

H4303 PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Instructor: Professor Dr. Harris
Text: As assigned in Course Schedule

First or Second Semester
Annually
Three Semester Hours

I. PURPOSE

It is the PURPOSE of this course to provide an opportunity for mature students to evaluate basic Christian beliefs in the context of both Christian and secular psychology. The intent of that exposure is to correlate the views of psychology with those of Wesleyan-Arminian theology wherever possible and to clearly identify and justify remaining areas of tension.

This emphasis is intended to prepare the Christian worker to utilize the resources of psychology whenever possible and to resist the invasions of psychology where that discipline would diminish the unique impact of Wesleyan theology upon Christian life.

THE OBJECTIVES of the course are

- 1) To introduce the student to scholarship which addresses itself to specific points of belief characteristic of Wesleyan-Arminian theology. Resources include reading assignments, cassettes and class lectures.
- 2) To train the student to respond to concepts presented in assignments and lectures in the context of class discussion.
- 3) To guide the student in formulating a Biblical basis for his personal commitments and convictions relative to basic beliefs. That process will involve the following co-ordinated activities:
 - a. A concise presentation of the Wesleyan-Arminian doctrinal position being focused during the class session. This should come from the students, who are mainly seniors, but will be clearly defined by the professor so that a clear comparative base has been established.
 - b. An open discussion of the relationship of Christian and secular psychology to the doctrinal position under study.
 - c. A guided effort, led by the professor, to develop a consensus from views presented by the class; such views a result of their reading, thinking, and intra-group dialogue.
 - d. A summary statement by the professor which is a distillation of those views from the assigned resources -- hopefully emergent from steps "a" and "b" -- which constitute the best thinking of holiness scholarship in the area under discussion. Our intent is to be pedagogic rather than pedantic. But in the final analysis it is the role of the professor to be dogmatic -- stating a position in a positive and emphatic manner. For there are elements of faith which defy the rationalizations of the secularist and evidences of maturity which have not come to inexperienced students.
- 4) To develop a confidence in your witness to holiness; a confidence based upon your own sense of functionality derived from a frank evaluation of your beliefs, an ability to "handle" challenging literature and unfriendly views, a stimulating look at yourself and a devotion to the certainties of God's Word.

II. PROCEDURES:

1. You will be given basic resource materials for each session. There is no way to derive the benefits of the course without the background research. So the reading for each assignment must be completed for the designated class period. Point values for the resource assignment, as indicated, will be forfeited if reading is completed after it is due.
2. The maximum benefit of the resource material rests in the exchange of ideas about the readings with other students and the instructor. Your participation is thus equally important as preparation. For that reason qualitative participation is scored to a level equal to the base value of the resource assignment.
3. The summary of each session is the context of all examinations, so you should exercise great care in recording the summary given you.
4. There will be two examinations; at mid-semester and at semester's end. The mid-semester will be objective, testing your comprehension of basic details. The final exam will be subjective, testing your ability to formulate and communicate concepts.
5. In order to receive credit for the course you must:
 - A. Be present at all sessions or submit an official excuse for any absence.
 - B. Take both examinations and score 80% of the point potential of both exams. This is an aggregate requirement which means you could score less than 80% on one but a higher score for the other would carry you through.
 - C. Accumulate 75% of the point potential for resource reading and class participation. This means you must participate in class discussions. Half the potential (50%) can be satisfied simply by reading the resource materials when due. But that leaves 25% -- half the discussion potential -- to be earned through participation. You should also note that reporting a resource assignment late (other than for reasons covered by official excuse) would eliminate those points from your aggregate score. So one missed assignment could well mean you could not pass the course.
 - D. The 80% level for exams and the 75% level for reading-participation will be the "C" base in our grading scale.

