

Syllabus

PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN RELIGION

COMPARATIVE RELIGION 3240

By

Rudolf J. Siebert

Professor of Religion and Society

**Western Michigan University
Department of Comparative Religion
Kalamazoo, Michigan
2017**

Religion 324: Psychological Elements in Religion

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man”
(Heraclitos, 540 – 470 BCE)

“At bottom, every man knows perfectly well that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time” (Friedrich Nietzsche 1844 – 1900).

A. Course Description

Our course offers students a survey of theories and approaches to the study of religion from the perspective of psychology with an emphasis on psychoanalytical, humanistic, behavioral, cognitive, and dialectical psychology as well as on other theorists and trends emerging out of or relating to these traditions in psychology. The seminal texts of such classical theorists as Freud, Jung, James, Otto, May, Fromm, Marcuse, Horkheimer, Adorno, Reich, Erickson, Skinner, Adler, Ellis, Pearls, Rogers, the Mitscherlichs, Lohmann, Landauer, Frankl will be considered as well as more contemporary psychological approaches to religion. This course is in the form of lectures and discourses fundamentally concerned with the correlation between the human subject – the soul, the psyche, the person, the ego, the self, the personal and social character on one hand, and God, the Holy, the Absolute, the Unconditional, the wholly Other, the Infinite, on the other. The central interest of our course or discourse is with religious propensities, feelings, impulses, passions, attitudes, motivations, prejudices, representations, ideas, norms, and values, as well as pathologies and criminality. Our discourse will take place in the broader framework of the critical theory of society of the Frankfurt School and of the dialectical religiology derived from it. (See Road Map A, B, C, D on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>).

Critical Theory

As the course follows the critical theory of society and the dialectical theory of religion, critical questions as the following will be asked concerning: good and bad religion; rationalization; demythologization, disenchantment, deritualization, secularization; religious images and names; authority and superego; ego and id; libidinous and aggressive aspects of the id; projection; infantility; authoritarian and democratic personality; socialization and internalization; liberalization of religion; humanistic religiosity; conversion; social psychology and religion; inverse cipher theology; dogmatism and moralism; religion, morality and sexuality; sublimation; friendship; longing for the totally Other as source of unconditional meaning and validity claims. The critical theory of society and the dialectical religiology will be confronted and compared with behaviorist, functionalist, cognitivist, and other psychological theories of religion.

The Individual and the Infinite

Our critical, comparative, religiological discourse is concerned with the dialectical relationship between the psyche, the individual person, his or her consciousness, self-consciousness, spirit, inner world, on one hand, and religion as the experience of the Infinite, the Absolute, the Unconditional, the Ultimate Reality, the totally Other than the slaughterbench of nature and history, on the other (See Road Map A, B, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). We understand our discourse as future-oriented remembrance of individual human suffering with the practical intent to diminish it: particularly psychic suffering through therapy. "Critical" (critein - to differentiate) means to us differentiation and clarification, as well as individual emancipation. "Comparative" means to us, that we compare the collective representations of different world religions, but without uncritical equalization. (See Road Map B, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>).

We understand the individual subject in terms of his or her anthropological, phenomenological, and psychological qualities, as well as in terms of the psychic structures of ego, super-ego, and id, the will to life, including its libidinous as well as its aggressive aspects, forces and impulses: and particularly in terms of his or her spiritual ability to transcend the will to life toward the entirely Other as the negation of human perils: finitude, contingencies, loneliness, alienation, meaninglessness, fear of illness, aging, dying and death. (See Road Map A, B, on the website: <http://www.rudolfsiebert.org>). We understand the deep structure of religion as consisting of the concepts of the Divine, the connection between the Sacred and the human, the different forms of cult, and the transition from there into the inner world of the individual living in a particular society.

Consciousness and Subconsciousness

In our critical, comparative, religiological perspective, the psychologist of religion leaves the Infinite, the Unconditional, the Ultimate Reality, the totally Other than the sacrificial altar of nature and history, to the philosopher of religion or to the theologian. The psychologist is, however, concerned with man's consciousness and subconsciousness insofar as they relate themselves to the Infinite, the other dimension, the God: the longing for the entirely Other than the Golgatha or skull hill of nature and history. In our discourse, we shall take into consideration, and discuss, and analyze, and compare the works of outstanding psychologists of religion in the spheres of the traditional as well as of the critical theory - from S. Freud, A. Adler, V. Frankl, C. C. Jung, through W. James, E. Erickson, B. F. Skinner, and T. Parsons, to W. Reich, M. Horkheimer, W. Benjamin, Th. W. Adorno, E. Fromm, H. Marcuse, R. May, J. Rudin, P. Tillich, H. Küng, and J. Habermas, etc. , as they explore the form and the content of man's religious consciousness. We discuss these and other psychologists of religion against the background of the critical philosophies of religion from I. Kant, F. W. J. Schelling, G. W. F. Hegel, and A. Schopenhauer, through L. Feuerbach, K. Marx, and F. Nietzsche, to L. Tolstoy and E. Bloch, etc. We are, of course, aware, that there were positivists, like Hume and Ernst Mach, who thought, that the ego could not be rescued, not to speak of consciousness or self-consciousness and their continuity in time. All that is supposed to be theological or metaphysical psychology and has as such become obsolete a long time ago. People have no souls any longer. We must live soullessly. We are mind-brains, or finally just mindless brains. Also for more recent, very successful brain physiologist's man's ego or self is a delusion. There is no self-preservation, because there is no self to preserve. There is no self-knowledge, because there is no self to know. The old Greeks goal of all education and culture

