

PSYC GU4625: Psychology of Religion
Fall 2026

PSYC GU4625: Psychology of Religion (seminar, 4 points). Fall 2026.

Wednesdays, 10:10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., 200C Schermerhorn Hall.

Instructor: Dr. Larisa Heiphetz Solomon (lah2201@columbia.edu)

Office hours: Mondays, 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., 821 Uris Hall. If you have another class during office hours, please e-mail me to set up a meeting at a different time. Please also let me know which of your classes conflicts with my office hours so that I can consider how best to arrange my office hours around popular courses in future semesters. The best way to reach me is via e-mail, and I typically reply to e-mails within 3 business days. I am happy to meet with you throughout the semester to discuss anything related to the course.

I. Bulletin description

II. A full description of the content of the course

III. The rationale for giving the course

IV. The reading list and weekly syllabus

V. Course requirements

VI. Plagiarism and academic integrity

VII. Students with disabilities

I. Bulletin description

Prerequisites: Two courses in psychology, including at least one course with a focus on research methods and/or statistics, and permission of the instructor.

Review of theories and empirical research related to religious cognition and behavior. Topics include the foundations of religious belief and practice, people's concepts of religious ideas, and the lack of religious belief/identity (e.g., atheism), among others.

II. A full description of the content of the course

Religion is all around us—our currency says "in God we trust," students in many schools pledge allegiance to "one nation under God," and most federal employees do not go to work on Christmas regardless of whether or not they celebrate the holiday. Everyday life, too, includes many reminders of religious beliefs and practice. People wear clothing and jewelry marking their religious affiliation, pray before meals, and perform many other daily activities that stem from a religious source.

In this seminar, we will discuss (a) psychological theories pertaining to religious cognition and behavior as well as (b) empirical findings on religion among children and adults. This course does not attempt to make claims about religion *per se*; we will not be debating points of theology or discussing whether religious ideas are true. Rather, we will learn about how laypeople conceptualize religious ideas and how these ideas shape their lives. While focusing on research from psychology, we will also discuss some ideas from philosophy, religious studies, and other related disciplines.

Students will read and discuss several articles per week and will complete two large assignments: a midterm project focusing on religious pluralism and a final project that can take the form of a theory paper or a research proposal. To get the most out of this class, students should be comfortable reading empirical psychology research.

III. The rationale for giving the course

In addition to helping students learn about theories and empirical findings related to the psychology of religion, this course will improve students' written and oral communication skills. Students will write a reflection paper focusing on a religious tradition that is not their own as well as either a theory paper or a

research proposal that can serve as the foundation for a theoretical/review paper that can be submitted for publication, as the basis for a thesis or other empirical project, and/or as the beginning of a grant proposal. Students will also participate in weekly course discussions, lead a discussion on one assigned article, and give a brief presentation of their final project.

This course is an advanced seminar designed for graduate students, for advanced undergraduate psychology majors, and for students participating in the postbac psychology program. It fulfills the following degree requirements:

- For undergraduate psychology majors, this seminar will meet the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement and the seminar requirement.
- For undergraduate students in the joint Neuroscience and Behavior major, this seminar will fulfill the fifth psychology requirement: "One advanced psychology seminar from a list approved by the Psychology Department advisor to the program."
- For students in the psychology postbac certificate program, this seminar will fulfill the Group III (Social, Personality, and Abnormal) distribution requirement and the advanced seminar requirement.
- For psychology graduate students, this seminar can count as one of the three graduate-level seminars required for the M.A. degree or as one of the two additional graduate-level elective courses for the M. Phil. degree.

IV. The reading list and weekly syllabus

[Note: Articles preceded by an asterisk are eligible for in-class presentations.]

Week 1 [September 9th]: Introduction to the class

Please read this syllabus in preparation for class.

Week 2 [September 16th]: What is religion? - Individual-level perspectives

James, W. (1902). *The varieties of religious experience - Lecture II: Circumscription of the topic.*

Kay, A. C., Gaucher, D., McGregor, I., & Nash, K. (2010). Religious belief as compensatory control. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14, 37-48. doi: 10.1177/1088868309353750

Kirkpatrick, L. A. (1992). An attachment-theory approach to the psychology of religion. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 2, 3-28. doi: 10.1207/s15327582ijpr0201_2

Week 3 [September 23rd]: What is religion? - Social-level perspectives

*Cohen, A. B., & Hill, P. C. (2007). Religion as culture: Religious individualism and collectivism among American Catholics, Jews, and Protestants. *Journal of Personality*, 75, 709-742. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2007.00454.x

Mavor, K. I., & Ysseldyk, R. (2020). A social identity approach to religion: Religiosity at the nexus of personal and collective self. In K. E. Vail & C. Routledge (Eds.), *The science of religion, spirituality, and existentialism* (pp. 187-205). Academic Press.

Whitehead, A. L. (2023). What is Christian nationalism? In A. L. Whitehead, *American idolatry: How Christian nationalism betrays the gospel and threatens the church* (pp. 23-50). BakerBooks.

Week 4 [September 30th]: What functions does religion serve?

Abu-Raiya, H., & Pargament, K. I. (2015). Religious coping among diverse religions: Commonalities and divergences. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 7, 24-33. doi: 10.1037/a0037652

*Davoodi, T., & Lombrozo, T. (2022). Explaining the existential: Scientific and religious explanations play different functional roles. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 151, 1199-1218. doi: 10.1037/xge0001129

Watson-Jones, R. E., & Legare, C. H. (2016). The social functions of group rituals. *Current Directions in*

Week 5 [October 7th]: Religious pluralism

Note: Reflection papers due via e-mail before class.

- *Snook, D. W., Kleinmann, S. M., White, G., & Horgan, J. G. (2021). Conversion motifs among Muslim converts in the United States. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 13(4), 482–492. doi: 10.1037/rel0000276
- *Van Tongeren, D., Hakim, S., Hook, J. N., Johnson, K. A., Green, J. D., Hulseley, T. L., & Davis, D. E. (2016). Toward an understanding of religious tolerance: Quest religiousness and positive attitudes toward religiously dissimilar others. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 26, 212-224. doi: 10.1080/10508619.2015.1039417
- *Womick, J., & King, L. A. (2023). The existential challenge of religious pluralism: Religion, politics, and meaning in life. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 33, 230-245. doi: 10.1080/10508619.2023.2240105

Week 6 [October 14th]: God concepts

- *Johnson, K. A., Li, Y. J., Cohen, A. B., & Okun, M. A. (2013). Friends in high places: The influence of authoritarian and benevolent god-concepts on social attitudes and behaviors. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5, 15-22. doi: 10.1037/a0030138
- *Richert, R. A., Saide, A. R., Lesage, K. A., & Shaman, N. J. (2017). The role of religious context in children's differentiation between God's mind and human minds. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 35, 37-59. doi: 10.1111/bjdp.12160
- *Roberts, S. O., Weisman, K., Lane, J. D., Williams, A., Camp, N. P., Wang, M., Robinson, M., Sanchez, K., & Griffiths, C. (2020). God as a White man: A psychological barrier to conceptualizing Black people and women as leadership worthy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 119, 1290-1315. doi: 10.1037/pspi0000233

Week 7 [October 21st]: Evolutionary foundations

- *Gregory, J. P., & Greenway, T. S. (2017). Is there a window of opportunity for religiosity? Children and adolescents preferentially recall religious-type cultural representations, but older adults do not. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 7, 98-116. doi: 10.1080/2153599X.2016.196234
- *Lang, M., Purzycki, B. G., Apicella, C. L., Atkinson, Q. D., Bolyanatz, A., Cohen, E., Handley, C., Klocova, E. K., Lesorogol, C., Mathew, S., McNamara, R. A., Moya, C., Placek, C. D., Soler, M., Vardy, T., Weigel, J. L., Willard, A. K., Xygalatas, D., Norenzayan, A., & Henrich, J. (2019). Moralizing gods, impartiality and religious parochialism across 15 societies. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 286, 1-10. doi: 10.1098/rspb.2019.0202
- Pyysiäinen, I., & Hauser, M. (2010). The origins of religion: Evolved adaptation or by-product? *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14, 104-109. doi: 10.1016/j.tics.2009.12.007

Week 8 [October 28th]: Developmental foundations

Note: Outlines for final projects due via e-mail before class.

