

RELS 450.01 Senior Seminar: Paradigms of Personhood

MW 2:00-3:15pm / MYBK 119

Dr. Lee Irwin, Religious Studies Department

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Office Hours: Mon & Wed 3:30-5:00

(and by appointment)

Course Description: This course will be an interdisciplinary course on the construction of the “self” as seen within a variety of perspectives. The emphasis will be on models of human personhood that are developmental and include implicit transpersonal (spiritual) aspects. We will start by looking at some standard ideas of the person in normative religious traditions. Then we will investigate non-religious models of self involving studies in moral consciousness, brain research, altered states, mysticism, parapsychological intuitions, and various types of non-ordinary experience. In the course of study, we will explore the human capacity for transformation, extra-sensory perception, body awareness, empathy, types of intelligence, embodied spirituality, and reflexive self-awareness. We will also survey the history of transpersonal theory as it relates to religious experience. Our methodology will be dialogical and comparative; students are required to do significant short term professional writing. For the final research paper, each student will develop a theory of “self” incorporating select materials from the course and then to apply that theory to one example of a known religious person whose view of the self fits the theoretical model.

Books (Required):

Beauregard, Mario and Denyse O'Leary, *The Spiritual Brain: A Neuroscientist's Case for the Existence of the Soul*. HarperOne, 2008. ISBN-10: 0061625981.

Daniels, Michael. *Shadow, Self, Spirit: Essays in Transpersonal Psychology*. Imprint Academic, 2005. ISBN-10: 1845400224.

Fuller, Robert C. *Spirituality and the Flesh: Bodily Sources of Religious Experience*. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN-10: 0195369173.

Smith, Christian. *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN-10: 0199731977.

Plus required articles in electronic format (.pdf and .docx) available through your OAKS account (OAKS > RELS 450 > Content > List of Articles).

Course Requirements: There will be TWO take home exams (each worth 15% = **30%**); SIX summary writing assignments (each worth 5% = **30%**), two of which must be presented to the class; ONE paper proposal (worth **5%**) with annotated bibliography; a final Research Paper (worth **25%**, 10-12 pages); and class participation (worth **10%**). All take home exams must be submitted in printed format on the due date (no handwritten submissions); all SUMMARY writing

assignments must be double spaced and have 550-600 words (any word count over 600 will reduce your grade); instructions will be given for all writing assignments. Failure to submit the required paper proposal will result in a full grade deduction on the final paper. The class participation grade will be based on in-class discussion OR online submission to threaded conversations through OAKS/R450/Discussions (be sure to register). The research paper will be evaluated according to department guidelines for good research writing. We will discuss the department rubric.

Classroom Electronics: Students must TURN OFF all electronic devices before class starts; you are not permitted to engage in texting or reading electronic mail (etc.) while class is in session. If you have a computer for taking notes, you must ONLY take notes (no jumping to read email or surf the web). Computer users must sit in the front row. Every violation of this code will result in a deduction of points from your final grade average; repeated violations will result in a failing grade.

Honor Code: Lying, cheating, and plagiarism (failure to cite sources used in a paper) are violations of the Honor Code. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure based on dishonesty. Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating.

Grading Scale: Numerical/letter grades: A+ = 100-97; A = 96-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-87; B = 86-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-77; C = 76-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-67; D = 66-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or lower.

Reading Assignments: Readings should be done before the class for which they are assigned. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

- I. **Week One: August 22** Introduction to the Problem of "Self" (Personhood)
 - A. Reading Assignment: Ari Santos, "Theories of Self" and Leon Turner, "Disunity and Disorder: The Problem of Self-Fragmentation." OAKS/R450/Contents
 - B. Grade Assignment: None

- II. **Week Two: August 27, 29** Traditional Concepts of Self / Soul
 - A. Reading Assignment (8-27): Geddes McGregor, "Christian Concepts of Self/Soul;" Karen Pechilis, "Indian Concepts of Self/Soul;" Michael Mamura, "Islamic Concepts of Self/Soul." OAKS/R450/Contents
 - B. Reading assignment (8-29): Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, pp. 1-43.

