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Religion and Psychology • Spring 2021

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Jonathan Edelman • jonathanedelmann@ufl.edu (<mailto:jonathanedelmann@ufl.edu>)

Spring 2021 • An Online Synchronous and Hyflex Course • University of Florida • [MAT 0105](#)
(<http://campusmap.ufl.edu/?loc=0406>)

Writing Requirement: 4000 Words • General Education: Humanities

Meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays: 11:45-12:35 PM

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 - 11:00 am.

Dead Lines

- Discussion Papers: Weeks 2-6 on Fridays, Weeks 9-13 on Fridays
- Midterm Exam: Week 7
- Final Exam: 4/30/2021 @7:30-9:30 AM
- Paper One: Week 7
- Paper Two: Week 14

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<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55673662/download?wrap=1>

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[Collapse All](#)**▼ Start Here****Course Overview****Your Assignments****UF Resources and Policies****▼ Religion and Psychology • Jonathan Edelman • Spring 2021 • Weekly Schedule****Week 1 - Introduction to Course****Week 2 - Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)****Week 3 - William James (1842-1910)****Week 4 - Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)****Week 5 - Karl Jung (1875-1961)****Week 6 - Ninian Smart (1927-2001)****Week 7 - Midterm Examination****Week 8 - Paper One**

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**Week 11 - Religious Experience****Week 12 - Intelligence and Cognition****Week 13 - Contemporary Issues in Psychology, Philosophy, and Religion****Week 14 - Final Examination Preparation****Week 15 - Paper Two Preparation**

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Week 1

The first half of this course examines key figures in the history of psychology of religion, and the second half looks at themes in the psychology of religion. In every case students are encouraged to develop their own interests, thoughts, and scholarship on the topics.

A. F. Whitehead said, "When we consider what religion is for mankind, and what science is, it is no exaggeration to say that the future course of history depends upon the decision of this generation as to the relations between them." Although Whitehead said this nearly 100 years ago, it remains true today and will most likely be true in the intellectual landscape of the 21st century. This course covers the history of philosophy and religion on the matter of psychological theory. It looks at ideas of consciousness, intelligence, emotion, and cognition within the intersection of science, philosophy, and religion. Special attention will be given to the emergence of modern science as a tool or a method for resolving psychological problems. Thus, this course will also address theories of knowledge, of ignorance, and other matters in the sciences. By engaging with key thinkers, this course helps students construct their own psychological models for explaining human experience, belief, and well-being. As we examine texts, attention will be given to the social and the intellectual contexts in which they were created. Students are encouraged to think about and taught to write about psychology within the disciplines of philosophy and religion, thus engaging questions on the sources of knowledge (epistemology), and the nature of being (ontology and metaphysics). This course builds on the study of science and religion: How do the natural sciences inform our views on what it means to be alive and how do they chart a new future for natural life and artificial intelligence? How have scholars and scientists reconciled science and religion over time? To answer this question this course examines the work of scholars and scientists from a diverse range of traditions. This course explores how portrayals of the human psyche in science, religion, and philosophy provide us with a diverse range of human values and self-understandings. This course invites us to think creatively and constructively about the relationships between evolutionary science, psychological science, cognitive science, neuroscience, and the many intellectual and cultural disciplines with which it intersects. This course focuses on some philosophical and religious responses to psychology across and between religious and philosophical disciplines. It will set psychology within the larger history of science, philosophy, and religion, and examine theoretical models for understanding the relationships between science and religion.

Lecture

- Course Overview
- Your Assignments
- How does one think about science and religion? Complexity, [Conflict](#), [Support](#), [Separation](#)

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Reading

- [Modules \(https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/modules\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/modules)
- [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. \(https://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html\)](https://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html)

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Week 2



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The beginning of contemporary philosophy is often said to begin with Kant's Critique of Pure Reason and Kant has remained an important thinker in the history of philosophy; his epistemology informs the way scholars think about religion, god, the soul, free will, and mysticism. While he is most well known for his epistemology, and his deontological ethics, he also wrote about concept of beauty and taste in his Critique of Judgement (1790 AD). This week we shall look at Kant's concept of human experience, or intuition. How does our experience of an object relate with that object? Do we see it as it is or does our human mode of receptivity, or sensibility, change the phenomenon of human experience. The connection to psychology is that Kant's views inform how one might think about god, soul, free will, and other matters related to religion, but the discussion in the mental processes by which experience even occurs.

Lecture (Monday)

- Kant's concept of sensation

Reading (Wednesday)

- [Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Chapter One](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56299410/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56299410/download>)

Discussion (Friday)

- [What is Kant's view on the role the mind plays in the production of human knowledge?](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4541849)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4541849>)

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the appear to us in the phenomena). I have put Kant at the beginning of psychology of religion because his views were so influential across the many areas disciplines and is representative of a thinker at the beginning of what we might call contemporary philosophy and an important thinker at the beginning of scientific approaches to mind and consciousness.

Online

- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/>

Additional

- [Kant's Critique of Judgement](#)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741739/download>)
- [Kant's Critique of Pure Reason \(Transcendental Doctrine of Elements, Transcendental Aesthetic, §1-7\)](#) [\(https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm\)](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm)

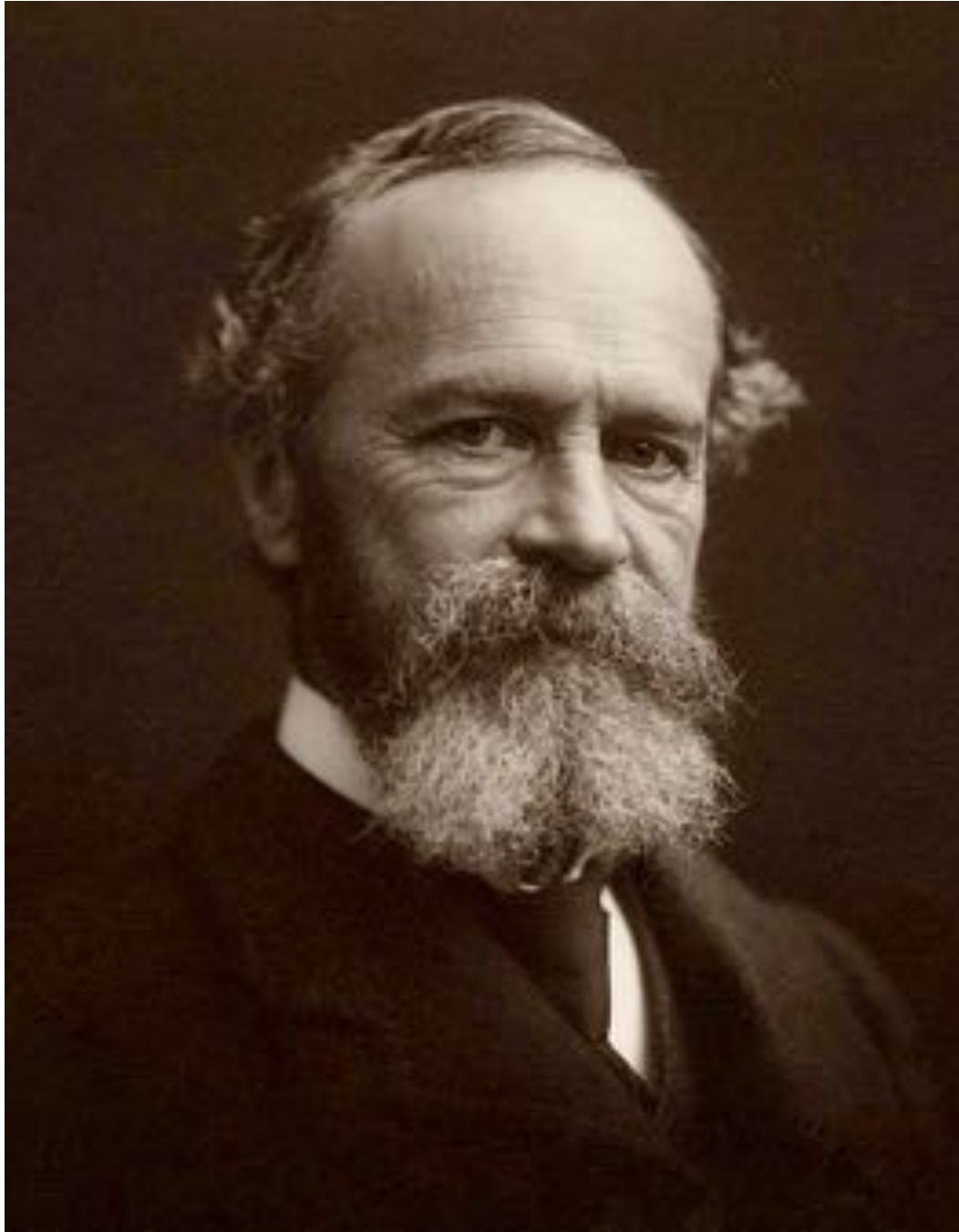
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Week 3



James is one of the most important 20th century American philosophers. In addition to works on philosophy and religion, James wrote on psychology and established the first research institute for psychology at Harvard University in 1875, after which he wrote *Principles of Psychology* wherein he wrote: "Psychology is the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and of their conditions."

