COURSE CODE: ZRE 4112

COURSE TITLE: THEORIES OF RELIGION

DATE: EXAM SESSION:

TIME: 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. This paper contains FIVE (5) questions. Answer ANY 3 questions.
2. Candidates are advised not to write on the question paper.
3. Candidates must hand in their answer booklets to the invigilator while in the examination room.
1. With illustrations, examine Claude Lévi Srauss (1908-2009) assertions that Structuralist approach to religion involves trying to establish the **meaning** of religious phenomena. (20 marks)

2. Discuss the teaching of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) which states that the technique of religion “consists in depressing the value of life and distorting the picture of the real world in a delusional manner – which presupposes an intimidation of the intelligence”. (20 marks)

3. “The totem is before all a symbol, a material expression of something else … It is evident that it expresses and symbolises two different sorts of things” (Emile Durkheim 1858-1917). Discuss. (20 marks)

4. With practical examples, evaluate **Carl Jung (1875-1961)** assertion that the collective unconscious contains the whole spiritual heritage of mankind’s evolution, born anew in the brain structure of every individual. His conscious mind is an ephemeral phenomenon that accomplishes all provisional adaptations and orientations.

Course Outline

Objectives of the study

To enable the student to understand various theoretical aspects clearly and intelligibly and carry out a critical appraisal of the approaches to the study of religions, especially phenomenology of religion, sociology of religion, philosophy of religion, psychology of religion, history of religion; comparative religions, Inter Faith Dialogue; and, major issues in contemporary debate in religion like secularism, atheism, humanism, marxism.

Teaching Methods

Lectures, Tutorials, Brainstorming Sessions, Group Discussions, Class Presentations, Assignments

Course Evaluation

- Term Paper 20%
- CAT 20%
- End of Semester Exam 60%

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Any student whom for whatever reason may have a disability that may require any special attention to facilitate his/her learning of the course, should kindly make arrangements to meet the course instructor on the same.

COURSE CONTENT

Introduction

1. Sociological and Anthropological Theories
   a. Functionalism
   b. Emile Durkheim (1858-1917): Functionalism
   c. Criticisms of the Functionalist Position
   d. Structuralism
   e. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908 - 2009): Structuralism
   f. Table 1: Structural Analysis by Lévi-Strauss of Three Myths Regarding the Origin of Tobacco
   g. Criticisms of Structuralism
   h. Historical/Interpretative Sociology
j. Criticisms of Historical Sociology

2. Psychological Theories
   a. Analytical Freudian Psychology
   b. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939): Analytical Psychology
   c. Jungian Psychology
   d. Carl Jung (1875-1961): Jung’s Concept of the Collective Unconscious
   e. Criticisms of Jungian Theory

3. Philosophical and Historical Theories
   a. History of Religion
   b. Criticism of the Methodology of History of Religion
   c. Phenomenology of Religion
   d. Criticisms of Phenomenology

4. Theological and Normative Theories
   a. Justificatory or Polemical Theories
   b. Evolutionary Theories
      1. Bellah’s Five Stages of Evolution:
         i. Primitive Religion
         ii. Archaic Religion
         iii. Historic Religion
         iv. Early Modern Religion
         v. Modern Religion
   c. Relativistic Theories

5. Typologies of Religion
   a. Yinger Sub-division of Sects into three Categories
   b. Bryan Wilson Categorization of Sects
   c. Troeltsch’s Description of the Division of Church and Sect

6. Approaches to the Study of Religion
   a. The Reductive/Empiricism Paradigm (Analytical/Determinist/Positivist/Etic)
   b. The Synthetic/Relativistic Paradigm (Holistic/Emic)
   c. The Debate

7. The Goal of the Study of Religion

References/Bibliography

Books for Further Reading
For a historical overview of the development of the study of religion, see: Sharpe, Comparative Religion.
Tylor, Edward Burnett, Primitive Culture, 1871.


Other useful books are:
Geertz, Clifford, The Religion of Java (1960), University Of Chicago Press
______________, The Interpretation of Cultures (1973), Basic Books 2000 paperback
James, William, The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature (1902)

Course Lecturer: Dr. Naila G. Napoo Sign: Date: