P 641 Spirituality and God-Images in Clinical and Cultural Context

Christian Theological Seminary

Spring 2013
Instructor: Matthias Beier, M.Div., Ph.D.
Thursdays, 1:00 – 4:00 pm
Class Room: 158
Office hours: By appointment
Office 202
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317-931-2346

Catalogue Course Description
Explores the creation, nature, maintenance and modification of our largely unconscious god representations and their relationship to human culture, with particular attention to implications for clinical practice and cultural-systemic analysis. Prerequisite: none.

Purpose of the Course
This course will explore perspectives on the nature of God images, both conscious and unconscious, their role in the human psyche and in the shaping of human cultures, and their potential for harm or healing in the lives of individuals, groups, humanity and the wider world. It will provide opportunities for learning to work with God images in clinical practice as well as in cultural practice. How do God images relate to and/or differ from psychosocial upbringing and cultural contexts? How can caregivers and/or counselors in various contexts work with implicit and explicit God images with those seeking help in ways that promote healing and wholeness rather than division and brokenness? What distinguishes harmful uses of God images from healthy ones, superstition from faith? Are God images only an obsolete vestige of human evolution, as the new atheists argue, or is there more to them? What do God images have to do with a sense of self, a sense of belonging, a sense of faith or spirituality, a desire for peace, and the human longing for a love greater than death? And why do God images culturally and personally so often become evoked to inflict physical and mental violence?

Licensure and Accreditation Standards
Mental Health Counselor Licensure
This course is designed to meet some of the licensure requirements for Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Indiana. In addition, it meets some of the requirements for Licensed Professional Counselor and/or Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor in other states.

CACREP Course Standards
This class addresses key aspects in the following core curricular areas of the 2009 CACREP standards:
“2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY—studies that provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society.”
“3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT—studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts.”
“7. ASSESSMENT—studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation in a multicultural society,” especially “f. social and cultural factors related to the assessment and evaluation of individuals, groups, and specific populations”.

Marriage and Family Therapy Licensure
This course meets partial course requirements for marriage and family therapy licensure in Indiana and other states, especially with regard to assessment of cultural and spiritual aspects.
MFT Core Competencies Addressed in this Course:

1.2.1 Recognize contextual and systemic issues (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, larger systems, social context.
1.3.1 Gather and review intake information, giving balanced attention to individual, family, community, cultural, and contextual factors.
2.1.6 Understand the limitations of the extant models of assessment and diagnosis, especially as they relate to different cultural and ethnic groups.
2.4.3 Evaluate the accuracy and cultural relevance of behavioral health and relational diagnoses.
4.3.2 Deliver interventions in a way that is sensitive to unique situations and dynamics (e.g., gender, age, socioeconomic status, culture/race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, larger systems issues of the client).
4.4.6 Evaluate reactions to the treatment process (e.g., transference, family of origin, current stress level, current life situation, cultural context) and their impact on effective intervention and clinical outcomes.

Course Requirements

1. Class attendance is required. Please be punctual. In case an absence from a class period is unavoidable due to illness, contact the instructor by e-mail prior to class. In case the absence is due to an emergency, contact the instructor within 24 hours of the absence. Unexcused absences (incl. partial ones) will reduce the final grade. According to Seminary policy, no credit will be given if more than three class sessions are missed.
2. Active, thoughtful and constructive participation in class discussion (15 % of final grade) reflective of the required reading assignments and in response to questions from the instructor or peers. Participation will include individual and group work.
3. Integration paper (25 %): 9-10 pages (type-written, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 point). Write an autobiography of the development of your own God-image(s). Dialogue with both Freud’s theory and Drewermann’s/Beier’s theory to analyze your own evolution and current view of God-images (give constant references to page numbers in the readings). Paper due Sept. 29.
4. Team Class Presentation (25 %): Choose a team partner among your peers in class. Carefully craft a dialogue together illustrating the day’s reading and perform the dialogue in class. Select a hypothetical psychotherapy or pastoral care case, a scriptural story, or an important cultural piece of interest to you (e.g., novel, movie, poem, speech, artwork, song, music, news story, political situation ...) to illustrate the day’s reading in the dialogue. You might develop the dialogue face-to-face or through chat, Skype, Facebook, etc. The presentation should be between 20-25 minute long, followed by a 5-10 minute discussion with the class about it. Provide the instructor on the day of the presentation with a written copy of the dialogue. Sign up will be done during week 1 and 2 for team presentations throughout the semester.
5. Final Paper (35 %): 12-15 pages, double-spaced. (30 % of final grade) In light of a close reading of the class texts develop and support your own theory and synthesis of what decides whether God-images have harmful or healing effects for individuals, groups and human culture in general. Include several pages of reflection on how you think harmful God-images can be therapeutically healed in psychotherapeutic, pastoral and/or public contexts. Be clear on your critical rationale for particular clinical approaches and philosophical/theological perspectives.

