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Russia Develops ‘Spiritual' Psychology University Course

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"Open Doors Day" at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow. **Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

Russia’s Science and Higher Education Ministry has created a new psychology course that trains future mental health professionals to instill traditional conservative values in their patients, the youth news website Doxa reported Tuesday.

The new course, which will be offered to both undergraduate and master's students, is called “Individual Spiritual Security and Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values in the Psychologist’s Work.”

A 32-page curriculum published by the ministry lists topics such as “modern Ukraine” and the “degradation of traditional spiritual and moral values in the West” as examples of humanity’s deviation from traditional values.

It is unclear when the course will be integrated into university programs and whether it will be mandatory for psychology students.

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The course's authors, who are connected to an obscure continuing education non-profit, said they were guided by President Vladimir Putin’s November 2022 decree, which sets out Russia’s official policy of defending “traditional values” against threats from so-called “gay propaganda.”

They also claim that surveys show that 40% of psychology graduates in Russia hold beliefs “opposite to traditional Russian spiritual and moral family values.”

“The number of social challenges and threats has increased recently: false information, foreign ideas and values imposed on the Russian youth, the propaganda of promiscuity, immorality and non-traditional sexual relations,” the course's authors write.

According to them, providing an education grounded in conservative values — which emphasize “the individuals’ spiritual and moral health” — can also help in rehabilitating Ukraine war veterans after they return to civilian life.

Russia has for years positioned itself as a bastion of "traditional" values in contrast with Western liberalism.

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