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Discussion

- [What does James mean by healthy-mindedness?](#)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4566682>)

Reading

- [The Varieties of Religious Experience, Lecture IV and V, pp.78-90](#)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55987254/download>)

Additional

- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/james/> (<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/james/>)
- <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/325> (<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/325>)

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Week 4 - Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

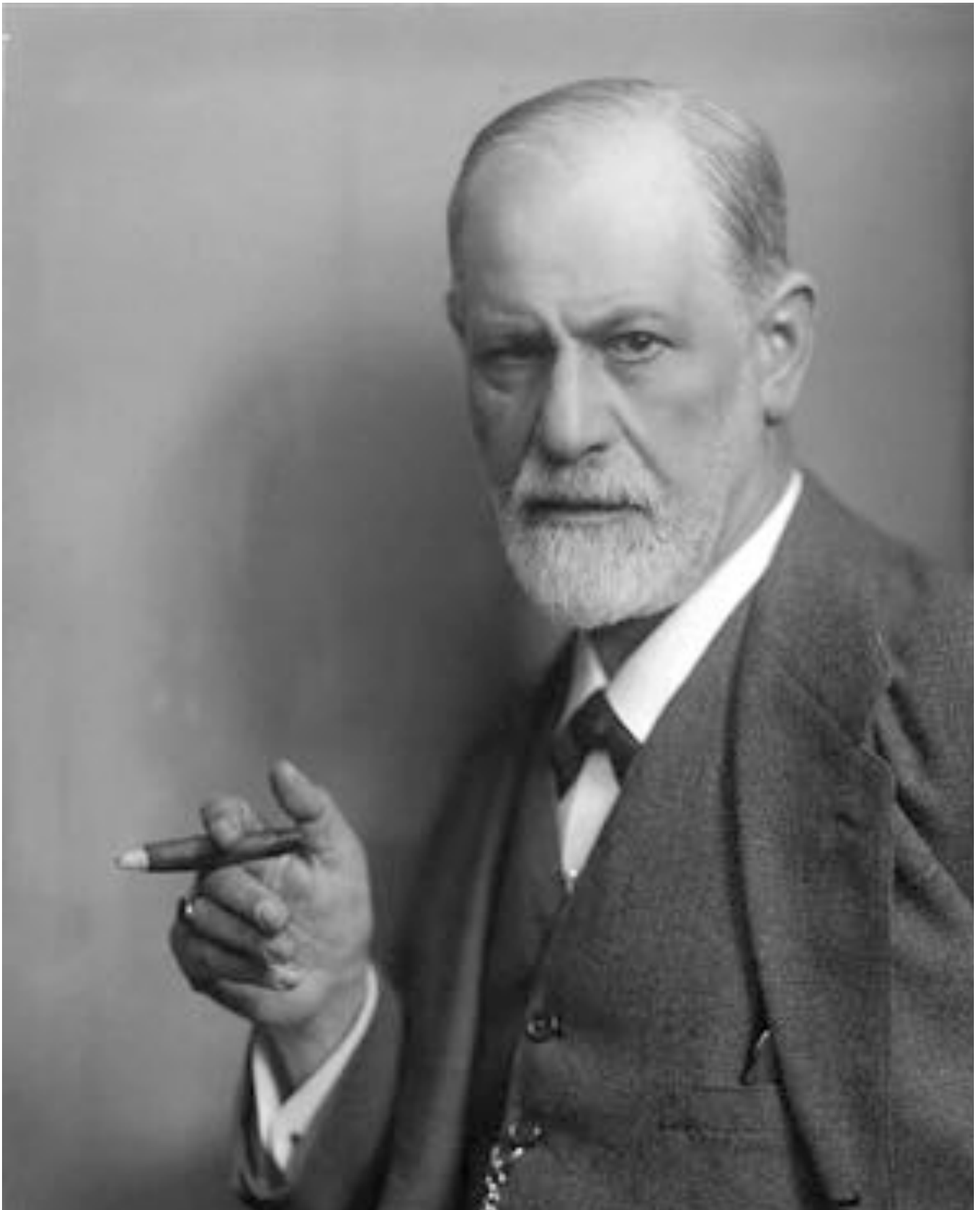


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It is often said that the three most influential humanistic thinkers of recent times are Darwin, Marx, and Freud. This week we shall read Freud and next week his most influential student and critic, Jung. These two constitute the foundation of modern psycho-analytic theory.