Style: Please follow APA style! For a useful summary of APA style, consult this webpage: http://www.deakin.edu.au/studentlife/academic-skills/undergraduate/handouts/referencing-apa.php
Class Methods

The overall teaching methodology of this course integrates didactic lectures, class discussion, student presentations, readings, use of media, written assignments and autobiographical exploration.

Grading Rubric

Grades will be determined by the number of points accumulated out of a total of 100 possible points.

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Class Schedule

Psychological and Cultural Analysis

Week 1 Jan. 24
Introduction
Required Reading: Holliman, “Why Bother with God?” (online at course page)

Week 2 Jan. 31
Foundations of God Image Research; Freud on the Origin and Effect of God Images
Required Reading: Moriarty & Hoffman, Foreword by A.-M. Rizzuto, & Ch. 1 “Introduction and Overview”
Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents: “Introduction” by Christopher Hitchens (pp. 9-19); “Sigmund Freud: A Brief Life” by Peter Gay (pp. 151-167); Chs. 1-3 (pp. 23-75)

Week 3 Feb. 7
Freud & Jung on Psychological & Cultural Dimensions of God Images
Required Reading: Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents: Chs. 4-8 (pp. 77-149)
Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 3: Jones, “Psychodynamic Theories of the Evolution of the God Image”

Recommended Reading: Jung, Carl Gustav. Psychology and Religion;
Rizzuto, Ana-Maria. The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study.

Week 4 Feb. 14
Interdisciplinary Study of God-Images in the Use of Religious Texts: Gen. 2-11 (pt. 1)
Required Reading: Beier, A Violent God-Image, Introduction & part 1 of Ch. 1: Fear, Evil, and the Origins of a Violent God-Image (pp. xi-47) & Appendix 1-2 (pp. 335-342)

Recommended Reading: Beier, “The Deadly Search for God”

Week 5 Feb. 21
Interdisciplinary Study of God-Images in the Use of Religious Texts: Gen. 2-11 (pt. 2)
Required Reading: Beier, A Violent God-Image, part 2 of Ch. 1: Fear, Evil, and the Origins of a Violent God-Image (pp. 47-130)

Team: ______________

Feb. 28 READING WEEK – NO CLASS

Integration Paper due Mar. 7

Week 6 Mar. 7
Required Reading: Beier, A Violent God-Image, Ch. 2 (pp. 131-208)
Week 7  Mar. 14  Cultural Therapeutics and the End of Violent Religion: Recovering the Nonviolent God-Image of Jesus: Working Through a Sadomasochistic Interpretation of the Cross

**Required Reading:** Beier, *A Violent God-Image*, Ch. 3 (pp. 209-271) & Conclusion (pp. 327-334)

**Recommended Reading:** Beier, *A Violent God-Image*, Ch. 4 (pp. 273-326)  

**God Images in Clinical Work**

Week 8  Mar. 21  God Image Research Overview; God Images in Attachment Psychotherapy

**Required Reading:** Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 2: Grimes, “God Image Research: A Literature Review”  
Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 4: Noffke & Hall, “Attachment Psychotherapy & God Image”

**Recommended Reading:** Kirkpatrick, “An attachment-theory approach to the psychology of religion”

**Team:**________________

Mar. 28  EASTER RECESS – NO CLASS

Week 9  Apr. 4  God-Images in REBT and in Neuroscientific Perspective

**Required Reading:** Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 8: Johnson, “Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy & the God Image”  
Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 7: Garzon, “A Neuroscientific Approach & the God Image”

Week 10  Apr. 11  God-Images in Existential-Integrative & in Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy

**Required Reading:** Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 6: Hoffman, “Existential-Integrative Psychotherapy & the God Image”  
Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 5: Moriarty, “Time-Limited Dynamic Psychotherapy & the God Image”

Week 11  Apr. 18  God-Images, Recovery from Sexual & Physical Abuse, and Diversity

**Required Reading:** Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 10: Doehring, “A Liberal Protestant Pastoral Theological Approach & the God Image: The Role of God Images in Recovery from Sexual and Physical Abuse”  

Week 12  Apr. 25  Summary of Psychotherapy Approaches to God Image Work; Discussion

**Required Reading:** Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 12: Moriarty, Thomas, Allmond, “God Image Psychotherapy: Comparing the Approaches” & “Epilogue: Postscript by W. Schmidt”  
Moriarty & Hoffman, Ch. 9: O’Grady & Richards, “Theistic Psychotherapy & the God Image”

Week 13  May 2  God-Images, the Human Need for Love, and the Development of Personhood: or, between Superstition & Atheism

**Required Reading:** Beier, *God Without Delusion*, selected chapters: TBA

Week 14  May 9  Discussion and Synthesis

**Final Paper Due May 9**
READING LIST

Required books are available for purchase at the CTS bookstore. Journal articles and book chapters are available at the Library reserve and through the course page. Additional recommended readings will be indicated during the course of the semester.

Required Readings:

Books

Journal Articles:

Recommended Readings:

Books

Articles & Book Chapters