III. COURSE SCHEDULE

Lesson 1 *Jan. 26*

- A. Aim: To discover ways in which theology and psychology can be complementary disciplines.
- B. Resources:
1. Christianity Today, August 19, 1966, pp. 9-11
 2. Christianity Today, January 30, 1961, "We Quote"
 3. Christianity Today, June 24, 1966, pp. 12-13
 4. Christianity Today, January 18, 1963, pp. 8-9
 5. Christianity Today, May 26, 1958, pp. 13, 14, 22
 6. Projecting Our Heritage, Boyd-Harris, pp. 43-54
 7. Intro. to the Psychology of Religion, Thouless, pp. 8-14; 56-64; 73-79
 8. Competent to Counsel, Adams, pp. 252-270; pp. 1-19 (Point Value 30-30)
- C. Method: We will discuss the concepts of each author with particular reference to these matters:
1. A definition of theology and psychology
 2. Areas of tension between the two
 3. Ways in which each discipline is useful to the other

Lesson 2 *Feb. 9*

- A. Aim: To develop a completely Biblical concept of guilt.
- B. Resources:
1. Guilt, Where Religion and Psychology Meet, Belgum, pp. 17-47
 2. None of These Diseases, McMillen, pp. 65-69
 3. Projecting Our Heritage, Boyd-Harris, pp. 31-40
 4. Dare to Discipline, Dobson, pp. 167-184
 5. Intellectual Digest, April 1974, pp. 43-50
 6. Christianity Today, "On Strangling Kings," Arlie J. Hoover, pp. 14-16, November 9, 1972 (Point Value 30-30)
- C. Method: You are to develop the following ideas to a point of Personal usefulness:
1. Belgum's concept of guilt
 2. A definition of guilt which is God-centered rather than man-centered (absolutist - not relativistic)
 3. An understanding of guilt which leaves man totally culpable for his acts

Lesson 3 *Feb. 23*

A. Aim To distinguish between pseudo and functional confession

B. Resources:

1. The Psychology of Christian Experience, Mavis, pp. 11-23.
2. Belgum, pp. 48-59; 118-141.
3. Adams, pp. 105-127.
(Point Value, ~~20-20~~ 40-40)
4. John Drakeford Tapes # 7 + 8

C. Method: We will be concerned with the characteristics of a functional confession; a chance to confess, experience forgiveness and experience change.

Lesson 4 *Mar. 2*

A. Aim: To identify the dynamics involved in a genuine conversion experience.

B. Resources:

1. Journal of Scientific American, March, 1968, pp. 27-30.
2. Boyd-Harris, pp. 71-77.
3. Thouless, pp. 104-120.
(Point Value, 15-15)

C. Method:

1. Be sure you understand the role of the will in conversion.
2. Establish the importance in understanding various "types" of conversion.
3. The influence of conversion upon life style is an important distinction.

MID-SEMESTER EXAM *Mar. 9*

Lesson 5 *Mar. 23*

A. Aim: To identify those changes in behavior which are uniquely traceable to a conversion experience.

B. Resources:

1. The Morality Gap, Lutzer, pp. 1-118
2. Wynkoop, Mildred, "A Theology of Love," pp. 165-183.
(Point Value 50-50)

C. Method: Carefully appraise the new morality as a viable commitment to values and as a reliable index for conduct.

Lesson 6 *Mar. 30*

A. Aim: To develop a Biblically based understanding of the sin nature

B. Resources:

1. ~~McMillen, pp. 120-147.~~
2. ~~Insights Into Holiness, Geiger, pp. 33-52.~~
3. ~~The Word and The Doctrine, Geiger, pp. 89-136. (Point Value 30-30)~~
4. *W.T.S. Journal 1976 p. 81-90*

C. Method: You are to move beyond the "proof-text" concept of exegesis and discover the Biblical description of the sin nature. Combine that with the idea that the sin nature is an instinct and a reality quite apart from human nature.

Lesson 7 *April 6*

A. Aim: To develop a functional and Biblical explanation of human nature

B. Resources:

1. ~~Psychology and Human Nature, Rickman, pp. 1-9.~~
2. ~~Bio Social Nature of Man, Montagu, pp. 71-80.~~
3. ~~Insights, Geiger, pp. 145-171.~~
(Point Value 20-20)

C. Method:

1. Make careful distinctions between such terms as malleable, essential, organic, primary, secondary as they relate to human nature.
2. Decide upon some theological implications in the rise of human nature to describe our conduct.
3. Explore the usefulness of the term "nature of humans" as an alternative to "human nature."

