The Psychology of Religion

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This course will introduce students to the two main approaches in the psychology of religion, the personal and the social. The personalistic psychology of religion is tied to psychoanalysis, starting with Sigmund Freud. The social psychology of religion draws on academic social science research. While the personalistic psychology of religion uses analogies and insights from individual psychodynamics in asking about the content of religious beliefs, the social psychology of religion seeks the correlates of religious beliefs in social space and social behavior. Both approaches are equally important in this course.

TOPICS OF CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND PREPARATORY READINGS:
(Films and guest speakers to be added)

1. Defining psychology and religion
   Ch. 1 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997

2. History and methodology of the psychological study of religion
   Chs. 2, 3, 4, 5 in Beit-Hallahmi, 1989
   Ch. 3 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997

3. Psychoanalysis: Basic concepts

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5. Explaining religious behavior: 16 hypotheses
   Ch. 2 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997

6. Explaining religious behavior: 16 hypotheses
   Ch. 6 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997
   Chs. 8, 9 of Beit-Hallahmi, 1989

7. Predicting religious behavior
   Ch. 8 in Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi
8. Correlates of religiosity: individual level  
Ch. 9, 10 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle

9. Correlates of religiosity: group level  
Ch. 11 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle

10. The psychoanalytic interpretation of religion  
Ch. 7 in Beit-Hallahmi, 1989  
Freud- The Future of An Illusion

11. Conversion  
Ch. 7 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997

12. Summing up- looking at the 16 hypotheses  
Ch. 12 in Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997

REQUIRED READING:


ADDITIONAL READINGS:


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
One take home exam; one term paper. Format and topic of term paper to be decided jointly by student and instructor. Students will have the option of presenting the paper in class.

Films: The Holy Ghost People, Marjoe

Guest speakers: from Jehovah's Witnesses, Benjamin Creme group.