LECTURE

- The Development of psychoanalytic thought

READING

- [John H Brooke, *Freud on Religion*](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741736/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741736/download>).
- [“Chapters I-VI,” *Future of an Illusion*, by S. Freud, pp.5-33](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55978864/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55978864/download>).

DISCUSSION

- [What is Freud's psycho-analytic theory?](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4613799)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4613799>)

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- [Freud's definition of the libido \(1917\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56718960/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56718960/download>)
- [Freud's summary Future of an Illusion \(1930\)](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56719231/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56719231/download>)

MOVIE

- “The Forbidden Planet,” 1956, directed by Fred M. Wilcox
 - [The ID](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2BYyeS-flU) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2BYyeS-flU>)

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Week 5 - Karl Jung (1875-1961)



Jung continues to influence psychologists today and his theories about archetypes, religious experience, the unconscious, and his interpretation of Freud continue to animate intellectuals today.

LECTURE

- The Development of psychoanalytic thought. K. Jung

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- **Jung's Definitions: 2,6,9,12,16,31,48**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56882220/download>).

ADDITIONAL READING

- **Karl Jung, Symbols of Transformation, pp.7-36**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741738/download>).

DISCUSSION

- **What is Jung's psycho-analytic theory?**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4541852>).

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Week 6



Ninian Smart (d.2001) was a theorist, historian, and scholar of religion and one of the most important figures in the development of religious studies in the USA and the UK. In his *Dimensions of the Sacred*, Smart characterized various features of our concept of religion, one of which is the human experience of religion as a psychological phenomenon. This week we examine Smart's discussion of the "experiential and emotional" aspects of religion.

Lecture

- Ninian Smart and his approach to the study of religion: emotions and experience

Reading

- [Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred*](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741743/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741743/download>).

Discussion

- [What is Smart's concept of religious experience?](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4549700)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4549700>)

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Week 7

Assignment:

I. For each of the five weeks of semester select one of the readings from the modules and describe in detail what the author is arguing, giving attention to the thesis, the content, and the context. Your answers should be approximately 200 words for each week.

II. In a separate 150-250 word answer describe a reading or concept from one of the five weeks you found illuminating in some way. Provide reasons for your selection and justify your analysis.

Formatting Template:

Part I: Make the "Discussion question" for each week the Heading of your essay and place your answer underneath the Heading.

Part II: Make "Connection" your Heading and place your essay underneath.

Your bibliography should come at the end of your document.

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Week 8



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This week we will use the three hours of class time to review your Mid Terms and Paper One. Word count 2000-2500.

Hour One: The Assignment, Formatting, and Submitting

Hour Two: "What is my thesis?" Classwork and groups of four.

Hour Three: "What is my introduction, conclusion, the point of each paragraph?" Classwork and groups of two.

Your Paper One is due on Friday by 5:00 PM EST

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Week 9 - Psychology in Religious Studies



The academic study of religion is informed by a wide range of disciplines, including psychology. This week surveys some of the broader trends in the "psychology of religion".

LECTURE

- Religious Studies and the Psychology of Religion

READING

- (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741735/download>) Psychology of religion (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741741/download>).
- <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199828340/obo-9780199828340-0066.xml> (<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199828340/obo-9780199828340-0066.xml>)

DISCUSSION

- How is religious studies informed by psychology? (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4549677>)

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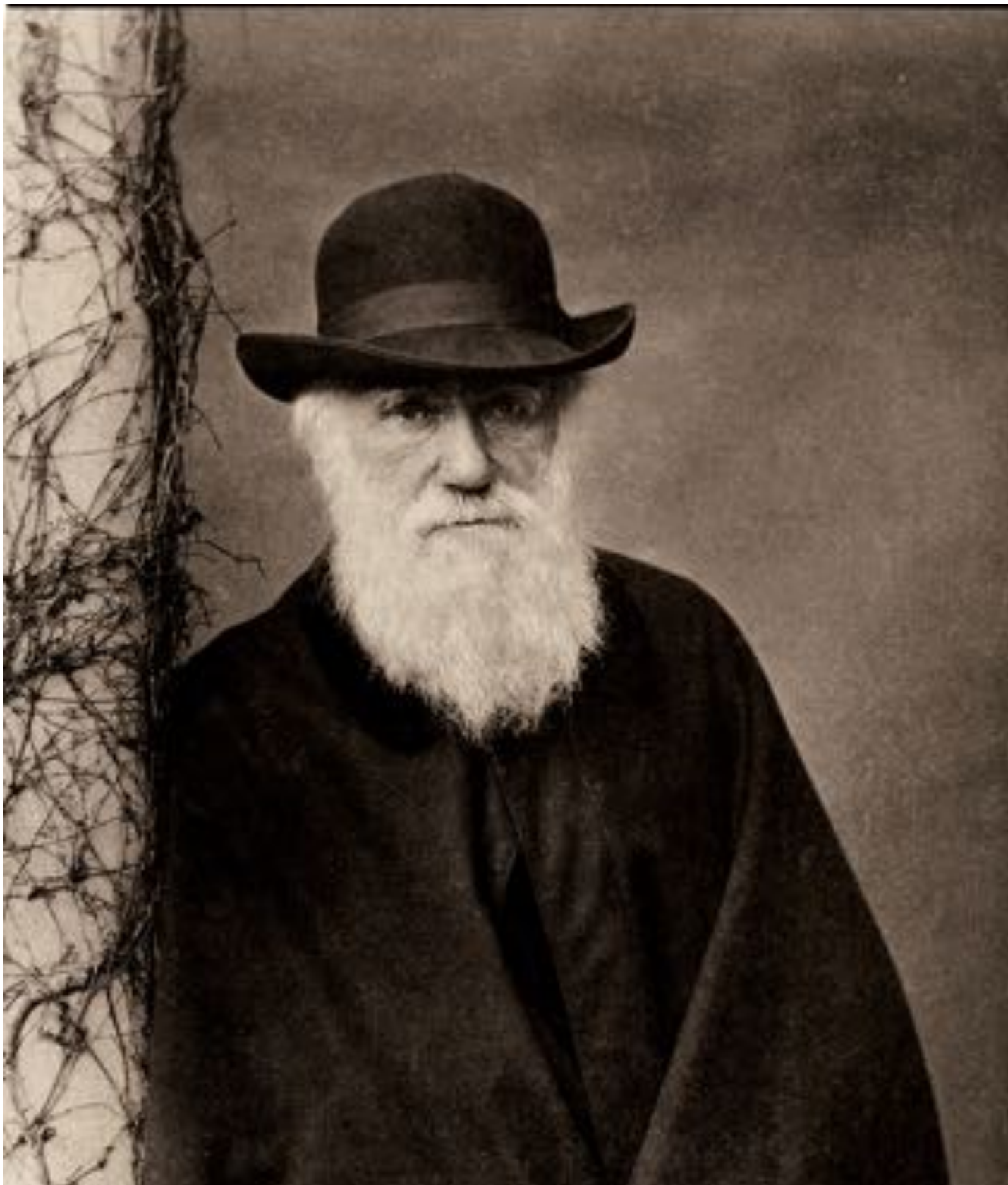
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Week 10



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Continuing our investigation of academic disciplines that inform the study of religion, this week we examine evolutionary psychology. In the *Descent of Man* (1871) Charles Darwin had questioned whether our belief in god and supernatural powers could have evolved from our biological ancestors who had attributed agency to the wind or rain because they were unable to comprehend natural law. Could other aspects of our belief, our concepts of ethics, our psychological dispositions and inclinations --- could all of that be attributed to evolutionary processes? Does evolutionary psychology justify the a social, political, or ethical theory, or would that suffer the is/ought fallacy? This week examines questions and topics like this to gain yet another set of perspectives on the relationship of religion and psychology.

Lecture

- Evolution and Religion: an emerging dialogue

Reading

- [David Buss, *Evolutionary Psychology*](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741737/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741737/download>).

Discussion

- [Does evolution influence human psychology?](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4549757)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4549757>).

Video

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqVG4-ykP4c> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqVG4-ykP4c>)

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(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QqVG4-ykP4c>).