 - C. **Grade Assignment (8-29): First Summary Due**, Smith (7-43)

- III. **Week Three: September 3, 5** Moral Foundations of Personhood
- A. Reading Assignment (9-3): Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, pp. 45-94.
 - B. Reading Assignment (9-5): Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, pp. 95-145.
 - C. Grade Assignment: None
- IV. **Week Four: September 10, 12** Neuroscience and Religion, Part I
- A. Reading Assignment (9-10): Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, pp. 147-158;
Andrew Newberg, "Neuroscience and Religion." OAKS/R450/Contents
 - B. Reading Assignment (9-12): Beauregard, *Spiritual Brain*, pp. 1-40.
 - C. **Grading Assignment (9-10): Second Summary Due**, Newberg
- V. **Week Five: September 17, 19** Neuroscience and Religion, Part II
- A. Reading Assignment (9-17): Beauregard, *Spiritual Brain*, pp. 41-77
 - B. Reading Assignment (9-19): Beauregard, *Spiritual Brain*, pp. 79-123
 - A. Grade Assignment: None
- II. **Week Six: September 24, 26** Neuroscience and Religion, Part III
- A. Reading Assignment (9-24): Beauregard, *Spiritual Brain*, pp. 125-180
 - B. Reading Assignment (9-26): Beauregard, *Spiritual Brain*, pp. 181-227
 - C. **Grade Assignment (9-26): Third Summary Due**, Beauregard (181-227)
- III. **Week Seven: October 1, 3** Neuroscience and Religion, Part IV
- A. Reading Assignment (10-1): Beauregard, *Spiritual Brain*, pp. 231-295
 - B. PASS OUT EXAM ONE (10-1)
 - C. **Grade Assignment (10-3): EXAM ONE Due (Take Home)**
- IV. **Week Eight: October 8, 10** Transpersonal Theory and the Self, Part I
- A. Reading Assignment (10-8): Roger Scruton, "Neurononsense and the Soul."
OAKS/R450/Contents
 - B. Reading Assignment (10-10): Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 1-38
 - C. Grade Assignment: None
- V. **Week Nine: October [15], 17** Transpersonal Theory and the Self, Part II
- A. FALL BREAK, October 15, NO CLASS
 - B. Reading Assignment (10-17): Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 39-62.
 - C. **Grade Assignment (10-17): Fourth Summary Due**, Daniels
- VI. **Week Ten: October 22, 24** Transpersonal Theory and the Self, Part III
- A. Reading Assignment: Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 63-114
 - B. Reading Assignment: Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 115-158
 - C. Grade Assignment: None

VII. Week Eleven: October 29, 31 Transpersonal Theory and the Self, Part IV

A. Reading Assignment: Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 159-185

B. Reading Assignment: Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 186-215

C. Grade Assignment (10-31): PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

VIII. Week Twelve: November 5, 7 Transpersonal Theory and the Self, Part V

A. Reading Assignment: Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 216-262

B. Reading Assignment: Daniels, *Shadow, Self, Spirit*, pp. 262-278

C. Grade Assignment (11-5): Fifth Summary Due, Daniels (216-233)

IX. Week Thirteen: November 12, 14 Transpersonal Theory and the Self, Part VI

A. Reading Assignment: Eugene Taylor, "States of Consciousness."

OAKS/R450/Contents

B. PASS OUT EXAM TWO (11-12)

C. Grade Assignment (11-14): EXAM TWO DUE (Take Home)

X. Week Fourteen: November 19, [21] Embodied Spirituality, Part I

A. Reading Assignment: Robert Fuller, *Spirituality and the Flesh*, pp. 1-49.

B. Grade Assignment (11-19): Sixth Summary Due, Fuller (1-24)

C. THANSIVING BREAK NO CLASS NOVEMBER 21

XI. Week Fifteen: November 26, 28 Embodied Spirituality, Part II-

A. Reading Assignment: Robert Fuller, *Spirituality and the Flesh*, pp. 51-98

B. Reading Assignment: Robert Fuller, *Spirituality and the Flesh*, pp. 99-151

C. Grade Assignment: None

XII. Week Sixteen: December 3 Summary Conclusions

A. Reading Assignment: Robert Fuller, *Spirituality and the Flesh*, pp. 153-166

B. Grade Assignment: FINAL PAPER DUE / FRIDAY DECEMBER 7 / 4:00 PM

You must email the paper to me (irwinl@cofc.edu) or drop it by the RELS Dept; if you drop it off you need to write me an email and tell me that you did so.

DO NOT USE OAKES TO SEND PAPER, EMAIL IT TO ME DIRECTLY.