

**Course Outline: Fall 2018**

**Religious Studies 2300A**

**Religion and Psychoanalysis**

**Location: W108**

**Day(s): Wednesday**

**Time: 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**

**Instructor(s): Sharon Lindenburger, MA, PhD candidate**

**Contact info: slinden@uwo.ca**

**Prerequisites Required for this Course:**

A previous course in Religious Studies would be good, but is not a requirement. All undergrad students may enroll, as well as MTS and M.Div students.

**Course Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:  
1. Explore a variety of religious experiences through the lens of psychoanalysis

2. Trace the historical evolution of psychoanalytic perspectives on religion

3. Demonstrate that it is possible to create a dialogue between psychoanalysis and theology

4. Develop insights on how psychoanalytic factors affect the formation of faith or theology

5. Describe how images of God are affected by a psychoanalytical perspective

6. Develop a deeper understanding of the interplay between the human psyche and religious experiences and insights

**Course Syllabus:**

This course explores the relationship between religion and psychoanalysis. Prior to the development of psychoanalysis as a way of understanding human beings, religion was almost always the main source of exploring the human psyche. Psychoanalysis began to challenge the monopoly of strictly religious approaches. In some ways, psychoanalysis set itself up as a rival to religious approaches in dealing with issues such as faith, theology, and the human mind. However, in contemporary times there has been an increasing movement toward seeing religion and psychoanalysis as complementary. This course will explore some key facets of the relationship between psychoanalysis and religion theoretically, historically, clinically, and hermeneutically based on the writings of several psychoanalysts, classical and contemporary, such as William James, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Erik Erikson, D.W. Winnicott, W. Meissner, Norman Holland, and Ana-Maria Rizzuto.

**Course Materials:**

(As much as possible, the instructor will hand out selections from the books below in a file of readings to be prepared.)

Erikson, Erik. *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1962

Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1961

Freud, Sigmund. *Totem and Taboo*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1961

Holland, Norman. *5 Readers Reading*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975

---. *Literature and the Brain*. PsyArt Foundation, 2009

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Penguin, 1989

Jones, James. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion: Transference and Transcendence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991

Jung, C.G. *Psychology and Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966

Meissner, W*. Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986

Rizzuto, Ana-Maria. *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979

Winnicott, D.W. *Playing and Reality*. New York: Routledge, 1989

Optional Supplementary reading (resources for essay assignments, etc):

Clift, Wallace B. *Jung and Christianity: the Challenge of Reconciliation*. New York: Crossroad, 1996.

Fontana, David. *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*. Malden MA: Blackwell, 2003.

Fromm, Erich. *Psychoanalysis and Religion*. Binghampton, NY: Vail-Ballou Press, 1950

Freud, Sigmund. *Moses and Monotheism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1939

Jacobs, Janet Liebman and Donald Capps, eds*. Religion, Society, and Psychoanalysis: Readings* *in Contemporary Theory*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997

Loewenthal, Kate. *A Short Introduction: the Psychology of Religion*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000.

Mitchell, Stephen A. and Margaret J. Black. *Freud and Beyond: A History of Modern* *Psychoanalytic Thought*. Needham Heights MA: Simon and Schuster, 1996

Paloutzian, Raymond. *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion* (2nd edition). Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster, 1996

**Detailed Course Outline**

**Week One: Introduction**

What is religion? What is psychoanalysis? Is there an obvious link between the two? Overview of the texts, course expectations, assignments, grading, etc.

**Week Two: An early psychological approach to religion (William James)**

Chapters: The Reality of the Unseen; The Religion of Healthy-Mindedness; The Sick Soul; the Divided Self and the Process of its Unification

Text: James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*

**Week Three William James (cont’d)**

Chapters: Conversion; Conclusion of Conversion; Mysticism

**Week Four: Religion as an Illusion (Sigmund Freud)**

Freud’s Judaic background

Freud’s idea of religion as a projection; God as a father figure (deriving from the Oedipus Complex); is science a replacement for religion?

Text: Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*

**Week Five: God as an exalted father (Freud)**

The earthly father’s exaltation into heavenly father in terms of totem and taboo; connection between a totem meal and holy communion.

Text: Freud, *Totem and Taboo*

**Week Six God as an archetype in the unconscious (Carl Jung)**

The image of God as ingrained in the unconscious; the image of God as a religious symbol

Text: Jung, *Psychology and Religion*

**Week Seven: *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (Erik Erikson)**

Chapters: The Fit in the Choir; Obedience—to whom?; the Meaning of “Meaning It.”

