



**Psychology 2065B (570)**  
**The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality**  
**Winter 2026**

Instructor: Dr. Kelly Barnes  
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**Course Information**

**Calendar Description:**

A survey of the psychological study of religiosity and spirituality. Topics include psychological theories of religiosity, developmental trends, neuropsychology and religious experience, and religiosity and relationships, social behavior, and health.

**Prerequisite(s):**

**Antirequisite(s):** [Psychology 3772F/G](#).

**Extra Information:** 3 lecture hours.

**Course Weight:** 0.50

**Breadth:** Category A

**Subject Code:** PSYCHOL

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

**King's University College**  
**Psych 2065B – The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality**

**Course information:**

The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, Psych 2065B (570)

Instructor(s): Dr. Kelly Barnes

Contact Information: [kbarne2@uwo.ca](mailto:kbarne2@uwo.ca)

Office hours: After class or by appointment

**Course description:**

A survey of the psychological study of religiosity and spirituality. Topics include psychological theories of religiosity, developmental trends, neuropsychology and religious experience, and religiosity and relationships, social behaviour, and health.

**Course learning outcomes:**

Our focus in this class is to understand how religious and spiritual behaviours are researched in psychology and how this research creates theories of religious and spiritual behaviours. The student does not need to have any background in psychology or research.

By the end of this course a student will:

- understand basic theories of various psychological approaches to behaviour including biological, cultural, social, cognitive, developmental, and clinical approaches.
- be able to discuss how these broad approaches are applied to understand behaviour as it relates to religiosity and spirituality.
- be able to discuss some basic descriptive and empirical methods researchers use to answer questions about behaviour associated with religiosity and spirituality.
- be able to demonstrate how a research question about religious or spiritual behaviour can be explored in the psychological literature.
- be able to discuss how psychology explores special topics in religious behaviour such as mysticism and mystical pursuits, big questions about the purpose of life and mortality, religious fundamentalism, and terrorist acts in the name of religion.
- have gained an appreciation for the diversity of behaviours associated with, and affected by, religiosity and spirituality.

**Mode of Instruction:** In person

**Course textbooks/materials:**

**Required:** Paloutzian, R. F. (2016). Invitation to the Psychology of Religion (3rd edition). Guilford Press.

**Note.** The textbook can be ordered from the Western Book Store at this [link](#) for \$88.25. Students may purchase their textbook new or used from whatever source they choose as long as it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

A computer with internet access is required for accessing the course Brightspace page.

### **Method of evaluation:**

#### **Participation (10%)**

Participation is an important part of this course. There will be 9 lectures during the term, and participation will be tracked each week through a simple in-class activity (such as an online poll or a quick written response).

Your best 6 participation scores will count toward your grade. If you miss a class, that simply counts as one of the dropped scores. There are no make-up activities for missed classes.

How it works:

- Attend class and complete the participation activity to earn credit.
- Only your top 6 scores out of 9 will be used, so occasional absences will not affect your grade significantly.

#### **Exams: Midterm (30%) & Final (30%)**

There are two exams in this course:

- Midterm Exam (30%) – Covers all material up to the exam date. Includes multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
- Final Exam (30%) – Covers material from after the midterm only (not cumulative). Includes multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

Both exams are worth 30% each, for a total of 60% of your final grade.

#### **Thought Papers (3 worth 10% each = 30%)**

You will write three thought papers during the term. Each paper is worth 10%, for a total of 30% of your final grade.

**Optional Bonus:** You may complete a fourth thought paper. If you do, it will replace your lowest score from the three required papers.

What to do:

- Each paper is based on a specific textbook chapter and lecture theme. A question will be provided to guide your response.

- Your goal is to show thoughtful understanding by making meaningful connections between the reading and the lecture.

Format:

- 2–3 pages, APA style (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins).
- Additional references are not required, but you must cite any ideas or facts that are not your own.

Grading:

- 0 = Nothing submitted
- 5–6.5 = Paper lacks coherence or depth; does not show clear understanding of the reading
- 6.5–8 = Complete paper, acceptable writing, shows you did the reading
- 8–10 = Strong understanding, critical thinking, creative connections, clear writing

<b>Component</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Worth</b>	<b>Cumulative Worth</b>
Participation	9 lectures – best 6 count	10%	10%
Midterm Exam	<b>Feb 10</b> (during class time)	30%	40%
Thought papers	<b>Feb 3, Mar 3, Mar 31</b> <i>Optional: Apr 9</i>	30%	70%
Final Exam	<b>TBD</b> – Exam period (Apr 12–Apr 30)	30%	100%

## **Readings and Lectures**

Both the textbook and the lectures are important for doing well in this course. They work together, but they are not the same.

