

Soul Beliefs: Causes and Consequences¹ (Fall 2013)

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 3:30-4:30, Tuesday 3:00-3:30 pm or by appointment

01:830:123 Soul Beliefs: Causes and Consequences (4 cr) Exploration of the causes and consequences of various beliefs about the soul. Topics such as the self, mind/body dualism, evolution, culture, death anxiety, afterlife, religious and political conflict.

Course Reader: [use only this edition!](#)

Ogilvie, D. & Hamilton, L. (2012) *Soul Beliefs: Causes and Consequences*, 2nd Second Custom Edition for Rutgers University. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Course Materials

Weekly readings will be available through a course reader that must be purchased at a local text book store (including Douglass/Cook Bookstore, Rutgers University Bookstore, and New Jersey Books). Other readings will be linked from the online syllabus, and a few more readings will be posted on the Sakai site for the course. These readings will include journal articles, essays by authorities in the field, book chapters, court rulings, etc. Students will also be encouraged to find related resources on their own and share these references on the Sakai site.

Course Goals

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Explain how life experiences shape people's worldviews.
- Analyze a contemporary global issue from a multidisciplinary perspective.
- Analyze the relationship that science and technology have to a contemporary social issue.
- Explain and be able to assess the relationship among assumptions, method, evidence, arguments, and theory in social and historical analysis.
- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.
- Apply concepts about human and social behavior to particular questions or situations.

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Grading Policies

60 pts	Mid-term exam 1
60 pts	Mid-term exam 2
100 pt	Take-home final exam
115 pts	assignments
<u>165 pts</u>	<u>(11 x 15)</u> discussion posts
500 pts	TOTAL

Academic Integrity

You are expected to be honest with yourself and fair to your fellow students. We will enforce the University's regulations on academic integrity, and we ask your individual assistance in reporting any suspected violations to us or to the Office of Student Conduct. The University's regulations are appropriately strict, and if you are tempted to violate them, you should first read the regulations and potential consequences: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

Logistics of the class:

You are welcome to access the course lectures at your own pace. The syllabus is just a general guide to pace your studying. I suggest that you do not wait until the last minute to access the lectures given that you will have discussion posts due each week. For each lecture, recordings of the lectures divided into 20-30 minute clips, the PowerPoint slides, and the readings are listed under each week tab.

Because this is an online class, the recitations will be carried out on the discussion boards. Each week, you will be assigned to a group and discuss the group topic with your classmates. In addition, you will post in a topic of your choice. These initial posts are due by 11:59pm on Thursdays. Students in your group, other groups or I may reply to your posts. By 11:59pm on Sundays, you will respond to those replies. These posts are to be discussions, not just isolated posts or responses such as "I agree" and "you are right". Each week, your posts will be graded out of 15 points based on quality and timeliness- please see the course site for the grading rubric.

In addition to posting on the discussion board, you will submit 9 assignments. Assignments should be uploaded to the dropbox for the assignment on the course site. In addition to listing the assignments at the end of the syllabus, the weekly tab also includes a description of the assignment and the grading rubric.

Because this is an online class, I would like you to feel free to contact me via email with any question. In addition, you may also contact me by phone if you would like extra help.

Unit 1: Historical Foundations of Science, Religion, and Worldviews

Dates	Lecture Topics [O: Ogilvie, H: Hamilton, G: Guest]	Reading Assignments	Assignments
Week of 9/2	Introduction to the Course; Questionnaire & Release Form		See and download Assignment 1 on week 2 tab NOW . You will need the extra time in order to prepare.
	Class Discussion of Soul Beliefs		
9/6	In class meeting- 1:40-3:00 in Beck Hall AUD http://rumaps.rutgers.edu/location/beck-hall		
Week of 9/9	Historical Foundations of Soul Beliefs – Part I	<i>A Partial History of Soul Beliefs</i> , p. 1-20 (Ogilvie)	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Sept. 12 at 11:59pm
	Historical Foundations of Soul Beliefs – Part II	<i>A Partial History of Soul Beliefs</i> , p. 21-36 (Ogilvie)	All replies due by Sun Sept. 15 by 11:59pm Assignment 1 – Due Sep 15 by 11:59 pm (20 pts) Talking About the Soul
Week of 9/16	Historical Foundations of Soul Beliefs – Part III (with guest contribution by Prof. Tracy Shors)	Course Reader Chapter 1, p 1-40: <i>The Evolution of Religious Behavior</i> (Wade)	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Sept. 19 at 11:59pm
	Functions of Religion in Ancient & Modern Times		All replies due by Sun Sept. 22 by 11:59pm Assignment 2 – Due Sep 22 by 11:59 pm (10 pts) Religion in Societies
Week of 9/23	Religions Under Attack	<i>The Four Horsemen of Atheism</i> Video Part 1: (Link) Video Part 2: (Link)	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Sept. 26 at 11:59pm
	Big Ideas and Big Controversies	<i>The Crime of Galileo and Scientific Revolution</i> http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1630galileo.asp	All replies due by Sun Sept. 29 by 11:59pm Assignment 3 – Due Sept 29 by 11:59 pm (10 pts) Religious Conflict in the World
Week of 9/30	Darwin's Dangerous Idea	Course Reader Chapter 2, p 41-65: <i>Ever Since Darwin</i> essays (1) Darwin's Delay, (2) Darwin's Sea Change, (3) Darwin's Dilemma: The Odyssey of Evolution, and (4)	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Oct. 03 at 11:59pm

		Darwin's Untimely Burial. (Gould) Course Reader Chapter 7, p 134-140: <i>The Development of Evolutionary Science</i>	
	H: The Mind-Body Problem	Course Reader Chapter 4, p73-88: <i>My Brain Made Me Do It</i> (Gazzaniga) <i>Did Your Brain Make You Do It?</i> (Monterosso & Schwartz) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/29/opinion/sunday/neuroscience-and-moral-responsibility.html?_r=1 <i>The Mind-Body Problem</i> (Eliasmith) http://philosophy.uwaterloo.ca/MindDict/mindbody.html	All replies due by Sun Oct. 06 by 11:59pm Assignment 4 – Due Oct 06 by 11:59 pm (15 pts) Darwin's Theory and a New World

**** **Exam 1** ****
**** **FRI OCT 11** ****

Unit 2: Belief Systems as a Part of Our Lives

Dates	Lecture Topics	Reading Assignments	Assignments
Week of 10/14	Thinking and Feeling	Course Reader Chapter 5 p 89-105: <i>Unpleasantness in Vermont</i> (Damasio)	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Oct. 17 at 11:59pm
	Terror Management (Prof. Solomon)	<u>Solomon et al., <i>Tales from the Crypt</i> (on Sakai)</u>	All replies due by Sun Oct. 20 by 11:59pm
Week of 10/21	Internalized Beliefs I	<i>Anatomy of Internalized Beliefs</i> (Ogilvie), p 1-21	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Oct. 24 at 11:59pm
	Internalized Beliefs II: The Evolution of Senses of Self in Childhood	<i>Anatomy of Internalized Beliefs</i> (Ogilvie), p 22-40 Course Reader Chapter 3 p 67-71: <i>Religion is Natural</i> (Bloom) <i>Mirror Neurons and Imitation: Learning as the driving force behind "the great leap forward" in</i>	All replies due by Sun Oct. 27 by 11:59pm Assignment 5—Due Oct 27 by 11:59 pm (20 pts) Core Beliefs

		<p><i>human evolution.</i> (Ramachandran)</p> <p>http://williamspencer.com/mirror_neurons.pdf</p>	
Week of 10/28	After-Life, Out of Body, and Disembodied: What's the evidence? (Prof. Musolino)	Course Reader Chapter 6 p 110-129: Psychology and Scientific Thinking	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Oct. 31 at 11:59pm
	After-Life, Out of Body, and Disembodied: What's the evidence? (Prof. Musolino)	<p>Soul Searching- Chapter 2 (Churchland)</p> <p>My Heavens –Chapter 3 (Churchland)</p>	<p>All replies due by Sun Nov. 3 by 11:59pm</p> <p>Assignment 6– Due Nov. 3 by 11:59 pm (10 pts) Intercessory Prayer</p>
Week of 11/4	Prelude 3: Biological Perspectives		Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Nov. 7 at 11:59pm
	The Brain and Our Emotional Future	Re-Read Course Reader Chapter 3 p 67-71: <i>Religion is Natural</i> (Bloom)	<p>All replies due by Sun Nov. 10 by 11:59pm</p> <p>Assignment 7 –Due Nov. 10 by 11:59 pm (10 pts) Dualism: Bloom vs. Descartes</p>
Week of 11/11	The Biology of Thou Shalt Not	<p><i>The Biology of Thou Shalt Not</i> (Hamilton)</p> <p>Re-read Course Reader Chapter 4, p73-88: <i>My Brain Made Me Do It</i> (Gazzaniga)</p> <p>Neuroscience in Court (Kelland) http://news.yahoo.com/insight-neuroscience-court-brain-made-070322193.html</p>	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Nov. 14 at 11:59pm
	The Undesired Self	<i>The Undesired Self</i> (Ogilvie, Cohen, & Solomon)	<p>All replies due by Sun Nov. 17 by 11:59pm</p> <p>Assignment 8- Due Nov. 17 by 11:59 pm (10 pts) Emotions and Transgressions</p>

