check with your professor about their policies on late work and requests for extensions. For Incomplete grades, keep in mind that these are typically only given when you have missed a single major assignment due to circumstances beyond your control and do not have time to make it up before the course grading period ends.
7. **Absences due to Illness.** Please consult the [University policy](#) on what to do if you test positive for Covid. If you have to miss class due to illness or an emergency beyond your control, please consult with your individual professor for their policies on what to do.
8. **Extra Credit.** Extra credit will not be awarded to make up for missed assignments or to increase scores on completed assignments.

**Enjoy the Ride!** You are here to learn and grow as a whole person! We expect you to make mistakes and to struggle with learning from time to time. If you weren't doing that, you wouldn't grow very much over the course of your college experience. And remember that you are more than your grades.

## SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

### Required Policy Information for all Course Syllabi

All Santa Clara University syllabi must refer students to the following policies. Below are examples of statements that faculty may use.

#### **Academic Integrity**

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of—and commitment to—a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct + Code.

Academic integrity is part of your intellectual, ethical, and professional development. I expect you to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. I will clarify expectations on academic integrity as needed for assignments and exams. If you have questions about what is appropriate on any assignment, please let me know before you hand in work. For more resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, including the appropriate use, of course, sharing sites such as Chegg, see this site created by the SCU Library at <https://libguides.scu.edu/academic-integrity> or visit [www.scu.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity).

#### **Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)**

Santa Clara University is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment free of all forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence.

Please know that as a faculty member, California law SB 493 requires me to report any information brought to my attention about incidents of sexual harassment or misconduct to the SCU [Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office](#) (408) 551-3043. This includes, but is not limited to, disclosures in writing assignments, class discussions, and one-on-one conversations.

Should you need support, SCU has dedicated staff trained to assist you in navigating campus resources, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and filing a formal complaint with the University or with law enforcement. Please see the [Student Resources](#) page for more information about reporting options and resources.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment or sexual violence and wishes to speak to a **confidential** resource who is not required to report, please contact one of the following SCU resources for support:

- Bree Van Ness, [Assistant Director for Student Survivor Advocacy and Campus Support](#), SCU Wellness Center, 852 Market St, (408) 551-3307, [bvanness@scu.edu](mailto:bvanness@scu.edu)
- [SCU Wellness Center](#)
- [CAPS](#)
- Any individual (clergy, counselors) acting in a professional capacity for which confidentiality is mandated by law

I am happy to help connect you with any of these resources.

### **Accommodations for Pregnant and Parenting Students**

Santa Clara University does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy or related medical conditions. Absences due to medical conditions relating to pregnancy and childbirth will be excused for as long as deemed medically necessary by a student's doctor, and students will be given the opportunity to make up missed work. Students needing accommodations can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Students needing accommodations can also seek assistance with accommodations from the Office of Accessible Education (OAE) or from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX Office. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <https://www.scu.edu/title-ix/resources/pregnancy>.

### **Office of Accessible Education**

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact the Office of Accessible Education [oea@scu.edu](mailto:oea@scu.edu), <http://www.scu.edu/oea>) as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through OAE, please be sure to request your accommodations through your my OAE portal and discuss them with me during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. To ensure fairness and consistency, individual faculty members are required to receive verification from the Office of Accessible Education before providing accommodations. OAE will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assistive technology.

Students with approved accommodations of time and a half should talk with me as soon as possible. The Office of Accessible Education must be contacted in advance (at least two weeks' notice recommended) to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations.

In light of shifting health advisories related to COVID-19, exams may be administered online. Students with approved testing accommodations should contact me (at least two weeks' notice recommended) prior to the exam date to notify me of their intent to use their testing accommodations on the upcoming exam to ensure their accommodations are effectively implemented.

### **Safety Measures**

In order to meet our learning objectives, we will adhere to the highest standards for safety and mutual respect. I expect everyone to adhere to current university mask mandates at all times; to make their best attempt to make themselves heard when asking questions or contributing to discussions, and refrain from eating or drinking in class. It is expected that everyone will follow university guidelines about health and public safety measures outlined in this [email](#).

### **Use of Classroom Recordings**

All online class meetings will be recorded and made available on Camino. As is stated in the [Student Conduct Code](#): "...Dissemination or sharing of any classroom recording without the permission of the instructor would be considered "misuse" and, therefore, prohibited. Violations of these policies may result in disciplinary action by the University. At the instructor's discretion, violations may also have an adverse effect on the student's grade."