Lesson 8 *April 13*

A. Aim: To develop a Biblical concept of cleansing and experience an understanding of and a personal commitment to that great work of God in the human heart.

B. Resources:

1. Boyd-Harris, pp. 123-129.
2. Geiger, Word, pp. ~~151-179~~, 191-194. *157-197*
3. The Wesleyan Advocate, Nov. 4, 1968, pp. 4-6
4. Helps to Holiness, Brengle, pp. 18-43.
5. The Spirit and The Word, Coleman, pp. 35-37.
6. Wynkoop, pp. 337-~~346~~
7. Journal of Psychology and Theology, Sumner, 1974, pp. 202-209
(Point Value, 50-50)
8. *Wesleyan Advocate May 23rd 1977 p. 5, 6, 9*

C. Method:

1. What is negative about God's cleansing?
2. What is positive about God's cleansing?
3. Evaluate carefully this question: Does cleansing leave any continuing responsibility for the believer?

Lesson 9 *April 20*

A. Aim: To rescue the concept of crucifixion from its friends; to recast this Biblical concept into a truly Biblical and thus useful Form.

B. Resources:

- ~~1.~~ Geiger, Insights, pp. 75-88; 263-280. *5. Binder, Crucifixion*
- ~~2.~~ Coleman, pp. 33-35; 41-43. *Radiant Cassette #57*
3. Wynkoop, pp. 249-267. *(Listen to just this one)*
- 4. Ruth, Entire Sanctification 110-112 ; 129-131*

C. Method:

1. Develop a working knowledge of Pelagian and Calvinistic teaching as they relate to the idea of crucifixion.
2. What is the relationship between consecration and crucifixion?
3. Are the flaws of a consecrated life like those of a crucified life?
4. In your judgment are eradication, destruction, crucifixion, consecration, sanctification useful terms?

Lesson 10 *April 27*

A. Aim: To face realistically the question of temptation as it is based upon a Biblical definition of acceptable behavior.

B. Resources:

1. McMillen, pp. 25-97.
(Point Value, 20-20)

C. Method: You will be expected to do more than identify various kinds of behavior as destructive and therefore wrong. You will face the question of your involvement at the point of tolerating such behavior. Is toleration endorsement? Is endorsement synonymous with indulgence so far as culpability is concerned?

Lesson 11 *May 4*

A. Aim: To answer the question: do some people have a "gift" of faith and thus greater potential in prayer?

B. Resources:

1. Mavis, pp. 118-127.
2. Geiger, Word, pp. 283-290.
3. Thouless, pp. 90-95.

4. Jessop When Prayer Seems Not To Work 65-112
 (Point Value, 40-40) 50-50
 C. Method: 5. "Praying Like Jesus" Coleman Wesleyan Advocate Jan 2, 1978

1. What kinds of things can the prayer of faith accomplish?
2. What is useful about the idea that prayer can be intercessory, thanksgiving, meditation or an act of resignation?

~~FINAL EXAM~~Lesson 12 May 11

- A. Aim: To explain the relationship between a vital Christian experience and functional living; long the exclusive province of psychology but now held to be derived from theology as well.

B. Resources:

1. Brandt Tapes 1 - 2 - 3 - 11 - 12
2. American Historical Journal, "Cultural Strain and Protestant Liberalism," pp. 386-411.
3. Christianity Today, April 24, 1964, pp. 28-29.
4. The Wesleyan Methodist, January 17, 1968, p. 8, 9, 17.
5. Christianity Today, May 23, 1968, pp. 3-6.
6. McMillen, pp. 98-119.
7. Geiger, Word, pp. 293-303.
8. Boyd-Harris, Heritage, pp. 131-136.
9. Geiger, Insights, pp. 209-221.
10. Brengle, pp. 18-43.
11. Christianity Today, August 1, 1969, pp. 5-8.
12. Dobson, pp. 15-62.
13. Coleman, pp. 49-51; 57-59.
(Point Value, 60-60)

- C. Method: You will discover from these resources a number of "controls" for human behavior. Evaluate them as to their Biblical basis, theological consistency and practical worth.

Do you now feel you have discovered an empathy for the techniques of psychology without a sense of threat against your religious beliefs?

Final Exam - week of 18th