Knoti se auton
(Know yourself)

has lost its validity. Speculation reminds positivists only of Wall street, but not of the cognitive ability to hold extreme opposites together in one notion: subject and object being mediated through each other and only in this way knowable. For the advanced brain physiologists, man is rather something like the lobby in a hotel, where people enter from all sides and disperse again. All what is going on in man is environmental. There is no substance to it, no abiding center. What does not even abide physically, will even less survive theologically or metaphysically: no immortality. We are supposed to let go once and for all the theological and metaphysical illusion of immortality together with the two other metaphysical notions of God and freedom. They are not even postulates any longer, in order to make a moral life possible. We shall have to take the positivists very seriously. Does the brain think? Or does man think through his brain? Can the metaphysical postulates at least be transformed into a longing for God, immortality and freedom, in spite of the fact that they cannot be physically proven? Things get worse, of course, when societies, which have no metaphysics any longer in the first place, reintroduce it nevertheless as ideology: understood as false consciousness, as masking of personal, national, racial or class interests, shortly as untruth. In our discourse, we shall have to ask questions concerning such issues. We shall have to ask, if without the longing for the totally Other than the horror and terror of nature and history, without Transcendence, there can be any autonomy of man and solidarity among men at all?

The Religious and the Secular

In our discourse about the human psyche and its highest religious aspirations we must - if we want to succeed in coming to a mutual agreement in mutual respect - take into consideration the modern dichotomy between the religious and the secular sphere of consciousness and action and interaction (See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). This dichotomy has enormous repercussions for the modern personality as well as for religion and thus for the psychology of religion. Modern positive and critical psychology is forms of secular consciousness. Some psychologists are as secular people, nevertheless, interested in the religious dimension, which has been superseded by secularity: often too abstractly. Some psychologists, like Freud, or Adler, or Marx, or Schopenhauer, or Nietzsche, tried to help people to emancipate themselves completely from their religious past, often too undialectically, and thus with great damage to the individual personalities. Other psychologists, like Jung or Frankl, wanted to show people new ways to a deeper understanding of religious collective representations and symbols: often not critically enough, and thus with regressive results. Other psychologists again, e.g. Rudin, May, Tillich, and Küng, tried to walk on the boundary between the sacred and the profane consciousness, and even build a bridge across the modern abyss between the religious and the secular language, ultimately in favor of the religious consciousness. Critical psychologists, like Horkheimer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse, Fromm and Habermas, believed it to be best for the formation of an enlightened personality to supersede, i.e. not only critically to negate, but also to preserve, and to elevate the sacred into the profane consciousness: to let the limited and unrenovable semantic and semiotic materials and potentials in the depth of the mythos migrate into the discourses of secular expert cultures, particularly also into psychology and psychoanalysis.

Contradictions

That the critical theory of religion, including a critical psychology and social - psychology of religion, concentrates on the modern dichotomy between the sacred and the profane does in no way mean, that it neglects the other contradictions in modern civil society: namely the antagonisms between man and nature, between the matriarchal and the patriarchal principle, among the races and the nations, between the individual and the collective, between the classes, between right and Left, between theory and praxis, etc. (See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). When you listen to your radio in your car you hear religious and secular, male and female, individualistic and collectivistic, African, Asian, Near Eastern and European, bourgeois and proletarian music. Religion and psychology look very different depending on being approached from the religious or secular, male or female, individualistic or collectivistic, Aryan or Semitic, bourgeois or proletarian perspective. In critical discourse these perspectives strive to come to an agreement with each other about what is prejudice and ideology, or what is the truth, and thus to resolve the modern contradictions toward alternative Future III - a reconciled society. The university stands and falls with the search for the truth. Positivists only know of correctness and incorrectness of statements concerning facts. For us, truth is the negation of untruth: of ideology. As late capitalist society moves toward alternative global Future I – the totally administered society, George Orwell 's statement gains in validity:” During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act. We shall try to tell the truth

The Totally Other

It is the intent of our discourse, to negate determinately, i. e. concretely, the religious consciousness into the secular language, but in the horizon of the totally Other than the mere structures of often cruel facts and laws of evolution asserted by the positivistic ally oriented traditional theorists, particularly the positive

psychologists, the ego-psychologists, or the cognitivists (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfsiebert.org>). Under no circumstances do we want to break off prematurely the dialectic of enlightenment. However, we shall take into consideration the price of progress: all the destruction and suffering that the instrumental rationality - as progressing domination of external and internal nature - carries into the world. We should at least think about the possibility of breaking the spell of self preservation through domination over nature in terms of a stubborn, one-sided instrumental or functional rationality and about the possibility of man's consequent reconciliation with his inner and the external nature. These possibilities cannot be envisioned and actualized without the powerful longing for the totally Other that the slaughterbench of nature and history. We thought once that the chimpanzees, from whom we separated 7 million years ago were peaceful; creatures. Since the 1970s science know that the Chimpanzees have a dark side. Groups of male chimpanzees are often engaged in intra-species killing of individual males. The human cousins have unfortunately perfected this dark side to such an extend that they became able in the 20th century to kill 75 million enemies with one bomb in a few seconds and to engage in a war which cost the lives of 60 million humans. Also the psychology of religion must contribute with other secular expert cultures to the resolution of this dark side, not only in chimpanzee, tribes but also in human individuals and nations. Chimpanzees have no longing for the totally Other: we do. Therefore there is hope. The psychology of religion is to explore this connection between ego and the will of life and its aggressions on one hand, and the longing for the totally Other on the other, and its effects on the formation of the autonomy and sovereignty of the subject and the inter-subjective anamnestic, present and proleptic solidarity.

Traditional and Critical Psychologists

In our discourse, we shall engage in the critique of traditional and critical psychologists, who explain religion and the gods, and God as a psychic projection of human feelings a la Ludwig Feuerbach: the feelings of weakness, fear, joy, or of selfish hope, or avarice, or thirst for power(See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfsiebert.org>). The psychological projection theory of religion is almost universal on the Left, in the Center, and on the Right of the philosophical and social-scientific spectrum. We shall appreciate the strength of the projection theory: it's emphasizing on the subjective factor in religion - man's own active contribution. However, we shall also point out the weakness of the projection theory: it underestimates the possible objective solicitation of the subjective projection mechanism in the dimension of religion as in other spheres of human life, e. g. in the realm of the human potential of sexuality and eroticism. It is this negativity of the projection theory of religion, which drives it beyond itself toward a psychological theory, which allows for the supersession of the sacred into the profane consciousness against the horizon of the longed and the hoped for entirely Other: as the determinate negation of human abandonment, injustice, alienation, and meaninglessness. Such critical psychological theory of religion may be able to conjugate in a qualitatively new form faith and reason, revelation and enlightenment, redemption and happiness, grace and liberation. Thinkers like Schelling, Hegel, Teilhard de Chardin, Tillich, and Küng can show the way to an adequate resolution of the modern core problem of the dichotomy of the religious and the secular consciousness and language.

Male and Female

In our discourse we must also deal with the second fundamental contradiction in modern civil society, if it is to succeed in terms of mutual understanding and respect: that between male and female, patriarchy and matriarchy (See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfsiebert.org>). We shall never understand the psychology of either women or men as long as we fail to acknowledge, that a state of war has existed between the genders for over six thousand years. This war is indeed a guerrilla war. About six thousand years ago the patriarchy triumphed over women. Society became organized on the basis of male domination. Women became the property of men. Women were obliged to be grateful to men for every concession. But there can not be domination of one social class, nation, race, or sex over the other that does not lead to subliminal

rebelliousness, rage, hatred, and desire for revenge in those who are oppressed and exploited, and to fear and insecurity in those who do the oppressing and exploiting. We shall never understand the psychology of religion without taking into consideration the antagonism between male and female in modern civil society, not to speak of the still existing primitive, archaic and historical-intermediate societies.

Father and Mother

While in our relationship to the father the morality, the will, shortly the conscious traits are decisive, in our relationship to the mother the deeper laying structures play the decisive role: modes of behavior, unreflected forms of reactions, psychic gestures, etc., which are very difficult to present conceptually (See Road Map A, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). In addition, we owe after all to our mother our life, which we love so much in spite of all its terrible aspects. The matriarchal principle incorporates the granting, shelter - giving, permitting, protectively - covering, home-like principle in opposition to the refusing, forbidding, demanding achievement – rivalry - and competitiveness - producing patriarchal principle. This has nowhere been expressed more validly than in Sophocles's *Antigone*. Of course, in Sophocles's tragedy the motherly idea comes to the foreground not in the physical mother but rather in the sister instead. In this tragedy has been formed for all time the opposition between the pragmatic, duty- and will-conform spirit and the not cleared up logic of the mythos. This logic of the mythos is in process of being radically exterminated by the present progress of civil society toward alternative Future I - the totally administered society.

Mythos and Enlightenment

There is hardly any better example when Sophocles' *Antigone* from which can be studied some fundamental traits of the dialectical method of our critical theory of religion, including a critical psychology and social psychology of religion(See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). As the dark superstition, the spirit immersed in nature, the mythos for itself alone drives into destruction, thus tends no less the unrelenting and pitiless positivistic enlightenment, which merely fights against and combats the mythos, the irresistible progress, toward alternative Future I - fascism. In their extreme escalation both, mythos and enlightenment, fall together. As radically opposed, mythos and enlightenment are identical. In the perspective of the critical theory of religion, liberation lies theoretically and practically in a movement, in which both, mythos and enlightenment, receive what is due to them, without existing side by side groundlessly, unfounded and without any reason. In the view of the dialectical theory of religion, the mythos is to be superseded, not abstractly, but rather concretely, into the enlightenment. Radical monotheism and radical enlightenment are to be reconciled through Transcendence. Semantic and semiotic materials and potentials are to be allowed to migrate from the depth of the mythos into the secular discourse among the expert-cultures and through it into communicative and political action against the rebarbarization of the Western civilization.

Individual and Collective

In our discourse, we must deal also with the third fundamental antagonism in modernity, if it is to succeed in terms of mutual understanding and respect: that between the individual and the collective, between personal autonomy and universal solidarity (See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). This modern gap developed parallel to and in inter-connection with the other contradiction between the religious and the secular consciousness from the very start of modernity. As modern man emancipated himself from religion, so he also divorced himself from the old solidarities of families, kinship groups, guilds, religious organizations, etc. This produced many ambiguous consequences for people living in the modern conjugal family, civil society, political state and history. Like the contradiction between the religious and the secular, so also the dichotomy between the individual and the collective has the greatest consequences not only for the particular person, but for the modern culture, particularly for religion, as well. To

be sure, modern psychology presupposes not only the split between the religious and the secular, but also - and even more so - the dichotomy between the individual and the collective.