**Week Eight: Religion as a positive creative tool (D.W. Winnicott)**

The search for the self through the creative use of imagination; Religion as transitional object

Text: Winnicott: *Playing and Reality*, Chapters: Transitional Objects; Playing: Creative Activity and the Search for the Self; the Location of Cultural Experience

**Week Nine: Ingrained Images of God (Ana-Maria Rizzuto)**

How people build an image of God; clinical research on the formation of a God-image

Text: Rizzuto: *The Birth of the Living God*: Chapters: A God Without Whiskers, A God in the Mirror; God, the Enigma; God, my Enemy

**Week Ten: Beyond Freud: the search for useful correlations between psychoanalysis and religion (Meissner)**

The dialogue between psychoanalysis and theology

Text: *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*: Chapters: The Images of Man; the Religious versus the Psychoanalytic Perspective; Freedom in Psychoanalysis and Theology

**Week 11: Does our Unconscious affect the way we interpret sacred texts such as the Bible, Torah, Buddhist sutras, etc.”**

Text: excerpts from Holland, *5 Readers Reading* and *Literature and the Brain*

How we may read ourselves into sacred texts: “reading who we are”

Brief description of Holland’s ongoing Delphi Project

Brief sharings of student research projects

**Week 12: Possibilities of a new relationship between psychoanalysis and religion (James Jones)**

Revitalizing the dialogue between psychoanalysis and religion; going beyond reductionism

Text: Jones: *Contemporary Psychoanalysis and Religion*. Chapters: Transference and Transformation; Toward a Psychoanalysis of the Sacred

Continued brief sharings of student research projects

**Assignments & Method of Evaluation of Assignments:**

**Course grading:** This is a seminar course; therefore attendance at each class is crucial. There will be no exam; however, this puts more weight on the quality of your case study paper and your class presentations and discussions.

**1. Attendance: 10%**

**2. Case Study Paper (45%).** Each student will submit a final paper on a religious theme such as conversion, mysticism, prayer, or other aspects of religious experience. The paper will demonstrate an understanding of socio-cultural contexts, psychological aspects, psychoanalytic theory and practice, and theological implications. The paper should be approx. 15 pages. Each student will do a brief presentation in class on the topic of his/her research or case study. **Deadline: December 5, 2018**

**3. Presentation (30%)** Each student will choose from required readings and prepare a presentation that a) covers the main points of the text, and b) his/her own reflections on the text. For the presentation, the student will prepare a one or two-page summary to distribute to other classmates, along with questions for discussion. The presentations will be approx. 20 minutes each. Deadline (to be determined as each student chooses a reading for presentation, beginning with Week 3)

**4. Participation in class discussions (15%)**

**Additional Statements:**

1. **Statement on Use of Electronic Devices during Tests and Exams**

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

1. **Statement on Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg113.html.
2. **Plagiarism-detecting Software/Computer Marking:**
3. All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the

commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection

of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents

in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently

submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently

between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( http://www.turnitin.com ).

B) Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for

similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that

may indicate cheating.

1. **Support Services:**

* UWO Registrar’s Office: http://www.registrar.uwo.ca
* Huron’s Faculty of Theology, Office of the Dean: http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\_of\_theology/info\_for\_current\_students
* Faculty of Theology office: srice@uwo.ca, 519-438-7224, ext. 289
* Bachelor’s Academic Advising at Huron: http://www.huronuc.ca/CurrentStudents/AcademicAdvisorsandServices
* Huron’s Writing Skills Centre: <http://www.huronuc.on.ca/student_life/writing_services>
* UWO’s Mental Health website: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to this website for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
* UWO Student Support and Development Services: <http://communications.uwo.ca/current_students/student_services.htm>
* Services provided by Western University Student Council: http://westernusc.ca/services/

1. **Accommodation for absences:**

*If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to your Faculty’s Dean’s office (or academic counselor), and not to the instructor. For the Faculty of Theology, all such documentation must be submitted to room A227. It will be the Dean`s office that will determine if accommodation is warranted.*

1. **Non-medical absences:**
2. **Medical absences:** See also the Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

—Undergraduate Students, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf)

**For work representing 10% or more of the overall grade for the course**, a student must present documentation indicating that the student was seriously affected by illness and could not reasonably be expected to meet his/her academic responsibilities. Documentation must be submitted as soon as possible to your Faculty Dean’s office (Huron Arts & Social Science students should take their documentation to the Academic Counsellor, through the Academic Services Centre at Huron), together with a Request for Relief specifying the nature of the accommodation requested. The request and documentation will be assessed and appropriate accommodation will be determined by the Dean’s office in consultation with the instructor(s.) Academic accommodation will be granted ONLY where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete his/her academic responsibilities.

The UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) and Request for Relief are available at the Student Centre website (https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm), Huron University College Academic Counselling website (www.huronuc.on.ca) or from the Dean’s Office or Academic Services Centre at Huron.