**** Exam 2 ****

Friday November 15

Unit 3: How Does It All End?

Dates	Lecture Topics	Reading Assignments	Assignments
Week of 11/18	Evolutionary Psychology	Cosmides & Tooby, Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer, http://www.cep.ucsb.edu/primer.html	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Nov. 21 at 11:59pm
	The Evolution of the Human Brain	Course Reader Chapter 7, p 134-155: Evolution, Heredity &Behavior	All replies due by Sun Nov. 24 by 11:59pm
Week of 11/25	The Human Spark	NPR interview with Richard Leakey: http://www.npr.org/2011/04/15/135442954/richard-leakey-reflects-on-human-past-and-future	
Week of 12/2	The Scopes Trial: Human Origins and the Public Classroom	<i>The Scopes Trial</i> (Sakai) http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/evolut.htm	Discussion post in your topic and in another topic due by Thursday Dec. 5 at 11:59pm
	The Dover Board of Education: Intelligent Design and the Public Classroom	<i>Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District: Teaching Intelligent Design in Public Schools</i> (Lee) http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/crcl/vol41_2/lee.pdf <i>Defeating Creationism in the Courtroom, But Not in the Classroom</i> (Berkman & Plutzer) * <i>Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District</i> http://www.aclupa.org/downloads/Dec20opinion.pdf (*Suggested, not required)	All replies due by Sun Dec. 8 by 11:59pm Assignment 9 –Due Dec. 8 by 11:59 pm (10 pts) Soul Reversal
Week of 12/9	Where Do We Go From Here?		

Take-Home Final Exam

Assignments

Assignment 1 – Due Sep 15 Talking About the Soul (20pts)

According to a poll taken in 2008, ninety-six percent of adults in the United States report they believe each person possesses a soul and 82% believe heaven exists. This means there is a high probability that you and other people you know believe that souls exist and a large portion of that group believe in Heaven. But we don't have much information about what people believe comprises the soul and it is very likely there are many versions of afterlife beliefs. Your kick-off written assignment is to help fill in some gaps regarding *what* people believe about the soul, whether or not it survives death, and *how* they came to believe whatever they believe.

Here are the mechanics of your paper.

1. Create a title page. Something like "Soul Beliefs" would be sufficient. Place your name, date, and RUID on the title page. This page will be removed after the score you receive on your paper is recorded,
2. Write your **sex, age, ethnicity** and **religious affiliation** at the top of the first page of your paper. (The first page is not the title page). Use the rest of the single or double-spaced page to write your own answer to the question, "**What is the soul?**" Define it as clearly as you can. (Note that there is no correct answer and you won't be graded on your definition). Then, on the same page, **state whether or not you believe it will survive your death (yes or no is enough)**, and, if yes, **What are the options for its final destination?**
3. Interview three (3) people about their definitions of, or beliefs about, the soul. Then ask them the same question you answered: **What is the soul? Does it survive death? What are the options for its final destination?** Condense the information into one page. Include their **age, sex, ethnicity, religious affiliation** and **occupation** on the top of the page. Do not give their names. These pages are to be numbered 2, 3, and 4.
4. On the final (page 5) briefly compare all four responses (yours and the 3 people you interviewed).

Note: Not every page needs to be a full page, but no page should run over to another page. Double spacing or single spacing is up to you.

This is a "for credit" exercise carrying a maximum of 10-points. Fewer than 10 points will be granted for failure to follow the directions, incomplete papers, sloppy formatting, and poor writing.

When reporting ethnicity, please use what you (or your interviewee) feel is most accurate from the options: **White, Black, Asian, South Asian, Latino, Multiracial and Other.**

Assignment 2 – Due Sep 22 Religion in Societies (10 pts)

Historians/Anthropologists say that no society has existed without religion. Why do you think this is so? Be sure to include some element of Wade's argument in your 1-page paper.