Secularization and Individuation

In critical, comparative - religiological perspective, in order to become psychologically well balanced and healthy, modern man must not only solve the problem of secularization, but also the problem of individuation. (See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>) Some modern psychologies of religion make this their central issue: e. g. Jung's individuation psychology. We shall discuss and analyze psychologists of religion, like Erickson, Fromm, Frankl, or Habermas, as they explain the identity crisis of the highly secularized and isolated modern individual, and try to overcome it by finding ways toward the constitution of new identities in terms of a humanism, which preserves and elevates in itself important religious elements. Being opposed to neo-paganism and its barbarism, they want to rescue humanizing, prophetic moments in religion, but not in a religious, but rather in a secular form. The rescued religious semantic and semiotic potentials are to preserve an ego - structure, which through Transcendence is able to gain distance versus the pressures coming from mechanisms in the social world, e. g. advertisements or political propaganda, as well as from natural mechanisms, e. g. instincts or impulses in the inner world: from the libidinous as well as aggressive will to life. Radical enlightenment is not possible without the determinate negation of prophetic theism: some of its semantic or semiotic materials and potentials!

Autonomy and Solidarity

In our critical, comparative, religiological discourse we disagree with neo-conservatism and deconstructionism, that we are already in a postmodern age, and that the modern problems of secularization and individuation are therefore already resolved (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). We agree with the praxis philosophy, that modernity itself still contains a religiously grounded ethical potential to resolve the dichotomy between individual and community, and to reconcile autonomy and solidarity in undamaged inter-subjectivity, and thereby also to prepare the way for the solution of the secularization problem. It is true, that modernity has stressed particularly the instrumental rationality, rooted in the human potential of work and tool. But modernity also contains mimetic and anamnestic rationality, rooted in the evolutionary universals of language and memory, and of sexual and erotic love, and of the struggle for recognition. We shall try to make a contribution to the further development of the communicative rationality in modernity, toward the truly post-modern Future III - a society, in which personal autonomy and universal, i. e. anamnestic, present and proleptic solidarity shall be reconciled.

Religion and Alienation

One central theme of our discourse is the connection between religion and alienation(See Road Map A, B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). It is not only a philosophical, but also a psychological problem. To what extent is religion itself alienation of man from himself? To what extent does religion increase the alienation of the individual from nature, from the community, and from itself? To what extent can religion help the individual person to conquer self - and community - and nature estrangement, and come to self-knowledge and self-determination, and to a differentiated self - and group-identity? We shall study religion as the source, result, and negation of the alienation of the individual.

Person as Story

In our discourse, we shall take seriously the fact, that each person has, or better still, is a story. Everybody has a history, and is history in the double sense of the word. We shall study the changes in the life cycle of the individual: from childhood and adolescence through adulthood to senescence. One stage determinately negates the previous one. Each stage of life has its own identity and value. We shall try to make connections between the emancipation history of the individual and the liberation history of the human species. In a certain sense, the story of the individual is a repetition of the evolution of human kind. The individual can emancipate himself or herself only in the context, and to the level of the general liberation history of the human genus. The universal and the particular correspond to each other. The individual can neither be ahead nor behind his or her time, without suffering great damage: i. e. ahead or behind the position of his or her society in the emancipation history of the human species. If all goes well, the particular is the universal, and the universal is the particular: the concrete universal! We shall study the role that religion plays in the different stages of the individual's life cycle and process of identity formation in the framework of modern systems of human condition and action systems. Our psychological approach will certainly also always be a social-psychological approach. Never shall we forget, that the individual and collective history of liberation is also always a history of suffering.

Critical Questions

As in our discourse we explore the split between the individual and civil society - the isolation of the individual from the collective, his or her contingency-experiences, powerlessness, frustration, deprivation, and loneliness in the more and more monetarized and administered modern society - we shall ask some of the following critical questions: Can religion rescue the individual person from being swallowed up by the subjectless and history less mega-machine of a more and more bureaucratized society: like the ant in the anthill, or the bee in the beehive ? (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). Can religion help the individual to cultivate his or her anamnestic as well as his or her anticipatory self-consciousness in the midst of a more and more positivistic society? Can religion in the middle of a nominalistic transition period help the individual to relate himself or herself to the dimension of the totally Other beyond the dimensions of nature, society, state and history, in order thereby to gain freedom and redemption, without falling into the traps, and illusions, and delusions of an obsolete peep-whole metaphysics, or some other kind of a fad? Can religion help the individual in his or her attempts at self-communication and self-realization?

Alternative Futures

We shall ask, if religion can encourage and empower the individual to work passionately for alternative Future III - a society characterized by communication without domination, and to mitigate at least alternative Future I - the totally administered society, and to resist alternative Future II - conventional wars and civil wars, NBC wars, and the consequent ecological destruction? (See Road Map A, B, C, D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>) Can religion help us in our attempts, to emancipate ourselves from a non-participatory coexistence with an autonomous, self-steering collective? Or must religion necessarily lead to the individual's introversion, narcissism, objectless inwardness, or to escapism's of different kinds.