- *Cui, Y. K., Clegg, J. M., Fang, Y. E., Davoodi, T., Harris, P. L., & Corriveau, K. H. (2020). Religious testimony in a secular society: Belief in unobservable entities among Chinese parents and their children. *Developmental Psychology*, 56, 117-127. doi: 10.1037/dev0000846
- Kelemen, D. (2004). Are children "intuitive theists"? Reasoning about purpose and design in nature. *Psychological Science*, 15, 295-301. doi: 10.1111/j.0956-7976.2004.0067
- *Srinivasan, M., & Dahl, A. (2024). To accept or reject? Hindu and Muslim children's views of religious, moral, and conventional norms. *Journal of Cognition and Development*, 25, 573-601. doi: 10.1080/15248372.2024.2346105

Week 9 [November 4th]: Religious conflict

- *Drelichman, M., Vidal-Robert, J., & Voth, H. J. (2021). The long-run effects of religious persecution: Evidence from the Spanish Inquisition. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 118, e2022881118. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2022881118
- *Smith, J. M., Pasek, M. H., Vishkin, A., Johnson, K. A., Shackelford, C., & Ginges, J. (2022). Thinking about God discourages dehumanization of religious outgroups. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 151, 2586-2603. doi: 10.1037/xge0001206
- *Wilkins, C. L., Wellman, J. D., Toosi, N. R., Miller, C. A., Lisnek, J. A., & Martin, L. A. (2022). Is LGBT progress seen as an attack on Christians? Examining Christian/sexual orientation zero-sum beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 122, 73-101. doi: 10.1037/pspi0000363

Week 10 [November 11th]: Religious benefits

- Vail, K. E., Rothschild, Z. K., Weise, D. R., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2010). A terror management analysis of the psychological functions of religion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 14, 84-94. doi: 10.1177/1088868309351165
- *Vishkin, A., Ben-Nun Bloom, P., Schwartz, S. H., Solak, N., & Tamir, M. (2019). Religiosity and emotion regulation. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 50, 1050-1074. doi: 10.1177/0022022119880341
- *Wallace, L. E., Anthony, R., End, C. M., & Way, B. M. (2019). Does religion stave off the grave? Religious affiliation in one's obituary and longevity. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 10, 662-670. doi: 10.1177/1948550618779820

Week 11 [November 18th]: Religion and morality

- *Gervais, W. M., Xygalatas, D., McKay, R. T., van Elk, M., Buchtel, E. E., Aveyard, M., . . . , & Bulbulia, J. (2017). Global evidence of extreme intuitive moral prejudice against atheists. *Nature Human Behavior*, 1, 1-5. doi: 10.1038/s41562-017-0151
- *Jackson, J. C., & Gray, K. (2019). When a good God makes bad people: Testing a theory of religion and immorality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 117, 1203-1230. doi: 10.1037/pspp0000206
- *White, C. J. M., & Willard, A. K. (2026). How karma helps and harms generosity toward those in need. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 52, 1410-1431. doi: 10.1177/01461672251313829

[November 25th - Thanksgiving Break]

Week 12 [December 2nd]: Non-religious belief and identity

Note: Final papers due via e-mail before class.

- *Gervais, W. M., Najle, M. B., & Caluori, N. (2021). The origins of religious disbelief: A dual inheritance approach. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 12, 1369-1379. doi: 10.1177/1948550621994001
- *Van Tongeren, D. R., DeWall, C. N., Chen, Z., Sibley, C. G., & Bulbulia, J. (2021). Religious residue: Cross-cultural evidence that religious psychology and behavior persist following deidentification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 120, 484-503. doi: 10.1037/pspp0000288
- Wixwat, M., & Saucier, G. (2021). Being spiritual but not religious. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 40, 121-125. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.09.003

Week 13 [December 9th]: Discussion of students' final projects

V. Course requirements

Grades will be determined as follows:

- Attendance/participation (10%)
- Weekly discussion comments (15%)
- Presentation (15%)
- Religious pluralism reflection paper (15%)
- Final project - outline (10%)
- Final project - paper (35%)

Attendance/participation (10%)

Attendance at each class is mandatory. This policy exists to support the educational experience of everyone in the class. If you are absent, not only do you miss out on the discussion, but your classmates also don't have the chance to learn from your unique insights. Everyone's participation is vital to a small, discussion-based class such as this one.

