

**School of Art History, Classics, Religious Studies**  
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**RELI 226: PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION CRN: 10402**  
**TRIMESTER 2 2011**  
**11 July to 12 November 2011**

**Trimester dates**

Teaching dates: 11 July to 14 October 2011  
Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2011  
Study week: 17-21 October 2011  
Examination/Assessment period: 21 October to 12 November 2011

**Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

**Names and contact details**

Course Coordinator: Dr. Joseph Bulbulia  
Office: Hunter 322  
Telephone: +64) 4-463-5043  
Course Tutors: Names and details are given on Blackboard under: `communications' → `contacts'.

**Class times and locations**

Lecture time: 13:10-15:00  
Lecture venue: Hunter HU LT 220  
Tutorial time/venue[s]: Times/venues vary, please sign up for tutorials at the Religious Studies office: hunter 318

**Additional information**

Religious Studies is in the Hunter Building. The Programme administrator, Aliko Kalliabetsos, is in HU 318 (ph: 463 5299 or [aliko.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:aliko.kalliabetsos@vuw.ac.nz)). We will communicate additional information by Blackboard and by student email.

**Office Hours**

The main Religious Studies office is open Monday - Friday, 9:30-12:00 noon and 2:30 - 3:30. You can arrange to meet with Joseph Bulbulia by appointment.

**Course delivery**

- This course is delivered by lectures and tutorials,
- Students are expected to attend all lectures and all tutorials.
- The course is assessed by five response papers of approximately 1,000 words each and a final research essay of approximately 3,500 words.

## Course Prescription

This course provides an introduction to the psychology of religion. Many people identify with religious groups or traditions and claim to have religious or spiritual experiences. This course explores how contemporary psychological research sheds new light on human religiosity. Topics include: the development of religion in children, the relationship between religion and morality, rituals, altered states of consciousness, and religion and identity. 100% internal assessment.

## Course content

### Lecture Schedule

1. **July 13** What do genes have to do with religion?
2. **July 20** What does culture have to do with religion?
3. **July 27** Why do we believe in the unseen?
4. **August 3** Why do gods have superpowers?
5. **August 10** How do children acquire their religion?
6. **August 17** How do we remember religious experience?

### Mid-trimester break August 22 - September 4

7. **September 7** How does the brain support religion?
8. **September 14** Why do we perform rituals?
9. **September 21** Why do we seek altered states of experience?.
11. **September 28** Does 'spirituality' differ from 'religion'?
12. **October 5** How does religion affect identity?
13. **October 12** Review.

**Required and recommend readings** can be found on Blackboard under 'Course Resources' → 'Course Readings'. There is no course reader for this course. All readings are posted on Blackboard as .pdf documents or as url links.

## Learning objectives

This course will help you:

- to interpret leading research in the psychology of religion;
- to better evaluate arguments based on quantitative data;
- to listen to the views of others and to respond effectively;
- to conduct research;
- to write more clearly, originally, and persuasively.

## Expected workload

This course is worth twenty points (20pts). One point typically equates to ten hours of work. For a twenty-point course, the 200 hours should be spread evenly over the 12-week trimester, break, study week, and exam period. While work styles will vary, the following is a rough-and-ready guide:

- Lectures and tutorials: three hours per week.
- Readings: four hours per week.
- Short writing assignments: five hours per assignment.
- Final research essay: forty hours.

## Readings

### Essential Recommended readings

All readings are given as PDFs under 'course resources' on Blackboard. There is no text for this course, though students are welcome to print any PDF for their personal use, at their own cost.

### Materials and equipment

Students are permitted to use personal computers in the classroom for note-taking purposes only.

### Assessment requirements

1. Five short response essays worth 50% of the final mark.
  - Due dates for your short essays are:
    - July 29, 2011
    - August 13, 2011
    - September 9, 2011
    - September 23, 2011
    - October 7, 2011.
  - Guidelines for these essays, along with templates, and examples of exemplary essays can be found under 'Courses Resources' on Blackboard. Please consult these documents before writing your short essays.
  - Each essay should be no more than 1000 words and no fewer than 800 words. Any essay that is less than 600 words and more than 1200 words will not be assessed.
  - Short essays must be submitted on Blackboard. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that his or her work has been submitted (when in doubt, ask your tutor to verify).
  - Each response essay will be worth 10% of your final mark. Response essay sum to a total of 50% of your final mark.
  - Your response essays should be 800-1,200 words.
2. Final research essay worth 50% of the final mark.
  - **The due date for your final research essay is October 28, 2011.**
  - Guidelines for these essays, along with templates, can be found under 'Courses Resources' on Blackboard. Please consult these documents before writing your final research essays.
  - Your final research essay must be submitted on Blackboard. It is each student's responsibility to ensure that his or her work has been submitted properly (when in doubt, ask your instructor to verify).
  - Your final research essay is worth 50% of your final mark.
  - Your final research essay should be 3,000-4,000 words.

### Marking Criteria

All work in this course is assessed in the following way:

- 33.33% for clarity/structure
- 33.33% for critical thinking/analysis
- 33.34% for creativity/originality

*Normally, an aegrotat pass will only be considered only if an applicant has completed at least 30% of the course assessment.*

**Penalties**

The penalties to be incurred for late submission of any assessed work (either a short essay or the final research essay) is .025% of the final mark.

No short essay that is less than 800 words or more than 1200 words will be marked.

No final research essay that is less than 3,000 words or more than 4,000 words will be marked

**Mandatory course requirements**

The minimal requirements to gain a pass in this course

1. Submit and pass at least three response papers.
2. Obtain a passing mark on the final research essay.
3. Attend at least 50% of all tutorials or obtain a passing mark on five *additional* short response essay papers.\*

[\*NOTE: *Any student who opts for the additional short response paper instead of attending at least 50% of tutorials must verify this option with the instructor prior to 1 August 2011*].

**Rules**

1. All work must be submitted by Blackboard, unless special permission is given prior to the due date.
2. All work must contain a student's name, a student's ID number, and relevant contact details, and a word count (inclusive of notes/bibliography).
3. No work that is more than two weeks late will be assessed.
4. Normally, the only valid excuse for an extension will be a medical certificate or a note from a professional counsellor.
5. Students are required to check Blackboard and their student email address (or the email address that is linked to Blackboard) at least once per a week for up to date information about any course changes.

### **Class Representative**

A class representative will be elected in first class. This representative's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, and posted on Blackboard under 'communications' → 'course contacts'. The class representative communicates with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

**Use of Turnitin**

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://www.turnitin.com>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

**Where to find more detailed information**

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study). Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).