Courage To Be

We shall ask, if all God - images of all positive religions are necessarily ideological or neuroticized, as Freud and Marx asserted? (See Road Map, B, C . D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). Is the connection between the Divine and the human necessarily fictitious? Are religious myths and rituals necessarily an instrument of social control or an expression of mass neurosis? Can the religion of the God beyond God, as Tillich hoped, give the courage - to - be to individuals, living in the present world-historical transition period:

the courage to participate in the community, and the courage to be oneself, if necessary even against the collective? Is a totally secularized or individualized individual possible at all? Where are the limits? What is the precise function of religious faith for the nervous stability of the individual personality, for the mental health, and the wholesomeness of the individual? Is the need for religion merely a derivation from the child's feeling of helplessness, as Freud asserted, and of the longing it provokes for security under a sublime father figure? Or is religion a necessary element in the maturation process of the individual subject? We shall try, to show that the concept of a gracious divine Providence, which we find in different forms in almost all world - religions, must not necessarily be ideological or infantile, as the enlighteners Marx and Freud assumed: that they were simply not dialectical enough; that they fell victim to the dialectic of enlightenment! Finally, we shall try to find out, if religion can help people to resist their becoming administered, or authoritarian, or fascist personalities in a more and more economically and politically bureaucratized, computerized, and cyberneticized signal society.

Right and Left

In our critical, comparative, religiological discourse, we shall take likewise seriously psychologists of religion on the Right - like e. g. Jung or Frankl - as well as on the Left - as e. g. Reich, Marcuse, or Fromm (See Road Map B, C, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). We shall move in the sphere of the critical theory of society and its psychological hypotheses, but without neglecting the traditional theory, e. g. a cognitive psychology, interested in the transmission of religious representations from one individual to the other. We shall see, that the father of psychoanalysis, Freud, can be made use of on the Right, e. g. by T. Parsons, as well as on the Left, e. g. by Habermas. The question is, of course, if Freud's psychology is equally adequately understood on the Right and on the Left? Or is maybe such double use possible only, because Freud's own psychology of religion contains conservative positivistic as well as radical elements? We shall try to clarify such issues.

Theodicy

In our critical, comparative, religiological discourse, we shall discover, that no traditional or critical psychology of religion can possibly bypass the theodicy (theos - God; dikae - justice) problem(See Road Map B, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). It is the question concerning the justice of God in the face of the injustices of his world. It is the problem of finitude, evil, suffering, pain, loneliness, fear of sickness, aging and death, and of meaninglessness. World - religions rise, when they have answers to the theodicy problem, which are adequate in terms of individuals living on a certain level of evolution, as learning process. World - religions move into a crisis, and possibly decline and "die", when they can no longer provide individuals with an adequate theodicy answer on a certain level of personal and collective learning and evolution. Only too often individuals ask: "Why me, o Lord?" Theodicy answers range from suffering is the consequence of secret sins, through suffering is a test, to suffering is the result of God's wish to preserve human freedom, etc. Can we say, that Auschwitz was divine punishment for the secret sins of the victims? Can we say, that Hiroshima was a divine test? If God "allows" a rapist to rape and kill a coed on our Campus, because he wants to preserve his freedom, then he operates under the niveau of the most miserable banana-republic, which at least tries to prevent the rapists from raping, and the murderers from murdering - if it is not totally corrupt - precisely in order to preserve human freedom, particularly the freedom of the victims. The untruth of a theodicy becomes visible, when its attempt to justify God turns him into a monstrosity, and thus becomes blasphemy. The most intense intra-psychic struggles of the most advanced individuals are connected with the theodicy problem. Religion stands and falls with the theodicy problem. We shall move through the monistic, dualistic, and dialectical theodicy answers of the different world religions. In terms of a theodicy of inquiry, we shall try to find answers, which are plausible on our present level of evolution, as learning process.

Ethical Aspirations

In our discourse, we shall be concerned with the high ethical aspirations, which we find, accumulated in the God-hypostases of the great Far Eastern, Mid Eastern, and Western positive religions: in the religions of wisdom, the mystical religions, and the prophetic religions(See Road Map B, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). We shall try to reappropriate these ethical aspirations with the help of outstanding psychologists of religion, e. g. Jung, Frankl, May, Tillich, or Fromm, so that they may become helpful in modern man's search for the totally Other, as perfect justice and non-possessive love, in all dimensions of his inner world: sense certainty, perception, feeling, understanding, observation, consciousness, subconsciousness, propensities, impulses, passions, libidinous and aggressive instincts and aspects of the will to life, ego, super-ego, images, ideas, values, attitudes, motivations, self-consciousness, reason, and spirit.

Salvation or Redemption

In our discourse, we shall become aware of the fact, that all still living great positive religious worldviews and systems of interpretation of reality and orientation of action promise salvation and redemption in one form or the other. (See Road Map B, C, D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). They offer individuals meaning in an apparently meaningless world, which can trustingly be accepted or cynically be rejected. They show individuals different ways of liberation. They make the attempt, to lead the individual from alienation to being at home with him or herself autonomously in communion and solidarity with others. For the individual's and for religion's sake we shall not put "epoche" on the truth question. We shall not bracket it in or out. We shall face it. To be sure, a world religion is not equally close to each point in time. Also the religious truth has a time core. We shall nevertheless ask: can this or that positive religion really proof its truth claim? Can it really solve the theodicy question without committing blaspheme, and thus without it through its own inner contradiction pushing itself beyond itself into a more concrete religion, with a more adequate theodicy solution, and thus without dissolving itself. To be sure, all these religious processes take place in the hearts and minds, in the "psyches" of the living believers. Individual persons must suffer them through. Religion, true or untrue, exists only in individuals. Also religious truth is for us the negation of ideology or untruth.

