

**REL4400/RLG 5937/PSY 4930 Religion and Psychology**

Meeting Times: Tuesday 3:00-4:55 PM (Periods 8-9) and Thursday 4:05-4:55 PM (Period 9)

Venue: MAT 0102

Instructor: Professor Ali Altaf Mian, Ph.D.

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Office Location: Anderson Hall 107-A

Office Hours: Mondays 11 AM to 12:30 PM and by appointment

**Course Synopsis**

This course surveys theoretical and empirical approaches to religion and psychology as well as psychoanalysis. Our key questions are: Are psychology and psychoanalysis helpful for analyzing religious traditions and texts? What alternatives to psychology and psychoanalysis do religious traditions elaborate? Specific themes to be studied include the unconscious, dream interpretation, trauma and PTSD, anxiety, mourning and melancholia, dissociation, narcissism, and humor and its relation to psychic experience.

**Required Texts:** All Readings on Canvas

**Assignments/Grade Breakdown:**

<b>Item:</b>	<b>Points:</b>
Weekly In-Class Writing Assignments	300
Group Presentation	100
Oral Exam	200
Presentation on Film and the Fine Arts	200
Attendance and Participation	200

**Weekly In-Class Writing Assignments (300 points)**

There will be 8 in-class writing assignments based on assigned readings and class discussions. The in-class writing always take place on our longer day (Tuesday). Each writing assignment is 50 points. The lowest two scores will be dropped.

**Group Presentation (100 points)**

You will work in groups of 3-4 persons to prepare a 15-minute presentation on a reading. Separate, detailed instructions will be posted on Canvas.

**Oral Exam (200 points)**

The oral exam tests your knowledge of the content as well as skills to communicate effectively your argument. A pool of possible questions will be posted on Canvas two weeks prior to this exam.

**Presentation on Film and the Fine Arts (200 points)**

Each student will make a presentation on a contemporary film or work of fine arts and/or artist, discussing how the work illuminates a key theme of this course. A writing component also needs to be submitted along with the in-class presentation. These presentations will take place in class during the last two weeks of class. Detailed instructions will be posted on Canvas by mid-February.

**Attendance and Participation (200 points)**

Class attendance and participation are mandatory. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You can miss two sessions without penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will detract 50 points from your grade. Excused absences are consistent with university policies as listed in the undergraduate catalog (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) and require appropriate documentation. Class will begin and end on time. Five late arrivals (anything over 5 minutes) will be considered one absence.

### Grading Scale

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
940-1000	94-100	A	4.00
900-939	90.0-93.9	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
834-866	83.4-86.6	B	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.00
600-633	60.0-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0.00

More information on grades and grading policies can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

### Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all. The use of laptops or tables is only allowed for purpose of note-taking.

### Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu>) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when

requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

On all work submitted for credit by University of Florida students, the following pledge is implied, “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from Chatgpt or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

### Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu> 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### Schedule of Readings

T 1/9—Introduction

R 1/11—Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* (excerpt)

T 1/16—William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (excerpt)

R 1/18—Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (excerpt)

T 1/23—Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (excerpt)

R 1/25—Required: Elliot R. Wolfson, *A Dream Interpreted within a Dream: Oneiropoiesis and the Prism of Imagination* (excerpt); Recommended: Amira Mittermaier, *Dreams that Matter: Egyptian Landscapes of the Imagination* (excerpt)

T 1/31—Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* (excerpt)

R 2/1—Julia Kristeva, *This Incredible Need to Believe* (excerpt)

T 2/6—Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (excerpt)

R 2/8—Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (excerpt)

T 2/13—Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (excerpt)

R 2/15—Norman O. Brown, *Life against Death: The Psychoanalytical Meaning of History* (excerpt)

T 2/20—Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”

R 2/22—Amy Hollywood, *Acute Melancholia and Other Essays: Mysticism, History, and the Study of Religion* (excerpt)

T 2/27—Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo* (excerpt)

R 2/29—NO CLASS (Dr. Mian is presenting at a workshop at the University of California-Riverside)

T 3/5—Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (excerpt)

R 3/7—Sudhir Kakar, *The Analyst and the Mystic: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Religion and Mysticism* (excerpt)

T 3/12 NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

R 3/14 NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

T 3/19—Stefania Pandolfo, *Knot of the Soul: Madness, Psychoanalysis, Islam*

R 3/21—Pandolfo, *Knot of the Soul*

T 3/26—Pandolfo, *Knot of the Soul*

R 3/28—Pandolfo, *Knot of the Soul*

T 4/2—Omnia El Shakry, *The Arabic Freud: Psychoanalysis and Islam in Modern Egypt* (excerpt)

R 4/4—El Shakry, *The Arabic Freud* (excerpt)

T 4/9—Christian Suhr, *Descending with Angels: Islamic Exorcism and Psychiatry* (excerpt)

R 4/11—Suhr, *Descending with Angels* (excerpt)

T 4/16—Presentations

R 4/18—Presentations

T 4/23—Final Meeting