Assignment 3 – Due Sept 29 Religious Conflict in the World (10 pts)

In ancient and modern times, religious differences have been directly or indirectly involved in the outbreak and maintenance of animosities between various groups both within and across national borders. The conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland is a good example of a within nation strife. The Crusades that featured Christians attempting to wrest control of holy places in around Jerusalem from the hands of Muslims is an example of a war that crossed national boundaries. Although one might be tempted to think that we have moved beyond the point where different religious commitments fuel intergroup hostilities, even a cursory look at the news of current events both locally and around the world underscores the continued contributions of religion beliefs and commitments to a tense and dangerous world. Your assignment is to locate and, in one page, summarize an article

in the news (either in print or online from a reputable news source) about a contemporary event or series of events, either in this nation or somewhere around the world, wherein religious differences are in the mix of factors involved in intergroup conflicts. Include a copy of the article (a clipping will be sufficient) with your paper.

Assignment 4 -- Due Oct 06 Darwin's Theory and a New Worldview (15 pts)

Charles Darwin refused to make a distinction between "higher" and "lower" species in his theory of evolution, arguing that all species, including human beings, are products of natural selection. He delayed publishing *The Origin of Species* because he knew that his ideas severely challenged basic assumptions about how human beings "arrived" on Earth.

Write a 2-page paper that 1) summarizes Darwin's theory of "descent by modification", 2) how "natural selection" contradicted the prevailing worldviews of his time, and 3) provide evidence that resistance to the theory of evolution remains strong in some sectors of our society 150 years after his seminal work was published .

Assignment 5 – Due Oct 27 Core Beliefs (20 pts)

The assigned reading titled *The Anatomy of Internalized Beliefs* deals with how beliefs about the soul can be transformed into unquestioned assumptions about how things are. These assumptions need not be conscious in order for them to direct the course of a life. But beliefs about the soul are not the only beliefs that can be internalized as assumptions. Early on in our lives or subsequent to childhood, we make various decisions about who we are. Some of these decisions can become enduring and persistent beliefs that can be transformed as basic assumptions that covertly guide our thinking, decisions, and actions. Some of these non-conscious "who I am" assumptions can be sources of empowerment. Others can limit what we do, place restrictions on our relationships, and distort our self-perceptions. For the purpose of this exercise, these assumptions about ourselves will be referred to as *core beliefs*. If you are not able to articulate one of your core self-beliefs, select one of the above that comes close to describing how you sometimes feel.

In this assignment, identify one of your core beliefs about yourself and write a 2-page paper that includes the following elements:

- A statement of the core belief
- When and under what conditions do you think it was formed
- How it has influenced your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the past
- How it currently influences your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Finally, after you have thought about one of your core self-beliefs, consider (in writing) if it "makes sense" to keep it or if the time has come to revise it or let it go.

One of the most difficult parts of this assignment is isolating a core self-belief because core self-beliefs tend to be elusive. In fact, you might not be able to identify a core belief, but you will be able to locate one of its neighbors. It might be useful to review the following examples of core self-beliefs that students have identified and written about in the past.

- I am a special person, destined for fame
- I am courageous
- I am imposter – "I hope nobody ever discovers how weak and incompetent I really am"
- I am under-rated by people around me
- I am honest
- I am stupid
- I am unloved and unlovable
- I am a person who is consistently misunderstood
- I am polite
- Underneath it all, I don't feel like I am a person of worth

- I am invincible
- I am unattractive
- It's important to me that everyone like me
- Underneath it all, I am a phony
- I am outgoing
- I am a good listener
- I always keep my word

Assignment 6- Due Nov 03 Intercessory Prayer (10 pts)

Research on the Effects of Prayer on Coronary Care Patients. A 1988 study by Randolph C. Byrd used 393 patients at the San Francisco General Hospital coronary care unit (CCU). In this study, people prayed for some patients to get better but not for others. Measuring 29 health outcomes using three-level (good, intermediate, or bad) scoring, the group that was prayed for suffered fewer newly diagnosed ailments on six of them. Byrd concluded that "Based on these data there seemed to be an effect, and that effect was presumed to be beneficial", and that "intercessory prayer to the Judeo-Christian God has a beneficial therapeutic effect in patients admitted to a CCU."