Social Problems

Finally, in our critical, comparative, religiological discourse, we shall try to prove, that the now living world religions can help individuals, existing in highly differentiated and complex systems of human condition and action systems, to mitigate at least alternative Future I, to resist Future II, and passionately to promote Future III: i. e. to resolve the social problems of war, hunger, political oppression, environmental destruction, and alienation(See Road Map A, B, C, D, on the website: <http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>). These problems are aspects of the modern theodicy problem. There is a psychological and a religious dimension to their solution. We shall try to inter-connect these dimensions. Only in alternative Future III - a society, in which personal autonomy and universal solidarity are reconciled - man shall be able to unfold completely, what once was called his nature or his spirit.

B. Mayor Discourse - Themes

In each discourse - session one of the following themes is introduced in lecture - form, and is then discussed, and analyzed thoroughly, and in detail. All themes are interconnected with each other, and can only be understood through each other. Our method is paradigmatic-dialectical and comparative in terms of the critical theory of religion.

1. The correlation between the subject and the totally other.
2. Form and content: critical theory, particularly critical psychology, and religion.
3. Fundamental categories: nature, subject, family, civil society, state and religion.
4. Communicative action and discourse.
5. Traditional and dialectical methods: determinate negation.
6. Location of critical, comparative, religiological discourse in the discourse-history: the three stages.
7. The necessary conditions of the critical, comparative, religiological discourse.
8. From mythos to enlightenment.
9. Definition of critical theory.
10. Definition of critical psychology.
11. Definition of the individual.
12. Definition of society.
13. Definition of religion.
14. The five human potentials.
15. Damaged and undamaged life.
16. Systematization and alienation.
17. Religion and the five human potentials.
18. The five-world model.
19. Validity claims and discourse ethics.
20. Discourse objections on the basis of the five validity claims.
21. The individual and the five world model.
22. Religion and the five-world model.
23. Definitions of religion on the Right, in the Center, and on the Left.
24. The deep structure of religion.
25. The history of religions and the psychological dimension.
26. The traditional unity, the modern disunion and the possible postmodern reunion of the religious and the secular.
27. Definitions of the individual on the Right, in the Center, and on the Left.
28. The deep structure of the individual.
29. The history of the individual.
30. The traditional union, the modern disunion, and the possible postmodern reunion of the individual and the collective.
31. Individual and religion in the antagonistic civil society.
32. The history of civil society and the individual and religion.
33. Individual, family, state and religion outside civil society.
34. Individual, family, state and religion integrated into civil society.
35. Different forms of totalitarianism and their impact on the individual and religion.
36. The theodicy problem.
37. History of the religiology, particularly of the psychology of religion.
38. Religion as projection of the individual.
39. Religion as opiate, and consolation, and protest of the individual.
40. Religion in the world as will and representation.
41. Religion and the individual's pleasure and reality principle.

42. Religion as the individual's illusion or delusion.
43. Religion and the individual's discontent in civil society.
44. Religion as the individual's longing for the totally Other.
45. The individual's tasks and meaning before the unconscious, unknown God.
46. The individual and mythology - and - ideology critique.
47. The individual in pantheism, polytheism, theism, deism, and atheism.
48. The individual and the coming of the Messiah.
49. The individual between Eros and Thanatos.
50. The individual and the development of the dogma of Christ.
51. The authoritarian and the revolutionary / democratic personality.
52. The individual man for himself.
53. The individual's escape from freedom.
54. The individual in matricentric and patriarchal religion.
55. The individual in authoritarian and humanistic religion.
56. The personal, social, and religious identity of the individual.
57. The individual and his or her psychic archetypes.
58. The individual and the principle of hope.
59. The individual and his or her courage - to - be: before the God beyond God.
60. The individual and the variety of religious experiences.
61. The individual and the alternative futures of religion.
62. The individual and the alternative global futures.
63. Eschatologies and apocalypses with and without the Messiah: and their psychological consequences.

C. Choices of Background Readings

We shall use as background reading one book every two week from the list below in order. They should introduce you into the critical theory of religion and its psychological hypotheses, without which we cannot get a full view of the individual personality or of religion. As the books emphasize the critical theory of religion, they do, however, not neglect the traditional theories of religion. You can use the books for class discussion, as well as in the three tests, and for extra-credit:

Required:

1. Siebert, From the Critical Theory to the Critical Political Theology: Personal Autonomy and Universal Solidarity.
2. Siebert, The Critical Theory of Religion: The Frankfurt School
3. Siebert, Horkheimer's Critical Sociology of Religion: The Relative and the Transcendent.
4. Siebert. From Critical Theory of Society to Theology of Communicative Praxis.
5. Siebert, Hegel's Concept of Marriage and Family: The Origin of Subjective Freedom.

Recommended:

1. Siebert, The Evolution of the Religious Consciousness Toward Alternative Futures.
2. Siebert, Toward a Radical Interpretation of Abrahamic Religions in Search for the Wholly Other.
3. Jensen, Walter. 2015. Sociology of Religion: A critical primer. (See chapter 3 for an overview of my work)

D. Depth Study

Please, choose seven of the following books as your depth study covering one every two weeks. That way you shall become a specialist in this author's work. You can use him in discussions and in the tests.