At the same time, life sometimes throws all of us curveballs, including illness and other emergencies. Therefore, all students have one absence to use in whatever way they deem best, with one exception: the free absence cannot be used on the date of your in-class presentation. Additionally, medical and family emergencies are excusable. In such instances, with my permission, you may write a 3-page paper (12 point Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins, double-spaced) on a topic of my choice to receive participation credit for that week. This make-up paper will be due before the beginning of the class following the one you missed (e.g., if you missed class during Week 4 and receive permission to write a make-up paper, it would be due before the beginning of class during Week 5). Make-up papers should be submitted as a .doc or .docx attachment via e-mail (lah2201@columbia.edu).

If you require more than two excused absences and/or experience an emergency that affects multiple classes, such as prolonged illness or a family situation that prevents you from completing your coursework, please be in touch with your dean. He or she can coordinate with all of your professors so that you don't have to take on this labor, and I am happy to work with you and your dean to find a solution for your particular situation.

Please arrive in class on time and stay for the entire class period. This is for your own benefit as well as that of the other students, since it can be disruptive for students to come in and out during class discussion. If you arrive late or leave early, you will not be able to earn full participation credit for that day.

In addition to coming to class, it's important to participate positively (and do other things that alliterate). Positive participation requires a balance between speaking and listening to your classmates. Please speak up if you have a question or thought to share, and please listen to your classmates' ideas and engage with them constructively. It is perfectly acceptable for you to disagree with someone else's comments—in fact, disagreement can make for lively and thought-provoking discussion! Please phrase your disagreements respectfully. If you feel nervous or hesitant about speaking in class for any reason, I'd be happy to discuss your situation with you.

Each week, participation is graded in the following way: 2 points = you were present in class and participated positively; 1 point = you were present but didn't participate positively and/or were not present for the entire discussion; 0 points = you weren't present, already used your free absence, and did not receive an excused absence.

Weekly discussion comments (15%)

Each week, you are required to turn in a set of discussion comments on that week's reading. Please e-mail me your comments by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on the Monday before each class. My e-mail address is lah2201@columbia.edu. Comments should be included as a .doc or .docx attachment. You are responsible for making sure that you are attaching a) the correct file and b) an uncorrupted file. I will grade the file I have in front of me at the deadline, even if that file is corrupt or contains comments for the wrong set of readings. Files should be named in the following format:

YourLastName_WeekNumber_PsychOfReligion_DiscussionComments (e.g., Smith_Week2_PsychOfReligion_DiscussionComments). Please also type your name at the top of the Word document. Part of the goal of discussion comments is to prepare for our conversations in class. Therefore, late discussion comments will not be accepted in most circumstances. If you feel that your situation deserves special consideration (e.g., you are hospitalized), please discuss with me as soon as you are able.

For each reading, please include a comment that is about 3-5 sentences long. You do not need to integrate the comments for each article into one cohesive essay; instead, many students find it easiest to include one bullet point or short paragraph per article. **Comments should not summarize the article!** Instead, they should discuss your thoughts about conceptual points related to the readings. Some ideas for what you may wish to address in your comments include the following:

- An interesting connection between two or more of the readings. This could involve synthesizing two seemingly disparate areas or highlighting a contradiction between two sets of findings. (Your total number of comments should still equal the total number of readings, so if your comment for one reading connects it with another reading, you should still write a separate comment for the second reading.)
- Possible extensions or applications of findings, including interesting policy implications that were not addressed in the paper.
- Comments about a particularly clever, apt, or unusual experimental design and why it affords a unique ability to learn something about the question of interest.
- Reasons why the authors' conclusions do not follow from their results, alternative explanations for their findings, methodological flaws, and other criticisms. Be civil in your critique, and make a good-faith attempt to understand the authors' reasoning. Also, note that authors typically address potential criticisms at the end of an article, often to the reader's satisfaction...so you might want to make sure you get that far. Additionally, **you may not use your comment to offer criticisms that could be made of the vast majority of psychological studies (the sample size is less than a hundred gazillion, the sample was not nationally representative, etc.).** Comments that offer these types of criticisms will not receive credit. Instead, if you wish to offer a criticism, focus on something unique to the paper you are criticizing.
- A proposal for a study that could be conducted to clarify the nature of a finding or address an unresolved issue.

Remember: although it is important to maintain a critical eye when reading scientific papers, some of the best discussion comments will be insightfully positive in nature. Weekly comments will be graded on the following scale: 3 = excellent, 2 = good, 1 = poor. Don't be discouraged if you're not getting 3s right away—this is a learning experience, and there's always room for improvement. **If you submit all required discussion comments (i.e., for every week other than the first week and the last week) by their deadline, I will drop your lowest discussion comment grade.**

Presentation (15%)

During one class period, you will give a short (~10 minutes) presentation on one of the assigned readings. Your presentation should include the following components:

- A brief (2-3 sentences) summary of the article. Assume that your classmates have read the article and just need to have their memories jogged.
- What is one strength of the research presented in the article? Please be specific and explain why you like this particular feature (e.g., why a specific aspect of the design is particularly important, or why a particular conclusion is especially interesting, etc.). Include your own ideas; do not just summarize the authors' arguments about the importance of their topic and/or the amazingness of their studies.
- What is one weakness of the research presented in the article? As with discussion comments, this weakness must be specific to the article on which you are presenting; it cannot be a critique that applies to many psychology studies. If the authors attempted to address your concern, why are their attempts unsatisfactory to you?
- How could this weakness be addressed? For instance, could follow-up studies provide a solution? If so, what would those studies look like?

Since your presentation is so short, you do not need to cover all aspects of the article. Instead, focus on the one strength and one weakness that seem most interesting to you. After your presentation, the rest of the class will discuss the article using your comments as a springboard. You may incorporate Power Point slides, videos, etc., if you think that this will enhance your presentation, but you are also welcome to just speak about your article, and doing so may reduce any stress around uncooperative technology.

Please e-mail me by **Thursday, September 10th at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time** with a list of your top 8 preferred articles (1 = the article you would most like to discuss). You may choose any articles that are marked with an asterisk (*) in the reading list above. I will e-mail you before the next class to confirm your article. To make sure that presentations are spread relatively equally across articles and weeks, I may not be able to assign you your first choice, but I guarantee that you will be assigned one of your top 8 choices. If I haven't received your preferences by the deadline, I will assign you an article that no one else has selected.

Religious pluralism reflection paper (15%)

Formatting requirements: 5 pages, one-inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, APA format. This assignment should not include an abstract or title page, but please type your name at the top of the first page. Please title this paper YourLastName_PsychOfReligion_ReflectionPaper.

The purpose of this assignment is to provide exposure to a religious tradition other than your own. It is possible to learn many important things about religion from reading scientific articles, but it is impossible to understand religion fully without observing how it actually functions. To achieve this goal, you will attend a worship service in a religious community to which you do not belong and write a reflection paper about your experience.

You may attend any type of worship service in the New York area, in a different area that you will be visiting before the assignment is due, or online. Please be respectful throughout the service and engage to your comfort level. For instance, you do not need to kneel when others do so or put money in a collection plate if one is passed around (though you are welcome to if you want), but please behave respectfully of those who are engaging in these activities. Your presence should not be uncomfortable for others in the room. Any indication that your behavior was disrespectful, irreverent, disruptive, flippant, or any other negative thing will result in a 0 on the assignment and may result in further sanctions depending on the nature of the behavior.

To prepare for your visit, I recommend becoming familiar with the religious community you will be visiting and learning a bit about what to expect. To facilitate your learning, I have reserved two electronic

copies of the book *How to be a perfect stranger: The essential religious etiquette handbook* (6th edition, edited by S. M. Matlins and A. J. Magida). You can access this resource by going to the course website and clicking on "library reserves." You can then navigate to the portion of the book relevant to the religious community you will be visiting.

