

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

RLG 211

**Professor M. A. Hewitt
Trinity College
Larkin 326
hewitt@trinity.utoronto.ca**

COURSE SYLLABUS [2017]

SEPTEMBER 11

INTRODUCTION:

What is 'Psychology of Religion'?

What is 'Religious Psychology'?

How are they to be distinguished from the 'psychoanalytic (depth psychology) study of religion'?

These questions become further complicated in sorting out what is a viable and reasonable working definition of 'religion.'

How is it possible to think about the academic study of religion in ways that distinguish it from *religious* studies and theology?

What are the differences between 'psychology' and 'psychoanalysis' and how do these differences shape and contribute to scholarly theories of religious beliefs, experiences and practices from a psychological and/or psychoanalytic perspective?

How does the study of religion approach subjective experience and explanatory analysis?

Are these approaches (emic/etic) mutually exclusive or complementary with respect to a theoretically adequate psychology of religion?

These issues will allow for a consideration of the interrelated questions concerning the source of religious beliefs, experiences and practices.

SITUATING/DEFINING THE DISCIPLINE

SEPTEMBER 18

Melford E. Spiro. 1966. "Religion: Problems of Definition and Explanation". In Michael Banton, (ed.). *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*. Tavistock.

David Wulff, 2016. "The Psychology of Religion: Originative Figures" in *Religion: Social Religion*, Wm. B. Parsons, ed. MacMillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks: Religion Series. Farmington Mills, MI.

Robert Fuller, 2016. "The Psychology of Religion: Historical and Contemporary Trends" in Wm. B. Parsons.

PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACHES TO RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE & BELIEF

SEPTEMBER 25

Sigmund Freud, 1927. "The Future of an Illusion." Vol. 21. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (SE)*. James Strachey (trans) London: Vintage/Hogarth Press

Sigmund Freud, 1930. "Civilization and its Discontents". Vol. 21. (chapter 1)

OCTOBER 2

Sigmund Freud, (1923). A Seventeenth Century Demonological Neurosis. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Edited James Strachey. Vol. 19: 72-105.

Lee Kirkpatrick, 1999. "Attachment and Religious Representations and Behaviour," in *Handbook of Attachment*, J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (eds) 803-822. New York: Guildford Press

OCTOBER 9----THANKSGIVING--NO CLASS

PSYCHOLOGIES OF MYSTICISM

OCTOBER 16 (ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE: 25%)

William James. (1902/1983) *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Penguin Classics. Lectures 1, 2 & 3.

Ralph Hood, 2002. "The Mystical Self: Lost and Found." *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*. 12/1: 1-14.

OCTOBER 23

William James. *Varieties*, Lectures 16/17; Lecture 18 & 20.

David Aberbach. 1987. "Grief and Mysticism". *International Review of Psychoanalysis*. 14: 509-

OCTOBER 30

Jason Blum. 2015. William James on How to Study Experience: Integrating Phenomenology of Religion and Radical Empiricism. *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*. 1-24.

Leigh Eric Schmidt. 2003. The Making of Modern 'Mysticism'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 71/2: 273-302.

NOVEMBER 6---- NO CLASS

COMPARATIVE APPROACHES: CULTURAL & HISTORICAL

NOVEMBER 13

Bruce T. Grindal. 1983. Into the Heart of the Sisala Experience: Witnessing Death Divination. *Journal of Anthropological Research*. 39/1. 60-80.

Pieter Craffert. 2011. Shamanism and the Shamanic Complex. *Biblical Theology Bulletin*. 41/3: 151-161.

Edith Turner. 1993. The Reality of Spirits: A Tabooed or Permitted Field of Study?" *Anthropology of Consciousness*. 4/1:

NOVEMBER 20 (ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE: 35%)

Gananath Obeyesekere. 1970. "The Idiom of Demonic Possession: A Case Study". *Social Science and Medicine*. 4: 97-111.

Gananath Obeyesekere. 1975. "Psycho-Cultural Exegesis of a Case of Spirit Possession in Sri Lanka". *Contributions to Asian Studies*, 8: 41-89.

Colleen Ward. 1980. "Spirit Possession and Mental Health: A Psycho-Anthropological Perspective". *Human Relations*. 33/3: 149-163.

CONCLUSION: NOTE ON METHODOLOGY: EMIC, ETIC, BOTH?

NOVEMBER 27

David Hufford, 2010. "Visionary Spiritual Experiences in an Enchanted World." *Anthropology and Humanism*. 35/2: 142-158.

DECEMBER 4 (ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE: 20%)

REVIEW/DISCUSSION

EVALUATION

Students will be asked to write THREE (3) PAPERS. These papers must be written in formal academic style, i.e. title page, clearly indicated references and bibliography. Specific topics will be suggested. Hand your papers in at the beginning of class on the due date.

DO NOT SEND PAPERS ELECTRONICALLY TO EITHER THE PROFESSOR OR THE TA.

Essay #1: 25%. (four to five pages).* Due: October 16.

Essay #2: 35%. (five to six pages).* Due: November 20.

Essay #3: 20% (three to five pages)* Due: December 4.

****Note: A penalty of 2% per day applies against assignments handed in after the deadline.***

Class attendance/participation: 20%**

*****Note: Class attendance and participation is part of the assigned work for this course.***

If you miss class due to illness or an unforeseen event, please email the professor with a copy to the TA to let them know, in advance wherever possible.