- A. Edgar, The Philosophy of Habermas
- A. Honneth, Pathologies of Reason. On the Legacy of Critical Theory
- A. Huxley, The Brave New World
- B. Brecht, St. John of the Stockyards
- B. F. Skinner, Beyond Freedom and Dignity
- B. F. Skinner, Science and Human Behavior
- C. Eller, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory
- C. G. Jung, Psyche and Symbol
- C. G. Jung, Psychology and Religion
- Ch. Baudelaire, The Flower of Evil
- D. Claussen, (ed), Traces of Liberation – Herbert Marcuse
- D. Claussen, Theodor W. Adorno: One Last Genius
- D. Jeffreys, Hell's Cartel. IG Farben and the Making of Hitler's War Machine
- D. Jenemann, Adorno in America
- D. Ranke - Heinemann, Eunuchs for the Kingdom
- D. Sherman, Sartre and Adorno. The Dialectics of Subjectivity
- E. Bahr, Weimar on the Pacific: German Exile Culture in Los Angeles and the Crisis of Modernism
- E. Bloch, On Karl Marx
- E. Bloch, The Philosophy of the Future
- E. Bloch, The Principle of Hope
- E. Bloch, Utopia
- E. Fromm, Escape From Authority
- E. Fromm, Escape from Freedom
- E. Fromm, Greatness and Limitations of Freud's Thought
- E. Fromm, Love, Sexuality, and Matriarchy. About Gender
- E. Fromm, Man for Himself
- E. Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man
- E. Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion
- E. Fromm, The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness
- E. Fromm, The Dogma of Christ
- E. Fromm, The Revolution of Hope
- E. Fromm, The Sane Society
- E. Fromm, To Be or To Have
- E. Fromm, You shall be As Gods
- E. Fromm, Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis
- E. H. Erikson, Childhood and Society
- E. H. Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle
- E. H. Erikson, Identity, Youth, and Crisis
- E. H. Erikson, Insight and Responsibility
- E. H. Erikson, Young Man Luther
- E. Hammer, Adorno and the Political
- E. Mendieta, Frankfurt School on Religion. Key Writings by Major Thinkers
- F. Fromm-Reichmann. Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy
- F. Jameson, Aesthetics and Politics
- F. Jameson, Late Marxism: Adorno or the Persistence of the Dialectic

G. Baum, Journeys
 G. Baum, Man Becoming
 G. Baum, Religion and Alienation
 G. Baum, Sociology and Human Destiny
 H. Küng, Psychoanalysis
 H. Marcuse, Eros and Civilization
 H. Marcuse, Essay on Liberation
 H. Marcuse, The Aesthetical Dimension
 H. Marcuse, The One-Dimensional Man
 J. Habermas, Communication and the Evolution of Society
 J. Habermas, Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity
 J. Habermas, Religion and Rationality. Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity
 J. Holloway, etc. Negativity and Revolution. Adorno and Political Activism
 J. J. Bachofen, Mother Right
 J. J. Bachofen, Myth, Religion, and Mother Right
 J. Rudin, Psychotherapy and Religion
 L. Jäger, Adorno. A Political Biography
 L. Jäger, Adorno. A Political Biography
 L. Löwenthal, Critical Theory and Frankfurt Theorists. Lectures-Correspondence-Conversations
 M. Horkheimer and Th. W. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment (2002)
 M. Jay, (ed.), An Unmastered Past. The Autobiographical Reflections of Leo Löwenthal
 M. Pensky. The Actuality of Adorno. Critical Essays on Adorno and the Postmodern
 N. Baldwin, Henry Ford and the Jews
 Orwells, 1984
 P. Apostolidis, Stations of the Cross. Adorno and Christian Right Radio
 P. Tillich, The Courage To Be
 R. /Funk, Erich Fromm. His Life and Ideas
 R. C. Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader
 R. Funk, The Essential Fromm. Life between Having and Being
 R. H. Stone/ M. L. Weaver. Against the Third Reich, Paul Tillich's Wartime Radio Broadcasts into Nazi Germany
 R. May, Love and Will
 R. May, Man's Search for Himself
 R. May, Power and Innocence
 R. May, The Meaning of Anxiety
 R. Wolin, The Frankfurt School Revisited
 S. Buck-Morss, Dreamworld and Catastrophe
 S. Freud, Civilization and its Discontent
 S. Freud, Dreams
 S. Freud, Introduction to Psychoanalysis
 S. Freud, The Future of an Illusion
 S. Lundgren, Fight Against Idols. Erich Fromm on Religion, Judaism and the Bible
 St. Best /D. Kellner, Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations
 St. Müller-Doohm, Adorno: A Biography
 Th. W. Adorno, Esthetical Theory
 Th. W. Adorno, Metaphysics. Concept and Problems
 Th. W. Adorno, Minima Moralia
 Th. W. Adorno, Problems of Moral Philosophy
 Th. W. Adorno, The Authoritarian Personality
 Th. Wheatland. The Frankfurt School in Exile

The Jerusalem Bible: The Judges, the Psalms and the Prophets

U. Ecco, Foucault's Pendulum

U. Ecco, The Name of the Rose

V. E. Frankl, The Search for Meaning

V. E. Frankl, The Unconscious God

V. Hugo, Les Miserables

W. Benjamin, Angelus Novus

W. Benjamin, Archive. Images. Texts, Signs

W. Benjamin, Illuminations

W. James, Varieties of Religious Experience

W. Jensen, Sociology of Religion: A Critical Primer — 2015

W. Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism

W. Reich, The Story of Christ

You may choose other works of the same authors, which are not registered here, from the library, as long as they deal with the psychology of religion and are approved by me.