Your paper should address the following questions. Please write out each question and then type an answer underneath before moving on to the next question; do not try to integrate the responses to all of these questions into one narrative essay. Each response should be approximately one page long:

(1) Which service did you attend (denomination, specific congregation/worship community, location)? What happened during the service/what did you observe? If someone made a video of the service (don't do this!), what would they see and hear?

(2) What did you experience during the service? What were your own thoughts, emotions, and reactions throughout the event?

(3) In what ways are the religious practices you observed similar to and different from your own religious tradition or lack thereof?

(4) In what way do your observations relate to course material? For instance, do they illustrate any theories we have discussed so far? If so, how? Do they seem to offer a counterexample to any theories? If so, in what way, and why do you think the theory you selected doesn't account for the practices you observed? These are just a few examples; you can address this question fully by describing any connection between course material and your observations.

(5) What did you learn from this assignment? You could address what you learned about the community you observed, about your own religious tradition, about religious pluralism more broadly, or anything else that you learned that was not captured in response to question #4.

REFLECTION PAPERS ARE DUE VIA E-MAIL, AS A .DOC OR .DOCX ATTACHMENT, BEFORE CLASS ON WEEK 5. The readings for Week 5 may inform your response to question #4, so you may want to do the readings before finalizing your assignment, although there are also many connections to be made to material covered earlier in the semester so it is fine if you submit the paper first and then do the Week 5 readings. Please title your file

YourLastName_PsychOfReligion_ReflectionPaper. Late papers may be e-mailed to me as a .doc or .docx attachment; however, they will be penalized 2 points out of 25 possible points for every 24 hours late or portion thereof (e.g., if you were going to earn 25 points and you turn the outline in 15 hours late you would earn 23 points, 36 hours late and you would earn 21 points, etc.). Turning in the reflection paper late may also delay my feedback and prevent you from getting timely feedback. Talk to me if an emergency prevents you from turning in the outline on time.

Final project (outline: 10%; paper: 35%)

Formatting requirements for final paper: 15 pages, one-inch margins, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, APA format. Here is a website that will walk you through how to format a paper according to APA guidelines:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html.

Do not copy and paste APA-formatted citations from Google Scholar or other search engines; in my experiences, they often have formatting errors. Please include a cover page with your name and the title of your paper. Cover page and references do not count toward the page requirement. An abstract is not required. Please title your final paper YourLastName_PsychOfReligion_FinalPaper (and please title your outline YourLastName_PsychOfReligion_Outline).

Your final project will build on the reflection paper you wrote for the assignment on religious pluralism. For this project, you may choose one of two formats:

- *Research proposal.* Describe a phenomenon related to religious pluralism that has not previously been studied or that would benefit from additional research. Review relevant literature, design a study or series of studies to test your ideas, predict results, and discuss the implications of the

proposed research. If your proposal has great merit, it could provide the groundwork for your future empirical work (e.g., for a senior thesis or dissertation). If you choose this option, you will be using *new data* that have not yet been collected to make a novel argument.

- *Theory paper.* Use a specific aspect of religious pluralism to shed light on previously existing theories that have not considered pluralism or to propose a new theory of your own. For example, does work on pluralism shed light on scientific understanding of the connection between religion and morality? If so, how? In this example, you would discuss relevant work on religious pluralism, then discuss relevant work on religion and morality, and finally demonstrate a specific way in which integrating these two literatures leads to new insights that would not be possible without this integration. If you choose to write a theory paper, you will be using *previously published data* to make a new argument. Although this sometimes seems like an easier option, keep in mind that you will be constrained by what other people have chosen to study; you must use data that are already available to support an argument that is not currently made in either literature.