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9TvtKrvdQ8> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9TvtKrvdQ8>



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9TvtKrvdQ8>).

Additional Readings

- “Evolution, Neuropsychology, and Other Biological Aspects of Religion,” in *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach* (Fifth Edition) by Ralph W. Hood, Jr., Peter C. Hill, and Bernard Spilka, Guildford Press, pp.56-79

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9TvtKrvdQ8>



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9TvtKrvdQ8>).

- “Forward to the First Edition” by R.Trivers, *The Selfish Gene* by R.Dawkins
- “The Long Reach of the Gene,” by Richard Dawkins in *The Selfish Gene* by Richard Dawkins, pp.302-344

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Week 11 - Religious Experience



What is the nature of religious experience, spiritual awareness, mysticism, visions of god, and other types of peak experiences? What is the definition of a religious experience? Why do we exclude or include certain types of experiences as religious? What kinds of problems arise when we attempt to characterize the nature of any human experience? Are these problems new, or do we see echos of Kant, James, Freud, Jung, or Smart? This week examines a range of methodologies and approaches to the study of the human experience, with a special focus experiences of god, liberation, rapture, and possession.

Lecture

- Psychology of Religion and Religious Experience

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- The Psychology of Religion, Chapters 10-11, "[Religious Experience](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56000320/download)" and "[Mysticism](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/56000321/download)"

Discussion

- [Is religious experience a psychological phenomenon?](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4569191)

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Week 12 - Intelligence and Cognition

This week examines the nature of intelligence and cognition from a range of sources and it is the first of two wildcard weeks.

Indian philosophy: This falls broadly in the area of epistemology. The nature of human cognition is a vast subject in science, philosophy, and religion; this week students are encourage to engage with the Reading by Matilal and bring to this subject their own academic experience.

Lecture

- Intelligence and cognition

Readings

- **B.K.Matilal, Perception** (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741740/download>).

Discussion

- **What is the nature of intelligence and cognition?**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4541886>)

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Week 13 - Contemporary Issues in Psychology, Philosophy, and Religion

- Aesthetic Experience: [Abhinava Gupta's The New Dramatic Art](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741735/download)
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741735/download>)
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_Sanderson
(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexis_Sanderson)
 - Returning to the topic of aesthetics, this week looks at the work of Abhinava Gupta, another leading Indian thinker. He provides a characterization of human experience of drama in psychological terms.
- Intelligence: AI, IQ, and other concepts
 - <https://informatics.research.ufl.edu/> (<https://informatics.research.ufl.edu/>)
- Paranormal Studies
 - http://religion.ufl.edu/news/2019/religion-and-the-paranormal/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=religion-and-the-paranormal
(http://religion.ufl.edu/news/2019/religion-and-the-paranormal/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=religion-and-the-paranormal)
- Consciousness Studies
 - <http://www.ufspiritualityandhealth.org/directorsadvisors/ritz.asp>
(<http://www.ufspiritualityandhealth.org/directorsadvisors/ritz.asp>)
- Psychedelic Studies
 - <https://spiritualityandhealth.ufl.edu/courses-at-uf/honors-uncommon-read-psychedelic-neuromedicine/> (<https://spiritualityandhealth.ufl.edu/courses-at-uf/honors-uncommon-read-psychedelic-neuromedicine/>)

Lecture

- Some contemporary issues in psychology and religion

Readings

- [B.K.Matilal, Perception](https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741740/download) (<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/files/55741740/download>)

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- **What are some contemporary issues in psychology and religion?**
(<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/419934/assignments/4613802>)

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Week 14 -- Final Examination Preparation

Hour One: The Assignment, Formatting, and Submitting

Hour Two: "What is my thesis?" Classwork and groups of four.

Hour Three: "What is my introduction, conclusion, the point of each paragraph?" Classwork and groups of two.

Paper Two: Connection

This papers should shall analyze and evaluate one topic after the Midterm, and connect that topic to your own personal belief system. Students should use MLA or a related style. 2000-2500 words (this does count towards WR)

Week 15 - Paper Two Preparation

Hour One: The Assignment, Formatting, and Submitting

Hour Two: "What is my thesis?" Classwork and groups of four.

Hour Three: "What is my introduction, conclusion, the point of each paragraph?" Classwork and groups of two.

Your Paper Two is due on Friday by 5:00 PM EST