### **Copyright Statement**

Materials in this course are protected by the United States copyright laws. I am the copyright holder of the materials I create, including notes, handouts, slides, and videos. You may make copies of course materials for your own use and you may share the materials with other students enrolled in this course. You may not publicly distribute the course materials without my written permission.

### **Technology Support**

SCU can provide you with technical assistance, and you can also reach out to our providers directly for questions. For Camino (SCU's branded instance of Canvas) support, contact [caminosupport@scu.edu](mailto:caminosupport@scu.edu) or call 408-551-3572.

You can also use the help button within the Camino platform (on the left-hand navigation) for 24/7 support via chat or phone with our vendor.

For Zoom assistance, contact Media Services at [mediaservices@scu.edu](mailto:mediaservices@scu.edu) or 408-554-4520. You can also get support from the [Zoom Help Center](#) website.

For SCU network and computing support, contact the SCU Technology Help Desk at [techdesk@scu.edu](mailto:techdesk@scu.edu) or 408-554- 5700. They can provide support for MySCU Portal, Duo, eCampus, hardware and software issues, and more.

In addition to the required syllabus statements above, statements addressing diversity, equity and inclusion, and student wellness such as those below are strongly recommended.

### **Syllabus Statements on Diversity, Inclusion, Wellness**

Santa Clara University syllabi are encouraged to include information for students to promote a more inclusive classroom. Below are recommended examples of syllabi statements that faculty may use. For more on developing an inclusive syllabus and course, the design sees a campus resource on [Inclusive Teaching](#) and a toolkit from the [Association of College and University Educators \(ACUE\)](#).

### **Land Acknowledgment**

Santa Clara University occupies the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ohlone and Muwekma Ohlone people.

### **Respect for Diversity**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, and culture. Your

suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.

### **Gender Inclusive Language**

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you go by a name different from what is on the class roster, please let me know. Using correct gender pronouns is important to me, so I encourage you to share your pronouns with me and correct me if I make a mistake. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. For more on personal pronouns see [www.mypronouns.org](http://www.mypronouns.org)

### **Wellness Statement**

I know you will do the best you can in this class (and all of your classes); however, it should never be at the expense of your own mental health, physical health, and/or well-being. Jesuit education is grounded in *cura personalis*, concern for the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. What does this mean for you? Be kind to others, and more importantly, be kind to yourself. Attend to your sleep (quantity *and* quality); drink lots of water; move; get outside; and pay attention to beauty that isn't coming to you on a screen. Eat good food; laugh; enjoy friends and family; look for opportunities to connect with others in new ways; pray, meditate, or otherwise attend to your spirit. And ask for help, even if you don't think you need it. Lots of folks, including me, are here to support you. It's never too late to reach out, and I am committed to helping you.

SCU has many resources and programs to support you. These resources may be especially helpful:

**Wellness Center:** <https://www.scu.edu/wellness/>

The Wellness center provides resources to aid and promote student well-being across the eight dimensions of wellness, including student peer groups for healthful living, violence prevention, and recovery.

**CAPS:** <https://www.scu.edu/cowell/counseling-and-psychological-services-caps/>

Santa Clara students are provided confidential counseling sessions at no cost through Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). Students have access to clinically appropriate, short-term therapy; group therapy; and other resources for care. A new 24/7 support line is also available: **408-554-5220**.

**SCU Culture of Care:** <https://www.scu.edu/osl/culture-of-care/>

If you are concerned for the mental or physical welfare of one of your peers, the [Office of Student Life Culture of Care](#) website provides resources for recognizing and helping someone in distress.

### **Academic Concerns**

If you are concerned with your progress in this class, please contact me so that we can find solutions together. [Drahmann Center](#) can also offer support with issues regarding your academic progress more broadly.

SCU also has multiple options for free academic tutoring. Students can make appointments to discuss work in a range of courses:

- [Drahmann Tutoring](#) (Numerous courses in the College of Arts & Sciences including Natural Sciences, Modern Languages, Economics, and Computer Science)
- [The HUB Writing Center](#) (Writing and Public Speaking)
- [Mathematics Learning Center](#) (MATH 4, 6, 8, 11-14, 30-31, 35-36, 51, 53)