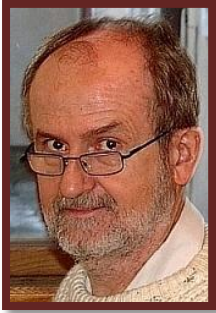


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# SPIRITUALITY AND ITS APPEARANCES: PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

**COURSE CODE:** OB41-II  
30 hours (15 meetings)  
**ECTS:** 6  
Institute of Psychology  
Al. Mickiewicza 5  
Wed. 9.45-11.15, room 7

## COURSE SYLLABUS

**Purpose:** Arguments for spirituality as a fundamental psychological category. Presentation of different approaches to the understanding and studying spirituality in psychology, from speculative to experimental.

**Requirements and meeting structure:** [1] active attendance on the grounds of teacher's presentations and reading suggested in advance by syllabus; [2] written account of original spiritual experiences of at least one person (one's own experiences not excluded). For the purpose of the enhancement of self-control of a student, each meeting will start with several multiple-choice questions (answers will not be counted and assessed). Up to half of the meeting time will be devoted for the presentation of the topic, followed by clues for the discussion; exemplary clues are listed after each topic listed below. Teacher's observations during the meetings will form the partial assessment of a student.

**Final assessment:** Oral exam (colloquium in the form of sharing arguments).

## TOPICS:

1. **Psychological backgrounds and domains of spirituality.** Why spirituality seems to replace religion in the modern Western society? Is it not the case that spirituality is the entirely Western and Christian invention? Is spirituality something else than religion? Assuming spirituality the *differentia specifica* of human species, where and how does it appear? Is it possible to measure it? Is spirituality practically relevant or just "an art for the art?"

**SUGGESTED READING<sup>1</sup>:** (1) Averill J. R. (1999). Spirituality: From the mundane to the meaningful – and back. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 18, 101-126. (2) Wulff D. M. (1997). *Psychology of religion. Classic and contemporary. Second edition*. New York etc.: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 5-7. (3) Heszen I. (2006). Spiritual resources and physical health. *Polish Psychological Bulletin*, 37(2), 84-93. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (4) Fontana D. (2003). *Psychology, religion, and spirituality*, 11-14, 148-156. Oxford: BPS Blackwell.

2. **Spirituality in main non-Christian religious traditions (I): Confucian and Taoist.** Confucianism – the ancient argument for the position that spirituality is not necessary a religion. Key principles of development of human social identity – is the Confucian ideology conservative or progressive? Do Taoist principles prove that this ideas equal to spiritual maturity, or rather ... the proof of oversimplification, naiveté if not the clever cover for laziness?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Ya L. H. (1988). A Confucian theory of human development. (In:) R. M. Thomas (Ed.), *Oriental theories of human development*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers, Inc., 117-133. (2) Kao Ch. C. L. (1975). *Search for Maturity*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, Chapter IV: The Taoist maturity. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (3) Hoff B. (1982). *The Tao of Pooh*.

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<sup>1</sup> All available texts, in the electronic PDF copies, will be provided on the CD ROM and (if possible) via the Internet.

3. **Spirituality in main non-Christian religious traditions (II): Hindu and Buddhist.** Does any Hindu identity still exist? Actual "Bollywood" or ... just a commercial myth? Guru and yoga master in the West – the purifying mission or the "religious business" (if it has anything in common with it)? In other words: are the Zen schools or the Diamond Way Buddhism of Ole Nydahl the religion or just another New Age ideologies?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Thomas R. M. (1988). A Hindu theory of human development. (In:) R. M. Thomas (Ed.), *Oriental theories of human development*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers, Inc., 29-73. (2) Pio E. (1988). *Buddhist psychology. A modern perspective*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 101-124 (Chapter 4: "Self-transcendence"). **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (3) Kao Ch. C. L. (1975). *Search for Maturity*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, Chapter VI: The Buddhist maturity.

4. **Spirituality in main non-Christian religious traditions (III): Jewish and Muslim.** What the everyday life of the orthodox Jew has in common with "the Talmud wisdom?" The everyday path of Muslim believer or the purification of the Sufi mystic: which way is better and why?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Angel M. D. (1986). *The rhythms of Jewish living. A Sephardic approach*. New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, Inc., For Sephardic House of Integration Shearith Israel (fragment). (2) Spilka B., Hood R. W. Jr., Hunsberger B., Gorsuch R. L. (2003). *The psychology of religion. An empirical approach. Third edition*. New York: The Guilford Press, 178-179. (paragraph "The phenomenon of Jewish achievement"). (3) Obeid R. A. (1988). An Islamic theory of human development. (In:) R. M. Thomas (Ed.), *Oriental theories of human development*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers, Inc., 155-174. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (4) Shafii R. (1985). *Freedom from the self. The Sufis' path of development* (fragments).