When creating your outline, please include the following information at the top: a) your name; b) whether your paper will be a research proposal or theory paper; and c) a tentative title for your paper. Then, please list the titles of each section you anticipate including in your paper. For a research proposal, this could be Introduction, Participants, Procedure, Expected Results, Discussion, Conclusions. For a theory paper, the headings would be more tied to your particular topic. For instance, in the example above, your headings might be Introduction, Religious Pluralism, Religion and Morality, New Insights Arising from Considering Morality in Light of Pluralism, Conclusions. At the end of the outline, please include full citations in APA format for any reference that was listed in the outline.

Under each heading, write a brief summary of what you expect to discuss in that section. Please be specific—e.g., if you are writing a research proposal, your sentences should give me a sense of the experiment that you will be proposing. Sections that will reference prior literature (e.g., the Introduction in research proposal; the two sections describing each separate research literature in the literature synthesis) should include references to at least five specific papers you are planning to cite in your paper and an explanation of how you will use that paper (e.g., "I plan to discuss work by Cohen, Siegel, and Rozin (2020) to demonstrate that Jewish adults place more emphasis on practice, whereas Protestant adults place greater emphasis on faith. This finding will contribute to my argument in XYZ specific way"). **You may use articles that we have read for class, but you must also include at least five peer reviewed empirical psychology articles (i.e., psychology articles that present new data) that are not on the syllabus. The course website includes a handout with instructions for how to find articles; please follow these guidelines when doing your literature search.** It is okay if some of your ideas change between the time you submit your outline and the time you write your final paper; the purpose of the outline is for me to get a sense of how you plan to approach your paper and for you to get feedback on your ideas before spending a lot of time and energy on the final paper.

OUTLINES ARE DUE VIA E-MAIL, AS A .DOC OR .DOCX ATTACHMENT, BEFORE CLASS ON WEEK 8. Please title your file YourLastName_PsychOfReligion_Outline. Late outlines may be e-mailed to me as a .doc or .docx attachment; however, they will be penalized 2 points out of 20 possible points for every 24 hours late or portion thereof. As with the reflection paper, turning in the outline late may also delay my feedback and prevent you from getting timely comments on your ideas. Talk to me if an emergency prevents you from turning in the outline on time.

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE VIA E-MAIL, AS A .DOC OR .DOCX ATTACHMENT, BEFORE CLASS ON WEEK 12. Please title your file YourLastName_PsychOfReligion_FinalPaper. The late policy is similar to that used with reflection papers and outlines, except that final papers will be penalized

10 points out of 100 possible points for every 24 hours late or portion thereof. Again, please talk to me if an emergency occurs.

VI. Plagiarism and academic integrity

Severe plagiarism (a.k.a. "copying") is the most overt and deceptive form of plagiarism. This involves deliberately misrepresenting all or part of another person's work as one's own. For example, a student might turn in a paper written by another student in a previous term. Another common example is writing containing chunks of "copy-and-paste" from published articles or online sources such as Wikipedia. Representing work as your own if it is not counts as severe plagiarism even if there is no one identifiable author (e.g., if you use text produced by ChatGPT or other programs and represent that text as your own). **The use of generative AI (ChatGPT, Claude, or any other generative AI tools) is not permitted for any portions of this course.**

Irresponsible plagiarism (a.k.a. "omission") is the act of paraphrasing or quoting from a source, without giving proper credit to the source. The author does not necessarily explicitly take credit for the idea or materials (but this is nevertheless implied).

Self-plagiarism (a.k.a. "recycling") is the act of representing one's own previous ideas or materials as new and original. For example, a student might turn in all or part of the same paper for more than one course. This may not seem as bad as stealing another person's work, but it is *deceptive*, and therefore unacceptable.

Should I plagiarize?

No. You will be caught, and then you will be sad. Assignments that show evidence of academic dishonesty will receive a zero, and any student who submits such an assignment may be referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Community Standards.

For more information about academic integrity at Columbia, please see <https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity>.

VII. Students with disabilities

Students with special needs who may require classroom and/or test accommodations should let me know as soon as possible. ODS often requires a few weeks to process an application, so please contact them as soon as you can. The procedures for registering with ODS can be found at <https://www.health.columbia.edu/content/disability-services> or by calling (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY).

Thanks for reading this far! I am very much looking forward to getting to know you and learning about the psychology of religion together.