

RELIGION AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

REL 4157

“Religion would thus be a universal obsession neurosis; like the obsession neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of relation to the father. If this view is right, it is to be supposed that a turning away from religion is bound to occur with the fatal inevitability of a process of growth, and that we find ourselves at this very juncture in the middle of that phase of development.”

Sigmund Freud

“Psychoanalysis itself is just a stripe on the coat of the tiger. Ultimately it may meet the Tiger—the Thing itself—O.”

Wilfred Bion

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Course Description:

From Freud’s dismissal of religion as rooted in the infantile wish to be protected by an all-powerful father to Wilfred Bion’s reflections on the mystical dimensions of psychoanalysis, religion has been a central topic of interest for both classic and contemporary psychoanalysts. Taking an historical and critical approach, this class explores the numerous interactions between psychoanalysis and religion. It discusses the different perspectives of psychoanalytic theorists, such as Freud, Jung, Winnicott, Kohut, and Bion, on a variety of religious traditions including Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, and phenomena such as ritual, mysticism, myth, and meditation.

Course Objectives:

- To familiarize students with a range of psychoanalytic perspectives and how these different thinkers and schools have approached religion.
- To develop analytic skills in which student can independently apply different psychoanalytic theories to religious phenomena.
- To understand the ways in which psychoanalysis and religion have conflicted, competed and collaborated in making sense of the human condition and religious phenomena.

- To introduce students to an intellectual community whose basic rules of engagement and discourse are fundamentally different from, and sometimes hostile to, those of the religions being analyzed. This encounter will foster a spirit of intellectual freedom and critical inquiry and, in turn, will require the ability and willingness to think openly and critically about controversial topics. (I encourage students who feel nervous or uneasy about this requirement to come and chat with me before committing to the class).

Class Requirements:

- **Discussion Posts:** There will be weekly discussion posts required. These are *informal* responses to check that you have worked through the class material. They essentially function as an attendance and participation grade. There are 14 of them (one for each week apart from spring break) and each one will be worth between 1-2 points. Each discussion post will be open on Monday 9.00 am and close the following Sunday 11.59 pm. *In total, they will make up 10% of your total class grade.*
- **Writing Assignments:** There will be a short writing assignment at the end of each module. For each of these assignments, I will give you a set prompt to respond to. These are *formal* and must be written in an academic style. Specific details are given below. There are five of them and each one is worth 10% of your final grade. *In total, they will make up 50% of your total class grade.*
- **Mid-Term Project:** Either alone or in groups of up to three, you will be required to produce a PowerPoint presentation on some aspect of psychology and religion. This presentation should be modeled on the power points that I provide: it should include readings, powerpoint content, images ect. You are essentially teaching me about some aspect of this topic that I am not able to cover. The authors of the one that wins will be awarded an extra credit point each. *In total, this will make up 20% of your final grade.*
- **Final Project: You have two choice for your final project:**
 - (i) **A research paper** that critically examines a topic within the field of psychoanalysis and religion
 - (ii) **A website** that critically examines a topic within the field of psychoanalysis and religion.

See webcourse for specific details. *This is worth 20% of your final grade*

***There are no exams in this class**

All assignment dates are set in webcourse. It is your responsibility to check and keep on top of the assignment section with its list of due dates.

Grading Scale:

A (94-100) **A-** (90-93) **B+** (87-89) **B** (83-86) **B-** (80-82) **C+** (77-79) **C** (70-76) **D+** (67-69) **D** (63-66) **D-** (60-65) **F** (0-59)

WRITING HELP: The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF students. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu>, stop by the first floor of Colbourn Hall, or call (407) 823-2197.

Deadlines: I follow a strict policy for late assignments. Unless we have discussed and agreed on an alternative arrangement in advance, grades will be dropped by half a letter grade for each day the assignment is late and will not be accepted after 3 days.

Withdrawal Deadline is Monday October 29th

UCF Academic Integrity Code

All written assignments require strict adherence to the honor code and must include the following "I (print name) hereby certify that I have adhered to the UCF academic integrity code (signature)." I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism, which I consider an essentially cowardly and uncreative activity that undermines education, character and community:

UCF is committed to promoting a culture of academic integrity where faculty and students work together to meet our personal, professional, and social responsibilities. A degree from UCF is only valuable to the extent it reflects valid assessments of student learning. Misrepresenting your learning on texts, projects, reports, or papers invalidates your grades and tarnishes the credibility of UCF. While collaboration is encouraged in the learning and studying process, you should assume all tests, quizzes, ect. require your individual effort unless explicitly directed otherwise. Unauthorized collaboration, whether voluntary or not, is cheating. Unauthorized use of materials during a test, quiz or other assessment is cheating. Regarding papers and projects, one of the core fluencies that students need to demonstrate is the ability to discern information that is common to the public from the intellectual property of individuals. Use of protected ideas, processes or language without attribution or proper citation is plagiarism.

Student Accessibility: Any student requiring accommodations in this course must contact Student Accessibility Services at the start of class. <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu>

READINGS:

“Reading is a means to think with another person’s mind: it forces you to stretch your own”

Required Texts:

Freud, *The Future of An Illusion* (Standard Edition) W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (September 17, 1989)

Carl Gustav Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (Vintage; Reissue edition (1989)

Mark Epstein, *Going to Pieces without Falling Apart* (Harmony; Reprint edition (June 1, 1999)

A number of selected readings will also be provided for each class. Please see the content page of the PowerPoint for details.

Required Movies:

Four of your five writing assignments will require a psychoanalytic reading of the following movies:

1. The Invention of Lying (Module One)
2. The Wizard of Oz (Module Two) *
3. Kumare (Module Three) *
4. Lars and the Real Girl (Module Four)

* Available in the UCF library. All movies are available to rent on Amazon Instant for \$3.99. Please be sure to prepare in advance for access to these movies. I have kept the reading list short in order to accommodate the extra rental costs.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One: 9th-15th January

What is Psychoanalysis?

Week Two: 16th-22nd January

Introducing Freud and Classical Psychoanalysis

Week Three: 23rd -29th January

Freud on Religion

Week Four: 30th January- February 5th

Applying Freud to religion

Week Five: February 6th- February 12th

Introducing Jung and Analytic Psychology

Week Six: 13th-19th February

Jung on Religion

Week Seven: 20th -26th February

Applying Jung to Religion

Week Eight: 27th February-5th March

Introducing Kohut and Self Psychology

Week Nine: 6th March-12th March

Kohut and Religion

Week Ten: SPRING BREAK: MARCH 13TH-18TH

Week Eleven: March 20th-26th

Introducing Winnicott and Object Relations Theory

Week Twelve: March 27th-April 2nd

Winnicott and Religion

Week Thirteen: April 3rd-9th

Introducing Bowlby and Main and Attachment Theory

Week Fourteen: April 10th-16th

Bowlby and Main and Religion

Week Fifteen: April 17th-23rd

Psychoanalysis as Mysticism