5. **Descriptive interpretations of different forms of mysticism.** Amazing insight without quantitative empirical data or only commonsense, trivial observations?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Meadow M. J. (1995). The dark side of mysticism: Depression and "the dark night." In D. Capps & J. L. Jacobs (Eds.) *The struggle for life: A companion to William James's The varieties of religious experiences*. Society for the Scientific Study of Religion & Princeton Theological Seminary, 220-234. (2) **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (3) James W. ([1902] any edition). *The varieties of religious experiences*. Lectures XVI and XVII: Mysticism. (after the Modern Library Edition of 1927, pp. 370-420).

6. **Explanatory interpretations of mysticism: psychological and neurobiological.** What is the mystical experience for: does it allow for finding our genuine self or we simply annihilate it in favor of a narcissistic contentment? Will we find "the God spot" using the brain tomography equipment? Does neurotheology make scientific sense?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Hood R. W., Jr. (2002). The mystical self: Lost and found. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 12(1): 1-14. (2) Reich K. H. (2006). Neurobiology: What could it mean for the psychology of religion? In M. Aletti, D. Fagnani & G. Rossi (Eds.), *Religione, cultura, mente e cervello. Nuove prospettive in Psicologia della religione*. Torino: Centro Scientifico Editore, 108-127.

7. **Extreme religious appearances of spirituality – apparitions.** Why the vast majority of apparitions had not been approved by the Catholic Church authorities? Natural and supernatural explanations of apparitions: are they really opposing?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Carroll M. P. (1983). Visions of the Virgin Mary: The effect of family structures on Marian apparitions. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 22(3): 205-221. (2) Zimdars-Swartz S. (1991). *Encountering Mary. From La Salette to Medjugorje*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 ("Personal experiences and public demands. LaSalette, Lourdes and Fatima," pp. 25-91) and 2 ("Personal crises of health, public crises of faith. San Damiano," pp. 92-123).

8. **Extreme religious appearances of spirituality – possessions.** Why a demoniac possession can be still qualified in terms of supernatural instead of psychopathological? If the possession by the devil is the peculiar kind of coping with disorders of identity, what is the role of exorcisms?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Lietaer H., Corveleyn J. (1995). Psychoanalytical interpretation of the demoniacal possession and the mystical development of Sister Jeanne des Anges from Loudun. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 5(4), 259-276. (2) Anneliese Michel (Wikipedia – the free encyclopedia) – article from the Internet: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anneliese\\_Michel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anneliese_Michel).

9. **Mainstream and sectarian (cult) accounts of spirituality – are they actually different?** Controversies around the role of non-traditional forms of spiritual involvement: are they helpful for the individual growth or harmful?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Spilka B., Hood R. W. Jr., Hunsberger B., Gorsuch R. L. (2003). *The psychology of religion. An empirical approach. Third edition*. New York: The Guilford Press, 375-399 (Chapter 12: "The social psychology of religious organizations," fragment). (2) Richmond L. J. (2004). When spirituality goes awry: Students in cults. American School Chancellor Association, June issue, 368-375.

10. **Spirituality of nonbelievers: agnostics, atheists.** When the belief in the transcendence is impossible, is there any room for transcendence? – the mystery of spiritual transformation. Unbelief as another belief. The clue literal versus symbolic dimension of processing the content of individual experience.

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Comte-Sponville A. (2007). *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*. New York: Penguin Books (fragment). (2) Duriez B., Hutsebaut D. (2007). A slow and easy introduction to The Post-Critical Belief Scale: Internal structure and external relationships. In: D. M. Wulff (Ed.), *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion*, Oxford University Press. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (3) Stark R. (1999). Atheism, faith and the scientific study of religion. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 14(1), 41-62.

**11. Spirituality seen from theoretical perspective: concepts of psychoanalysis, depth psychology, object relations theory, attachment theory.** Does finding spirituality in depth psychology require deep search?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Marcus P. (2003). *Ancient religious wisdom, spirituality and psychoanalysis*. Westport CT: Praeger Publishers, 1-6 (fragment of the Introduction). (2) Beit-Hallahmi B. (1995). Object relations theory and religious experience. (In:) R. W. Hood, Jr., (Ed.), *Handbook of religious experience*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 254-268. (3) Kirkpatrick, L. A. (1995). Attachment theory and religious experience. (In:) R. W. Hood, Jr., (Ed.), *Handbook of religious experience*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 446-475. (4) Thalbourne M. T. & Delin P. S. (1999). Transliminality, its relation to dream life, religiosity & mystical experience. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 9(1), 45-61. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (5) Pruyser P. W. (1968). *A dynamic psychology of religion*. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 47-76 (Chapter II: "Intellectual processes in religion").

