SCHOOL OF DIVINITY, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY

ACADEMIC SESSION 2015-2016

RS2004: Economic and Psychological Theories of Religion

15 credits; 11 weeks

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY:

The full set of school regulations and procedures is contained in the Undergraduate Student Handbook which is available online at your MyAberdeen page. Students are expected to familiarise themselves not only with the contents of this leaflet but also with the contents of the Handbook. Therefore, ignorance of the contents of the Handbook will not excuse the breach of any school regulation or procedure.

You must familiarise yourself with this important information at the earliest opportunity.

COURSE CO-ORDINATOR

Professor Robert Segal

E-mail: r.segal@abdn.ac.uk

Office tel.: 01224 273990 (with voice mail)

Office hours (KCF15): Tuesdays from 4 to 5 pm and Thursdays from 3 to 4 pm

 Discipline Administration

Mrs Claire Hargaden

50-52 College Bounds

Room CB001

01224 272366

divrs@abdn.ac.uk
TIMETABLE

One one-hour seminar and one two-hour class seminar a week for weeks 1-11--plus one two-hour revision seminar in week 12. Seminar means a combination of lecture with tutorial. There are no separate tutorials.

Tuesdays, 2-3pm in Edward Wright, S86
Fridays from 3-5pm in Taylor, A36

There will be no classes on the following dates:
24 November, 27 November

Students can view their university timetable at
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/timetables-550.php

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of leading theories of religion from the fields of economics and psychology. The main issues to be considered will be: what aspects of religion is each theory trying to explain; what aspects does the theory succeed in explaining; and how does the theory reflect the discipline from which it comes?

COURSE AIMS

To introduce students to the range of modern economic and psychological theories of religion and to enable students to apply theories to actual religions.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should have become familiar with the
range of modern economic and psychological theories of religion, with ways of comparing theories, with ways of applying theories to specific religions, and with ways of evaluating theories.

**LECTURE/TUTORIAL PROGRAMME**

**Weeks 1-2 ECONOMICS I: MARXISM**
Book of Revelation

**Weeks 3-4 ECONOMICS II: RATIONAL CHOICE THEORY**

**Weeks 5-6 PSYCHOLOGY I: FREUD**
Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, chs. 1, 4 (sections 5-7 only)

**Weeks 7-8 PSYCHOLOGY II: ERIKSON**
Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, ch. 3

**Weeks 9-0 PSYCHOLOGY III: JUNG**
C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, ch. 1

**WEEK 11 PSYCHOLOGY IV: COGNITIVISM**
Stewart Guthrie, *Faces in the Clouds*, ch. 7

**TUTORIALS**
There will be no tutorials in addition to the seminars. The seminars will be a mix of formal lecturing and class discussion. There are, then, no reading assignments beyond those for the seminars. Students are required to come to the seminars with copies of the readings.
READINGS

All of the readings can be accessed on the MyAberdeen page. Blackwell’s has copies for purchase of almost all of the readings. One reference work that will of help throughout the course is my edited Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion (2006). Copies will be put on three-day loan in the library, and paperback copies are available for purchase at Blackwell’s.

ASSESSMENT

One two-hour written examination (50%); one essay of 2000 words (50%)

PLEASE NOTE: In order to pass a course on the first attempt, a student must attain a Common Grading Scale (CGS) mark of at least E3 on each element of course assessment. Failure to do so will result in a grade of no greater than CGS E1 for the course as a whole.

Click to view the University Level Descriptors (ANNEX A).

Click to view the University Assessment Scale Band Descriptors (ANNEX B).

ESSAYS

Essays should be 2000 words long, including quotations, footnotes, and bibliography. Students will be penalized for essays that are either too long or too short.

1. Apply Marx and Engels’ theory to Liberation Theology. How well does the theory explain this example?

2. Apply rational choice theory to secular humanism. How well does the theory explain the rejection of religion altogether?

3. Apply Freud’s theory to the death of King David’s son Absalom (2 Samuel 13-18). How well does the theory explain the event?
4. Apply Erikson's theory to the life of Jesus or Buddha. How well does the theory explain your chosen example?

5. Apply Jung’s theory to Odysseus’ trip to the underworld (Odyssey Book XI). How well does the theory explain the event?

6. Apply cognitive theory to the conversion of Saul (Paul) in Acts 1:9-22). How well does the theory explain the event?

The main source of information for each essay topic is the assigned reading from the theorist. You are welcome but not required to consult any secondary sources. Any secondary sources you do use should supplement, not replace, studying the assigned reading from the theorist you choose. Cite in the bibliography any secondary sources you use. There are entries on the theorists in the following multi-volume reference works in the library: International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968), International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (2001), and Encyclopedia of Religion (first edition 1987, second edition 2005).

ASSESSMENT DEADLINE

Essays are due by Friday 20 November, 3 pm.

SUBMISSION ARRANGEMENTS

Submit one paper copy to the drop boxes in CB008 in 50-52 College Bounds and one electronic copy to Turnitin via MyAberdeen. Both copies to be submitted by 3.00pm on the due date.

Please note: Failure to submit both an electronic copy to TurnitinUK and an identical paper copy, with the digital receipt attached, will result in a deduction of marks. Failure to submit to TurnitinUK will result in a zero mark.
EXAMINATION
The two-hour written examination will consist of approximately six questions, any two of which must be answered.

General exam guidance will be given in the Student Handbook.

Past exam papers can be viewed at Past exam papers can be viewed at
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/.

RESIT INFORMATION
Access to the resit which is provisional on:

- All submitted coursework having been submitted and graded at CGS E3 or higher.
- Student having a valid Class Certificate. Students with C7s are not eligible for resits.

Past exam papers can be viewed at http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/learning-and-teaching/for-students/exam-papers/.