

RS 15 RELIGION AND PSYCHOLOGY
Fall Quarter, 2010

Instructor: Dr. Wade Clark Roof
Office: 3001 HSSB (Tel. 893-2562)
Email: wcroof@religion.ucsb.edu
Office Hours: Dr. Roof: Monday, Wednesday: 1:30-3 PM or by appointment;
TAs office hours to be announced.

TAs: Jennifer Hahn, Daniel Hotary, Martie Smith Roberts

Description: This is a course on religion and the “inner life” – described variously as “soul,” “mind,” or “psyche.” The focus is upon humanistic psychology -- on questions of identity, meaning, and the complex connections between religion, culture, and everyday life. Attention is given primarily to Western psychology and applications of theories to contemporary life.

Internet Resources: There are thousands of web sites on religion, quite a number on the psychology of religion. You will find it helpful to check out, in particular, the Virtual Religion Index at Rutgers University: <http://virtualreligion.net/vri/>

Required Texts:

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|----------------------|---|
| Frankl, V. | <u>Man's Search for Meaning</u> |
| Csikszentmihalyi, M. | <u>Finding Flow</u> |
| Beaudoin, T. | <u>Virtual Faith</u> |
| Kimball, C. | <u>When Religion Becomes Evil</u> |
| Forsyth, James | <u>Psychological Theories of Religion</u> |

Course Requirements:

1. Attend lectures and discussion section
2. Read assignments and do exercises in timely order
3. Two examinations, Mid-term and Final
4. Short paper (Approximately 10 typewritten, double-spaced pages) – A separate memo will describe the assignment

Examinations: Mid-term and Final. Both cover films, lectures, readings, and discussion. The final is cumulative. Each examination will include both objective and short answer and/or essay questions.

Make-Up Examinations: Available only for those who present written medical verification of illness from a physician or an obituary of a family member. No exceptions.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Serious offenses. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing even once risks failure of the course. Continued registration in the course after January 9, 2008 is regarded as acknowledgement of this risk and its consequences.

Rules of the Classroom (from the time instruction begins until class dismissed):

- 1) Cell Phones -- if they ring in class, you will be asked to vacate classroom.
- 2) Texting during class – prohibited. If caught, you’re asked to vacate classroom.
- 3) Late Attenders to Class -- sit at back of the room. Offenders to policy will be confronted. Continued registration in class implies consent to these rules.

Grading: Final grades to be determined on the basis of the following distribution of points:

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|--------------------|-----------|
| Mid-term | 30 points |
| Final | 40 points |
| Paper | 20 points |
| Discussion Section | 10 points |

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Sept. 24: INTRODUCTION: RELIGION, MODERNITY, AND YOU
Reading:
Peter Berger
www.cepchile.cl/dms/archivo_3532_1879/r98_berger_ing.pdf
Book: Virtual Faith

Key Questions:

- 1) What is religion?
- 2) Religion in culture, culture in religion
- 3) Religion and Modernity: What has Happened to Religion?

Exercise: What is the religious composition of your home community? Go to <http://www.thearda.com/> - - at top of page put in 5-digit postal code and learn about the major religious groups in your community. Further down, check out other information plus your own beliefs at “Compare Yourself.”

Sept. 27, 29 Gen X and Millennial Generation: The Centrality of the Experiential
Exercise: Go to <http://pewresearch.org/millennials/>
Check out “How Millennial Are You?”

Key Questions:

- 1) What is “Spiritual” versus “Religious?”
- 2) What is meant by “Cafeteria Religion/Spirituality?”

Oct. 4-6 RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Theories of William James
Conversion, Mysticism, Spirituality
Triggers of Religious Experience: Hearing,
Seeing, Touching, Ingesting, Fasting, Pain

Reading: “William James,” in J. Forsythe,
Psychological Theories of Religion, pp. 103-131

Key Questions:

- 1)What are the qualities of a religious experience?
- 2)What is central for James in defining religion?
- 3)The “reality of the unseen” – what is meant?

Oct. 8 “The Religious Experience” – Video

Oct. 11-13-15

THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Theories of Viktor E. Frankl

Threat of Chaos

Logotherapy

Suffering

Meaning as “Tragic Optimism”

Reading: Man’s Search for Meaning and
“Viktor Frankl,” in Forsyth, pp. 223-243.

Key Questions:

- 1)What factors figure into the “Making of Meaning?”
- 2)What can we learn from Frankl’s horrific experience as it applies to our ordinary lives?
- 3)What all does this tell you about human beings?

Oct. 18-20

THE HIDDEN SELF

Theories of Sigmund Freud

Need for Protection

Religion as Illusion

Dreams and Wish-fulfillment

Reading: “Sigmund Freud,” in J. Forsyth,
Psychological Theories of Religion, pp. 150.

Key Question: Do you really know yourself?

Read: <http://www.psywww.com/books/interp/chap03.htm>

Oct. 22:

Film: “The Hidden Nature of Man”

Oct. 25-27

THE UNDISCOVERED SELF

Theories of Carl G. Jung
Collective Unconscious
Archetypes
Individuation
Personality Types

Reading: "C.G. Jung," in J. Forsyth,
Psychological Theories of Religion pp. 51-
102.

Key Question: Are their identities within you yet to be
discovered?

Read: Jung on the Native American Medicine Wheel
What do you learn?

[http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=908
&Itemid=1](http://www.cgjungpage.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=908&Itemid=1)

Oct. 29

MID-TERM --- Nov. 1

Nov. 3-5

THE DEVELOPING SELF

Theories of Erik Erikson
Life-Cycle Theories
See also Attachment Theory

Key Question: How am I evolving, and why?

Read:

<http://www.learningplaceonline.com/stages/organize/Erikson.htm>

Nov. 8

WOMEN AND MEN

Key Question: Really now, this question again?

For a "Feminism and Religion Don't Mix" piece, read:
<http://www.buffalobeast.com/121/godhateswomen.htm>

For a more balanced view, read:
<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/faithandreason/perspectives3.html>

Nov. 10 Video: “Adam, Eve, and the Serpent”

Nov. 12 THE EMPTY SELF
The Expressive Self
Technology and Saturation
Consumption as a Means of Self-Construction

Read: <http://www.beingwithoutself.org/talks/ShoreAutobio.pdf>

Read: <http://www.blogsmonroe.com/christian/2009/07/escaping-the-empty-self/>

Nov. 15-17-19 WHEN RELIGION IS BAD
Reified Reality
Absolutizing
Authoritarianism
Coercion and Violence

Key Question: How bad is bad? What is bad religion?

Reading: Kimball, When Religion Becomes Evil.

Go to <http://www.psychwww.com/psyrelig/>
Scroll to New Religious Movements
Read “Society and Religion Movements”
and “Heaven’s Gate Website” (group suicide)

Nov. 22-24-29 WHEN RELIGION IS GOOD
Maslow and Self-Actualization
Fromm: Authoritarian vs. Humanistic Religion
Allport: Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Religion

Key Question: How good is good? What is good religion?

Read: On Maslow, pp. 195-220 in Psychological Theories
On Fromm, pp. 135-162 “ “
On Allport, pp. 165-192 “ “

http://pandc.ca/?cat=abraham_maslow&page=needs_hierarchy

Read: The Many “Truths” of Religion

http://www.omsakthi.org/essays/truth_religions.html

Read: Csikszentmihali, Finding Flow

PAPERS DUE ON Nov. 29

Dec. 1 SUMMING UP
Dec. 3 QUESTIONS/FINAL EXAM/COURSE EVALUATION

FINAL EXAMINATION - Thursday, Dec. 9, 4-7PM