**12. Spirituality seen from theoretical perspective: humanistic and transpersonal concepts of spiritual growth. Accounts of spirituality of the quantum physics.** Does not the humanistic and – even more the transpersonal – psychologies make "fuzzy concept" of spirituality still more fuzzy?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Maslow A. H. (1970). Religious aspects of peak-experiences, (w:) W. A. Sadler, Jr. (red.), *Personality and religion. The role of religion in personality development*. New York & Evanston: Harper & Row, 168-179. (2) Frager R. (1989). Transpersonal psychology. Promise and prospects. (In:) R. S. Valle, S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology*. New York & London: Plenum Press, s. 289-309. (3) Helminiak D. A. (1996). *The human core of spirituality. Mind and psyche and spirit* (fragments). Albany: SUNY Press, 14-22, 31-39, 43-59, 91-103, 121-128. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (6) McFetridge G., Aldana J., Hardt J. Slavinski Z. (Eds.) (2004). *Peak states of consciousness. Theory and applications. Volume 1: Breakthrough techniques for quality of life. First edition*. Institute for the Study of Peak States Press, Hornby Island, British Columbia, 1-19 (Chapter 1: "Current paradigms in the study of exceptional quality of life and mental health").

**13. Spirituality seen from theoretical perspective: cognitive approach.** Meaning as the central notion of cognitive understanding of spirituality. How is possible merging the rational with emotional, holistic, intentional sides of our minds?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Lans van der, J. (1997). Religion as a meaning system: a conceptual model for research and counseling. (w:) H. Grzymała-Moszczyńska & B. Beit-Hallahmi (Eds.) *Religion, psychopathology and coping. International Series in the Psychology of Religion* (pp. 95-105). Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: Editions Rodopi BV. (2) Proulx T., Heine S. J. (2006). Death and black diamonds: Meaning, mortality, and the Meaning Maintenance Model, *Psychological Inquiry*. 17, 4, 309-318. (3) Emmons R. A. (2000). Is Spirituality an Intelligence? Motivation, Cognition, and the Psychology of Ultimate Concern. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 10(1), 3-26.

**14. Spirituality seen from theoretical perspective. Non-psychological, "natural-scientific" approach of evolutionary biology).** Is the scientific and apparently reductionist approach the oversimplification, or actually the right explanation of the so-called spiritual phenomena?

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Hay D., Socha P. M. (2005). Spirituality as a natural phenomenon: Bringing biological and psychological perspectives together. *Zygon. Journal of Religion & Science*, 40(3), 589-612. (2) Hay D. (1998). *The spirit of the child*. Chapter 4: A geography of the spirit. London: Fount, s. 57-75. (2) Rhawn J. (2001). *The transmitter to God. The limbic system, the soul, and spirituality*. San Jose, CA: University Press California, 55-78 (Chapter 4: "The limbic system and the soul. Spirits, dreams and poltergeists"). **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (3). Persinger M. A. (1987). *Neuropsychological bases of God beliefs*. New York: Praeger Publishers, in particular Chapter 2: "The temporal lobe: The biological basis of the god experience (pp. 9-21).

**15. Spirituality seen from theoretical perspective: existential approach.** "Unknown" Ernest Becker and his unexpected contribution to experimental social psychological research on spirituality. "Memento mori" as the trigger of coping with feelings of limitations.

**SUGGESTED READING:** (1) Greenberg J., Solomon S. & Pyszczynski T. (1997). Terror management theory of self-esteem and cultural worldviews: Empirical assessments and conceptual refinements. In Mark P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 29, pp. 61-139. **In particular, pages 61 to 71.** (2) Hay D., Socha P. M. (2005). Spirituality as a natural phenomenon: Bringing biological and psychological perspectives together. *Zygon. Journal of Religion & Science*, 40(3), 589-612. (3) Pargament K. I., Mahoney A. (2005). Sacred matters: Sanctification as the vital topic for the psychology of religion. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 15(3), 179-198. **SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** (4) Socha P. M. (1999). The existential human situation. Spirituality as the way of coping. W: K. Helmut Reich, Fritz K. Oser & W. George Scarlett (Eds.). *Psychological Studies on Spiritual and Religious Development. Series: Being Human: The Case of Religion*, Vol. 2. Lengerich, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Riga, Scottsdale (USA), Wien, Zagreb: Pabst Science Publishers, 50-56.