

LAH 350 (29150)/JS 364(39455) – Spring 2016
Professor Robert H. Abzug
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:30 HRC 2.214 and CLA 2.402
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-5

Psychology and Religion in Modern American Culture

American religious culture is not only exceptional for its vigor but also for an increasingly creative fostering of spiritual experimentation and pluralism. It has been especially unusual in the role that psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic ideas have played in modern American spiritual quests. This seminar explores the historical, religious, and psychotherapeutic manifestations of the “search for meaning” in modern American culture. We will begin in the 19th century with spiritualism and other alternative religious paths, and quickly move to the 20th century and the uneasy and sometimes hostile interactions between formal religion, psychotherapies, and everyday experiences of illumination and transcendence. Our explorations will take us through theology, psychological theory, literature, music, politics, and art. For their term reports, students may write on topics of their choice on any aspect of the intersection of psychology and religion.

Reading Assignments:

Most of the readings will be available on Canvas the week before they are due. The exceptions are the following books, which will be available at the COOP or in the usual places online. None of them are expensive and all are quite excellent:

Jessica Grogan, *Encountering America*
William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Abridged, Bedford Books ed.)
Carl Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*
Rollo May, *Man's Search for Himself*

Requirements:

1. Faithful attendance and completion of assignments, as reflected in class participation
2. Completion of Weekly Comments on Reading
3. Completion of Joint Presentations on Readings
4. Completion of Term Paper on Topic of Your Choice (in consultation with professor)

Grading: Grades based on quality of work and timely completion

Reaction Journal: 20%

In Class Participation and Presentations: 40%

Term Paper: 40%

Details of these assignments to be explained in class during first week, and descriptive sheets distributed.

Missed Classes

- For authorized university travel and other legitimate events that take you away from campus, a week's advance notice with documentation will allow you to make up the work of the week with an extra short paper.
- Sudden onset of illness will also be a legitimate excuse if documented with evidence from a doctor or the health center. Again, an extra short paper will allow you to make up the work of the week.
- Other absences will trigger reduction of credit for your final grade.

Class Meetings:

- January 19 What is Religion? (HRC 2.214)
January 21 What is Psychology? (HRC 2.214)
- January 26 The State of American Religion in the 19th Century (CLA 2.402)
January 28 The State of American Religion in the 19th Century (HRC 2.214)
- February 2 Phrenology, Mesmerism, Spiritualism (CLA 2.402)
February 4 Phrenology, Mesmerism, Spiritualism (HRC 2.214)
- February 9 Late Nineteenth Century America (CLA 2.402)
February 11 (HRC 2.214)
- February 16 Protestant Schism and the Rise of the University (CLA 2.402)
February 18 Protestant Schism and the Rise of the University (HRC 2.214)
- February 23 William James and Psychical Research (CLA 2.402)
February 25 William James and Varieties of Religious Experience (HRC 2.214)
- March 1 Jung and Freud (CLA 2.402)
March 3 Reactions of Religious Faiths to Jung and Freud (HRC 2.214)
- March 8 May and Existentialism (CLA 2.402)
March 10 May and Existentialism (HRC 2.214)
- March 15 Spring Break
March 17 Spring Break
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- March 22 Grogan, *Encountering America* (CLA 2.402)
March 24 Humanistic Psychology and Beyond (HRC 2.214)
- March 29 Required Office Hours in Garrison 3.310
March 31 Required Office Hours in Garrison 3.310
- April 5 Individual Reports (CLA 2.402)

April 7 (HRC 2.214) Individual Reports

April 12 (CLA 2.402) Individual Reports

April 14 (HRC 2.214) Individual Reports

April 19 (CLA 2.402) Individual Reports

April 21 (HRC 2.214) Individual Reports

April 26 (CLA 2.402) Individual Reports

April 28 (HRC 2.214) Individual Reports

May 3 (CLA 2.402) Summary and Questions about Papers

May 5 (CLA 2.402) Class Evaluations and Final Thoughts

- Please note that all graded work done inside or outside of class must be your own work. Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the university. For more information, visit <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>. We strictly abide by the UT Honor Code < <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>> on questions of scholastic dishonesty.
- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259 <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.
- Students seeking assistance with writing may wish to contact The Undergraduate Writing Center <http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts>.
- Medical assistance/ counseling services are available at <http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/>.
- If you miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.
- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>