- The readings give you background and context for what we discuss in class.
- Lectures build on the readings and add material that is not in the textbook.

If you skip either the readings or the lectures, you'll miss key information. Students who attend class and keep up with the readings generally do much better.

## **Class Policies**

All university policies apply to this course (see attached). Please note in addition:

**Schedule of Classes, Readings, Assessments:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Textbook Reading</b>
January 6	Truth	No reading
January 13	Faith	Chapter 1: Religion in Psychological Perspective
January 20	Judgment	Chapter 3: Psychological Theories Look at Religion
January 27	Belief	Chapter 5: Developmental Processes in Religiousness and Spirituality
February 3	Destiny	Chapter 6: Looking for Religion in the Individual
February 10	<b>Midterm</b>	Covers everything up until this point
February 17	<b>Reading Week</b>	No reading/class
February 24	Enlightenment	Chapter 7: Religious Conversion, Deconversion, and Spiritual Transformation
March 3	Spirituality	Chapter 8: Religion, Spirituality, and Experience
March 10	Community	Chapter 9: Religion, Mental Health, and Well-Being
March 17	Holy War	Chapter 11: Religion, Social Attitudes, and Behavior
March 24	Death	Chapter 10: Religion and Health
March 31	Wisdom	Chapter 12: And in the End...Why Study This?
April 7	Course Culmination: Integration, Reflection, and Next Steps	No readings
<b>TBD</b> – Exam period (Apr 12–Apr 30)	<b>Final exam</b>	Covers everything after midterm (non-cumulative)

## Department of Psychology Policies Related to AI Tools

### 1. Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

**The Department of Psychology expects that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial).**

**The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is not permitted for any submitted coursework unless express permission has been granted by your instructor.**

Students **should not have AI tools write any part of their assignments or papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output.** Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offence and will be subject to academic discipline.

**Additional information:** Students can use AI tools to clarify questions they have about course content (e.g., you can ask ChatGPT about a course concept to help with your understanding), but students should be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor is a more effective strategy. Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and outdated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This means verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

### 2. Policy on Use of Translation Tools\*

**The Department of Psychology views the unapproved use of translation or language applications as an academic offence.**

Any usage of translation applications or language generation by students to complete specific assigned work for this course **must be approved** by the instructor **prior** to submitting the work **and noted by the student in the submitted work** itself.

Writing text and then feeding it into a computer application to improve or translate your own words, changing a few words, and then submitting this text as if it was your own **constitutes plagiarism.** You must compose text, choose words, construct logic flow, structure sentences and paragraphs to organize, synthesize, interpret information with your own mind. When you borrow language or ideas from another person or from a machine this must be acknowledged with quotation marks and/or citations.

#### **Why do we have this policy?**

- Translation is intellectual work and produces intellectual property, thus any text which is translated must cite the translator.
- Psychology endeavors to advance students' linguistic, analytic, and reasoning competencies – this can not happen outside of specific language competencies.
- Earning a university degree signals that an individual has advanced literacy and communicative skill in the language of instruction at the university; this is English at King's University College at Western University. If translation machines are used by students without regulation, we will have no way of certifying whether these competencies exist and fewer mechanism for encouraging students to do the hard work to develop them.

*\* Based on the policy developed by the Department of Child and Youth Studies*

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES  
2025-2026

**1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences**

**Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)**

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

**Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses\\_enrollment/exams\\_and\\_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

## **Absences from Final Examinations**

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

## **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

## **2. Support Services**

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

## **GBSV Support:**

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have

experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing [Care@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:Care@kings.uwo.ca) or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

### **3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices**

**Use of Electronic Devices:** Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

**Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom:** King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

### **4. Statement on Academic Offences**

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see [https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality\\_Reports - TurnItIn.html](https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports - TurnItIn.html).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

## **5. Copyright of Course Material**

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

## **6. Use of Recordings**

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

## **7. Policy on Attendance**

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.