Administrative Unit: History & Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: SOCI 341

Course Title: Social/Psychological Aspects of Religion

Number of: Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Social and psychological principles and concepts applied to religions and religious movements. Crosslisted as PSYC 341. Prerequisite: PSYC 101 or SOCI 111. Occasional offering.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): Prerequisite: PSYC 101 or SOCI 111.

Text(s): Most current editions of the following:


Durkheim, Emile. Translated by Carol Cosman. The Elementary Forms of Religious Life. Oxford UP.


Supplemental Texts:

Course Objectives:

- To understand the role of religion in society from a sociological perspective.
- To summarize the contributions to the sociology of religion provided by the classical social theorists: Marx, Weber, and Durkheim.
- To understand patterns of religiosity across time and place.
- To compare and contrast different religions in terms of beliefs, practices, sacred texts, deities, etc.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:

- Describe the collective behavioral forms of religious experience and structures adapted from that behavior.
- Analyze and explain the patterns of both ecstatic and ritual action among comparative religions.
- Synthesize the perspectives of sociology and psychology on the role of religion in solidarity and social change.
- Understand the various religions studied and their similarities and differences.
Topical Outline (major areas of coverage):

- Sacred and the Profane
- Significance of Ritual—Durkheim
- Theoretical Perspectives on Religion and Society—Marx, Weber, Durkheim
- Judaism, Christianity, Islam
- Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism
- Paganism
- Solidarity and Social Change

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 30

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: Dr. Kathleen J. Fitzgerald

Date: April 3, 2006

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

Office of Academic Affairs
12/04