A 1999 follow-up by William S Harris et al. attempted to replicate Byrd's findings under stricter experimental conditions, noting that the original research was limited to only "prayer-receptive" individuals (57 of the 450 patients invited to participate in the study refused to give consent "for personal reasons or religious convictions"). Additionally, the patients in the study knew that they were being studied, so some of the results may be attributed to some kind of placebo effect, where thinking that someone was praying for you made you feel better (this happens all the time with medications).

In other words, what Harris et al. did was give the names of 990 patients to volunteers who prayed for them daily. The volunteers were not updated on the patients' statuses and prayed for each person for 28 days regardless of how quickly they were discharged from the hospital. Additionally, the patients were not told that someone was praying for them, and they weren't asked if they wanted to participate (this is ethically okay, because the patients didn't actually do anything, and because asking them might cause additional distress).

Harris et al. (1999) used a different scoring system than Byrd, where hospitals patients were assigned points for anything that happened during their hospital stay. For example, getting a fever was 1 point, needing a pacemaker, defibrillator, or catheter counted as three points each, and going into cardiac arrest was 5 points. Using this weighted scoring system – which admittedly was, like Byrd's scoring, "an unvalidated measure of CCU outcomes," meaning that it was a new way of measuring how well someone did that hadn't been used before – Harris et al. found that patients who were prayed for scored an average of 6.35 on this scale, and those who were not prayed for scored an average of 7.13 – a 10% difference that was statistically significant. They found a similar difference if they just counted bad things that happened and didn't assign points – people who were prayed for did a little better. They concluded that "supplementary, remote, blinded, intercessory prayer produced a measurable improvement in the medical outcomes of critically ill patients". In other words, the prayers worked by making the people who were prayed for get better more quickly. However, when they applied Byrd's scoring system to their data, they could not document an effect of prayer.

Your assignment, based on this research, is to suggest what question(s) you would ask about this research to decide if this study proves that prayer helps people. In your one-page paper, you should specify what additional information you would want to know (for example, the theory of how prayer might have worked in this study, how the study was conducted, different groups that might have been tested, etc.). Since your commentary is limited to one page, identify only one or two items of information that would be needed to confirm or dis-confirm the hypothesis that prayer helps patients recover from heart conditions. It is strongly recommended that you use of information contained in Chapter 6 of the Course Reader (Psychology and Scientific Thinking) as your guide and make proper citations when you do so.

*For those of you who are interested, the original article can be found in the resources for this course, but it is NOT REQUIRED.

Assignment 7 -- Due Nov 10 Dualism: Bloom vs. Descartes (10 pts)

In his Meditations, Rene Descartes sums up his central dualist thesis when he states: "There is a vast difference between the mind and the body, in that the body...is always divisible, while the mind is completely indivisible" Although Paul Bloom also posits a sort of dualism in his work, it is somewhat different, as can be understood when he states: "'[Children] are dualists in the sense that they naturally see the world as containing two distinct domains...'physical objects and real events' and 'mental states and entities'."

Although they may seem similar at first, consider the full implications of their stances. Then, in a 2-page paper, compare Descartes' version of dualism with the dualism of children proposed by Paul Bloom, using this week's readings as your primary sources.

Assignment 8 – Due Nov 17 Emotions and Transgressions (10 pts)

Think back to some incident in your childhood (preferably before 10 years of age) when you did something wrong—it doesn't need to be some major transgression, but it should be something that you remember well and are willing to write about. In a 1-page paper:

- Briefly describe the incident
- Describe your knowledge at the time concerning the "rules" against such behavior
- Describe the differences (if any) of your knowledge about these rules now
- This will be difficult (perhaps impossible), but try to reconstruct your emotions at the time of the incident
- Describe the differences (if any) of your emotions about this behavior now, and... would you repeat it now?

Assignment 9 – Due Dec 8 Soul Reversal (10 pts)

During the past few weeks, you've learned about different beliefs about the soul, how these beliefs have changed over time, and how they differ in the modern day depending on religious and cultural influences. You've also heard arguments declaring that there is no evidence that souls actually exist.

This assignment is a "what-if" exercise. Imagine a scenario in which your beliefs about the soul are found to be wrong. If you believe in souls, what if you found out that souls don't really exist? If you don't believe in souls, what if you found out souls really *do* exist? In a one page paper, describe how you'd feel, and if and how your life would change as a result.