

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON -- NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Electronically submit this completed form with attachments in one file to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

COLLEGE (check one):	Arts and Sciences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Business	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposal Submitted By:	Mehdi Aminrazavi		Date Prepared:	11/1/2016		
Course Title:	Neuro-Theology					
Department/discipline and course number*:	CPR/Religion 342 (will also be accepted in Contemplative Studies Minor)					
Prerequisites:	Either any one 100- or 200-level religion course or one from Biology 121/122/127 or the permission of the instructor.					

*This course number must be approved by the Office of the Registrar before the proposal is submitted.

Number of credits:	3	Will this course meet for at least 700 contact minutes for each credit hour proposed? If no, provide a credit hour justification.	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will this be a new, repeatable "special topics" course? (Do you want students to be able to take this new course more than once if the topic changes?)			NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date of first offering of this new course:	FALL OR SPRING 2017/2018					
Proposed frequency of offering of the course:	Every other year					
List the faculty who will likely teach the course:	Mehdi Aminrazavi					
Are ANY new resources required?	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	Document in attached impact statement	

This new course will be (check all that apply):						
Required in the major	<input type="checkbox"/>	Required in the minor	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Elective	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Elective in the major	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Elective in the minor	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Education**	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

**AFTER the new course is approved, a separate proposal must be sent to the General Education Committee.

Catalog Description (suggested length – less than 50 words):	
In this course, the phenomenon of religion will be analyzed and interpreted from a purely scientific perspective. This emerging field is a branch of evolutionary psychology and evolutionary biology which uses all the tools of a scientific method to study why humans have been religious throughout history.	

COURSE HISTORY:	Was this course taught previously as a topics or experimental course?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course Number and Title of Previous Course		Semester Offered		Enrollment	
Relg. 331Y		Fall 2008		15	
Relg. 331Y		Fall 2010		15	
Relg. 331Y		Fall 2012		15	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CHECK HERE if the proposed course is to be equated with the earlier topics or experimental offerings. If equated, students who took the earlier "topics" course will only be able to take the new course as a repeat (C- grade or lower).				
NOTE: If the proposed course has not been previously offered as a topics or experimental course, explain in the attached rationale statement why the course should be adopted even though it has not been tried out.					

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:

- Rationale Statement** – Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?
- Credit Hour Justification** (if required) – explain how this course will comply with the UMW Credit Hours Policy (D.5.3)
- Impact Statement** – Provide details about the Library, space, staffing, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course. Include supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. **Any change that impacts another Department must have a written statement (such as a copy of an email) from the Chair(s) agreeing to the change.**
- Sample Syllabus**

Department Chair Approval: _____ Craig Vasey _____

Date: Jan 23 2017

CCC Chair Approval: _____ *Surupa Gupta* _____

Date: 01/23/2017

UCC Chair Approval: _____

Date: _____

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:

1. Rationale Statement – Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?

This class is based on cutting edge research on the relationship between the brain, evolutionary psychology, biology and the religious phenomenon. This course is needed to familiarize students with an emerging field in religious studies in which religious thought and behavior are studied from a biological perspective.

2. Credit Hours Justification

This class will meet three times a week and is in compliance with UMW credit hours policy.

3. Impact Statement – Provide details about the Library, space, staffing, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course.

N/A---None of the above except the use of library is needed.

5. Sample Syllabus

Neuro-Theology

Mehdi Aminrazavi
Neuro-Theology
Religion 331 Y
Fall 2014

The materials we will study are part of an emerging scientific paradigm that seeks to analyze and interpret the phenomenon of religion from a purely scientific perspective. In fact, the field is a branch of evolutionary psychology and evolutionary biology which uses all the tools of a scientific method to study why humans are religious and why this phenomenon can be found in *all* human societies at *all* times and *all* places.

Week 1 Introduction, methodology, what do you do with a “false” but useful phenomenon? what does being *homo religiosus* implies for the scientists? The God’ Part of the Brain.

Why do intelligent people believe in dumb Ideas? Perhaps because they *can’t* help it! A personal journey!

Week 2 *Why God Won’t Go Away?*

Week 3 *Why God Won’t Go Away?*
Ritual Analysis

Week 4 *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*
Ritual Analysis

Week 5 *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*
Ritual Analysis

Week 6	Mid-Term
Week 7	Article Review Student Presentations
Week 8	Article Review Student Presentations
Week 9	The GOD gene Student Presentations
Week 10	The GOD gene Student Presentations
Week 11	Reviewing Articles Student Presentations
Week 12	<i>How God Changes Your Brain</i> Student Presentations
Week 13	<i>How God Changes Your Brain</i> Student Presentations
Week 14	Discussion Student Presentations

Required Texts:

1. A. Newberg & E. D'Aquili, *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*
2. A. Newberg & E. D'Aquili, *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*
3. D. Hamer *the GOD gene: How Faith Is Hardwired into Our Genes*
4. A. Newberg, *Principles of Neurotheology*

Recommended Texts and articles:

1. Joseph Giovannoli, *The Biology of Belief: How Our Biology Biases Our Beliefs and Perceptions*
2. Robert Pollack, *The Faith of Biology and the Biology of Faith*
3. C.R. Albright & J.B. Ashbrook, *Where God Lives in the Human Brain*
4. A. Newberg & M. Robert Waldman, *How God Changes Your Brain*

www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/opinion/13brooks.html?ex=1211342400&en=f1709d5171f59b95&ei=5070&emc=eta1

Alix Spiegel, Is Believing In God Evolutionarily Advantageous?
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129528196&sc=fb&cc=fp>

Falling in love:
<https://aeon.co/videos/contestants-have-five-minutes-in-an-fmri-to-love-someone-as-hard-as-they-can>

Your grade is computed on the following basis:

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (December 2015)

Mid-Term	20
Final	30
In class presentation	15
Research paper	20
Attendance and participation	15

Due to the nature of this course, you will lose the 15 points of attendance and participation if you miss more than one class (unexcused absence). Your letter grade in the course will be an A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, or F if your average is at least 90%, 80%, 70%, 60% or below 60%, respectively. "Participation" means more than attendance, but it does include attendance, since you cannot participate if you're absent. Excessive absences will be detrimental to your grade. The primary factors in the participation grade are: evidence that you are prepared for class (by your questions, answers and comments) and the quality (as well as quantity) of your contributions to our in-class work.

Late work will not be credited; to avoid a zero, do it on time.

II. University of Mary Washington operates at all times under an Honor System. Each student is expected to comply with the spirit of the system, which means (among other things) regular attendance in class, conscientious and timely completion of homework and reading assignments, honesty, and attentiveness to infractions of the Honor Policy.

Because we have an Honor System and intend that students conduct themselves as trustworthy, mature and self-responsible individuals, we do not mechanically count attendance each session. However, you are expected to be in class for each meeting, and to miss only in cases of genuine and significant conflicts, illness or emergency (the same criteria you would apply to the instructor). You will lose the 10 points for participation and attendance if you miss three classes or more which does not fit the description above.

III. When you are having difficulty with the material in this course, you should feel free to contact me and ask for assistance; it is unwise to let your confusions linger. It is your responsibility as a student to seek such help when and as you need it.

OFFICE INFORMATION:

Trinkle Hall #237
 Tel. 654-1341
Maminraz@umw.edu

M 9:30-10:00 and 2:00-3:00
 T By appointment only
 W 9:30-10:00 and 2:00-3:00
 TH By appointment only
 F 9:30-10:00 and 2:00-3:00