E. Grading

Grading is based on a 200-point scale divided as follows:

- a. We shall have a role call after each class session. Attendance will be worth 10 points total. Students who are chronically late or leave early will have their final grades penalized.
- b. We shall have as much lecture in each class session as necessary and as much discourse as possible according to the contemporary discourse philosophy. Oral participation in our discourse will be checked after each class and will be worth 50 points.
- c. We shall have two mayor essay tests in the first week of the second and the third month and a final and comprehensive test in the first week of the fourth month. Background reading, depth study, time diagnosis, audiovisual material, excursion experiences and substantial issues will be tested. The first two tests will be worth 40 points each. The final and comprehensive test will be worth 50 points.
- d. We shall have a voluntary extra-credit paper at the end of the course. It will consist of a critical summary of one of the background readings. The extra credit paper will be worth 10 points.
- e. Exam make-up policy: in the case of illness, exams can only be made up with a written note from a doctor, or in the case of family emergencies, with a note from the Dean of Students.

The grading scale is as follows: A (200 - 185), BA (184-173), B (172 - 159),

CB (158-145), C (144 - 131), DC (130-119), D (118-105), E (104 and below).

F. Objectives of our Discourse

The objectives presented here can help the student to evaluate our critical, comparative, religiological discourse on the psychological elements in religion or the religious elements in psychology from one test-period to the other, and particularly at the end of the course. The objectives of our discourse are:

1. To help the student, to gain insight into the history, structure, function and problematic of the critical theory of religion.
2. To help the discourse participant to think in an inter - disciplinary manner inside and beyond the boundaries of the critical theory of religion, particularly its psychological and social-psychological dimension.
3. To make the student aware of the difference between the traditional and the critical theory of religion.
4. To make the student aware of the significance of the theodicy problem in religion as well as in the critical theory of religion, and for the individual and his or her life and thinking: particularly his or her mental

health.

5. To make the discourse participant aware of the universality and the power of religious feelings, hopes, longings, fears, hates, aspirations, motivations, values, ideas, and attitudes.
6. To enlighten the students about the ambiguity of the religious consciousness: people have done the best and the worst in the name of Deus vult.
7. To make the discourse participant aware of the modern split between the sacred and the profane consciousness and language, and its possible resolution.
8. To make the student aware of the modern dichotomy between the individual and the collective, and the possible reconciliation of personal autonomy and universal solidarity.
9. To make the discourse participant sensitive for the problem of alienation, and for the necessity of its resolution: reconciliation.
10. To make the student aware of the fact that religion is not only feeling and images, and the individual is not only irrational, but both are also thought: homo duplex. Religion as well as the individual and their interconnection can be thought about scientifically.
11. To make the discourse participant aware of the fact, that religion is fully alive only to the extent, to which it is cathected, and acted out in communicative praxis.
12. To make the student aware of the large variety of religious experiences, as well as of psychologies of religion, which may not all contain the truth to the same extent.
13. To explore with the discourse participant the possible limitations of positivistic psychologies of religion, particularly behaviorism.
14. To show the student the way toward a critical, comparative religiology and a dialectical psychology of religion.
15. To help the discourse participant to gain self-knowledge and self-determination through insight into the critical, comparative religiology, and particularly the dialectical psychology of religion.
16. To help the student to take into consideration the human price to be paid for enlightenment: the dialectic of enlightenment.
17. To show the student a way to determinately negate myths into enlightenment, and thus to avoid the dialectics of enlightenment: it's turning back into mythology.
18. To show the discourse participant, how a critical, comparative religiology and a dialectical psychology of religion can help him or her to mitigate at least alternative Future I, to prevent alternative Future II, and to promote alternative Future III.
19. To help the student to reflect on alternative global futures and the possible role of individual and religion in them.
20. To help the student to deal with religious as well as secular-scientific apocalyptic visions
21. To show the student, how the notion of determinate negation can help him, to resolve religious as well as psychological problems.
22. To show the student, how he or she can with the help of the critical theory of religion, particularly its psychological and social - psychological dimension, stem himself or herself against regressive neo-pagan, neo-polytheistic, and mythological tendencies, and to be an enlightened person, and to preserve his or her autonomy in solidarity with others against the dangers inside and outside of himself or herself.
23. To help the student to reflect on the fundamental contradictions of the modern civil society - between the sacred and the profane, between the male and the female, between the individual and the collective, between the races and between the classes - and to work on their reconciliation.

G. Academic Honesty

Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the University policies and procedures that pertain to Academic Honesty. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. The academic policies addressing Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=974> and the Graduate Catalog at <http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=25&navoid=1030>. If there is reason to believe you have been involved in academic dishonesty, you will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s) and if you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. You should consult with your instructor if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test.

Students and instructors are responsible for making themselves aware of and abiding by the “Western Michigan University Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, and Stalking Policy and Procedures” related to prohibited sexual misconduct under Title IX, the Clery Act and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Campus Safe. Under this policy, responsible employees (including instructors) are required to report claims of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator or designee (located in the Office of Institutional Equity). Responsible employees are not confidential resources. For a complete list of resources and more information about the policy see www.wmich.edu/sexualmisconduct.

In addition, students are encouraged to access the Code of Conduct, as well as resources and general academic policies on such issues as diversity, religious observance, and student disabilities:

Office of Student Conduct – www.wmich.edu/conduct

Division of Student Affairs – www.wmich.edu/students/diversity

University Relations Office – www.wmich.edu/policies/religious-observances-policy

Disability Services for Students – www.wmich.edu/disabilityservices

Don't Worry!!! Be Happy!!!

You Have my Telephone

Number: 269-381-0864 and my E-mail: rudolf.siebert@wmich.edu

© 2017 by Rudolf J. Siebert. This document may be reproduced in any non-profit form without permission of the author; however, for-profit reproduction requires written permission.

<http://www.rudolfjsiebert.org>