

# FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

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### **PI 802: SCIENCE, RELIGION & HUMAN PURPOSE** **SPRING, 2004**

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Office Hours: By appointment

### **DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore human purpose through an integrative consideration of science and religion in the Western tradition. Students are expected to critically engage themes from moral philosophy, theology, history of science, anthropology, neurobiology, and cognitive science related to human purposes. Students are encouraged to integrate learning with personal formation. It is expected that students will complete the course with an epistemology of human purpose relevant to the practice of psychotherapy.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. To chart philosophical and historical associations between science and religion specific to human purpose.
2. To use altruism as a case study for human purpose, including the person as a relational and symbolic being.
3. To construct a cognitive and affective scaffold for meaning in the “culture” of psychotherapy.
4. To facilitate personal formation around the student’s identity as a scientist, healer, and caregiver.

### **COURSE FORMAT**

The class will meet Thursdays, 3:00 PM-5:50 PM in PSY 311. Students are expected to participate in class exercises, read assigned texts, and generate oral/written material. The course is designed around an interactive learning environment that includes case simulation, group work, and personal formation. Attendance is mandatory. **NB:** *All cellular phones must be turned off during class.*

*Evaluation.* Evaluation will be based on written assignments and midterm exam. All written work is expected in the format of the American Psychological Association publication manual, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. The APA publication manual can be found on reserve at McAlister Library. Another option is to purchase an APA template for MS Word entitled *APA Style Helper 3.0*. This may be purchased at [www.apa.org/books](http://www.apa.org/books).

*Assignments.* Late assignments will result in loss of one letter grade for each week late. It is my policy not to accept any course assignments beyond the last day of the quarter. If you wish to maximize confidentiality on your graded assignments, please submit the assignment in an envelope. Your graded assignment will be returned in the same envelope. Assignments may also be submitted electronically in Microsoft Word format. Assignments may be sent to [kevinreimer@cp.fuller.edu](mailto:kevinreimer@cp.fuller.edu)

### **REQUIRED READING (~1,000 pages):**

Brooke, J. H., & Cantor, G. (2000). *Reconstructing nature: The engagement of science and religion*. New York: Oxford.

Damasio, A. (2003). *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, sorrow, and the feeling brain*. New York: Harcourt.

Dueck, A. C., & Reimer, K. (2003). Retrieving the virtues in psychotherapy: Thick and thin. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 46, 427-443. **NB:** This article can be obtained at:  
<http://www.fuller.edu/sop/integration/Publications/Dueck%20Reimer.pdf>

MacIntyre, A. (1999). *Dependent rational animals*. Chicago: Open Court.

### **RECOMMENDED READING:**

Brown, W., Murphy, N. & Malony, N. (Eds.) (1998). *Whatever happened to the soul? Scientific and theological portraits of human nature*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Colby, A. & Damon, W. (1994). *Some do care: Contemporary lives of moral commitment*. New York: Free Press.

Damasio, A. (1994). *Descartes error: Emotion, reason, and the human brain*. New York: Avon.

Deacon, T. (1997). *The symbolic species: The co-evolution of language and the brain*. New York: Norton.

Emmons, R. (1999). *The psychology of ultimate concerns: Motivation and spirituality in personality*. New York: Guilford.

Fauconnier, G. & Turner, M. (2003). *The way we think: Conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*. New York: Basic.

Hauerwas, S. (2001). *With the grain of the universe: The church's witness and natural theology*. Grand Rapids: Brazos.

Hutchins, E. (1995). *Cognition in the wild*. Cambridge, MA: MIT.

MacIntyre, A. (1997). *Three rival versions of moral enquiry: Encyclopedia, genealogy, tradition*. South Bend, IN: Notre Dame.

Nouwen, H. (2002). *Here and now*. New York: Crossroads.

Oliner, S. (1992). *Altruistic personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe*. New York: Free Press.

Post, S., Underwood, L., Schloss, J., & Hurlbut, W. (Eds.) (2002). *Altruism and altruistic love: Science, philosophy, and religion in dialogue*. New York: Oxford.

Reimer, K. (2004). Natural character: Psychological realism for the downwardly mobile. *Theology & Science* 2(1), 226-254.

Sedikides, C. & Brewer, M. (Eds.) (2001). *Individual self, relational self, collective self*. London: Taylor & Francis.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING**

1. Reading Critique (25% of grade). Each of the assigned texts deals with scientific/religious content related to human purpose through various genres (e.g., historical, philosophical, neurobiological, psychological). For each text, write a 2 page double-spaced critique of the text's content AND use of literary genre. Your critique should answer the following questions: a), "What is the view of human purpose under scrutiny by this author?" and b), "How does this view change my perspective on personal identity and caring in psychotherapy, if at all?"

DUE DATES: As follows, in class:

Brooke & Cantor, April 15

MacIntyre, April 29

Damasio, May 13

Dueck & Reimer, May 27

2. Midterm Exam (35% of grade). The midterm will apply material from course lectures and readings to 2 therapy case vignettes. Students will respond to short essay

questions probing issues of identity, purpose, caring, revelation, and science in the therapeutic conversation. The midterm will take one hour of class time.

EXAM DATE: May 6 in class.

3. Term Paper (40% of grade). The term paper will be 12 pages (double-spaced) and include two parts. In **Part I**, select an “emergent” issue of human cognition and behavior as presented in class (e.g., altruism, spirituality, morality). Using scripture and/or theological resources, draft a discussion of a) how human purpose is understood on the basis of your emergent issue, and b) whether your emergent issue can be scientifically interpreted without violating a commitment to revelation. Your argument in Part I should lead to a one-sentence thesis statement regarding human purpose and personal identity. In **Part II**, explore how this “thick” thesis from informs your understanding of healing in psychotherapy. In your discussion, use a case vignette to show how your convictions regarding human purpose and personal identity will shape the “culture” of psychotherapy.

DUE DATE: Last day of class.

## SCALE

A = 90-100% Excellent

B = 80-89% Expected

C = 70-79% Below Expectations

F = <69% Unacceptable

## ACADEMIC POLICIES

FTS academic policies are described in the *Academic Handbook*, which is updated annually. The *Handbook* includes policies on extensions for incomplete coursework, academic integrity, non-discriminatory language, academic appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with FTS academic policies and to follow them. Copies of the *Academic Handbook* are available at the psychology reception desks at FTS.

## CLASS LECTURE TOPICS

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- ✘ *Aristotle in Geneva: Science, Religion, & Human Nakedness*
- ✘ *Whose Purpose? What Origin? Natural Theology & Divine Revelation*
- ✘ *Queen of the Sciences: Does Psychology Serve Theology?*
- ✘ *Emergence & Top-Down Causation*

- ✘ The following lectures are adapted from: Reimer, K. (forthcoming). *Theater of the caring mind: Everyday altruism in L'Arche.*
- ✘ *Why I Care*
- ✘ *Remembering Kenny*
- ✘ *Theater of the Caring Mind*
- ✘ *Something More from Nothing But*
- ✘ *Reparation from Suffering: The Culture of Christian Psychotherapy*
- ✘ *Retrieving the Virtues, Reclaiming the Beloved*