An introduction to psychological biblical criticism, including contributions of analytical psychologists C. G. Jung, Sigmund Freud, and Viktor Frankl, along with insights from cognitive, developmental and behavioral psychology, toward an understanding of the role of the human psyche in the history and interpretation of the Biblical text. It will offer psychological commentary on well-known biblical stories (from Adam and Eve to the Wedding at Cana), on types of religious experience (dreams, visions, conversion, speaking in tongues) and on the portraits of select biblical figures (Ezekiel, Paul, Moses, and Jesus). It will also explore the transaction between biblical texts and readers, noting both therapeutic and pathogenic outcomes. Class activity includes sessions with Walter Wink’s “transforming Bible study.”

“Everything to do with religion, everything it is and asserts, touches the human soul so closely that psychology least of all can afford to overlook it.” - C. G. Jung

“The fate of the world is determined by what happens in the human soul.” - Hans Carossa

“We do not yet grasp what historical forces brought forth and determined early Christianity. But beside and within this external history there is an inner history . . . Anyone who thinks that this religion can be illumined historically and factually without psychological reflection is just as much in error as one who pretends that everything about this religion can be said in this fashion.” - Gerd Theissen

“. . . Words not only convey something, but are something . . . [they] have color, depth, texture of their own, and the power to evoke vastly more than they mean; . . . words can be used not merely to make things clear, . . . but to make things happen inside the one who reads them or hears them.” - Frederick Buechner

**Books for Purchase**

- Miller, John W. *Jesus at Thirty: A Psychological and Historical Portrait*. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1997. (=Miller)
Objectives

1. To understand Scripture as a soul book, produced by the soul (psyche), addressed to the soul (psyche), for the care and cure of the soul (psyche). The word psyche occurs over a hundred times in the New Testament, referring to the living “self.” This means that the Bible is to be seen not only as the product of historical, social, literary, and revelatory processes. It is quintessentially the product of a psychic process in which conscious and unconscious factors are at work in the biblical authors and their communities, in the texts they have produced, in readers and interpreters of these texts and their communities, and in the historical “effects” Scripture has had on the lives, minds, and “souls” of individuals and cultures over the centuries, for both good and ill.

2. To come to an informed historical and semantic understanding of the words “soul” and “psyche” in Aristotelian, Greco-Roman, biblical, and contemporary usage.

3. To examine the story of the emergence of the new discipline of psychological biblical criticism, beginning in the late 1960s in the context of the new developments in biblical scholarship (e.g., feminist, liberationist, ideological, and cultural criticism), with a survey of the new literature in the field.

4. To explore the foundational contributions of Carl Jung, Sigmund Freud, and Viktor Frankl to a fuller understanding of the self, and also to a psychological critical approach to the Bible, with emphasis on its repertory of myths, legends, history, laws, psalms, proverbs, prophetic vision, gospels, parables, letters, and apocalypses.

5. To consider the contributions of cognitive, developmental, and behavioral psychology and object relations theory to biblical understanding.

6. To explore the exegetical agenda of a psycho-spiritual approach to the Bible, with attention to select themes: biblical symbols and archetypes; psychodynamic factors at work in biblical narrative; the psychology of biblical personality portraits (e.g. Jesus of Nazareth, King Saul, Ezekiel, Paul, and Judas Iscariot); the psychology of biblical religious experience (e.g. glossolalia, dreams, conversion); the psychology of biblical ethics; and biblical psychology.

7. To explore the hermeneutical agenda of a psycho-spiritual approach to the Bible, with attention to the following: the effects of texts on readers; the effect of readers on texts; the “performance” of texts through drama, music, liturgy, soup kitchens, and creeds; and the history of biblical effects, both pathogenic and therapeutic.

8. To experiment with Walter Wink’s Transforming Bible Study approach as a workshop demonstration of the psychodynamics at work between biblical text and reader.

Requirements.

1. Attendance and classroom exchange are as important as the reading. (BYOB for each session). Following new Hartford Seminary policy: missing two sessions without submitting written makeup work incurs a 10% lowering of the student’s final grade. See Hartford Seminary Grading Guidelines for further information (30% of grade).

2. Book Review*: Credit participants are to make one 15 minute class presentation (with a written review submitted to the instructor, one week after the oral report). See the attached Book Review Selection sheet and bring a list of your top three choices for the “lottery” selection on the opening class session. The review is to include the following: (a) a substantive précis or overview of the book in relation to this course, (b) a brief discussion of five to ten ideas you have found worth thinking about, explaining why, and (c) an evaluation of the book in terms of its contribution to the work of this course (d) the
presentation of one important issue for class discussion. The reviewer is encouraged to prepare “visuals” (hand-outs, chalk-board outlines, overhead projector transparencies, etc.) or a class participation exercise to enhance communication. (30% of grade).

3. Final Project*: A 12 to 15 page paper due on a date (TBA) in late December or early January. A 3x5 topic proposal, including proposed title and descriptive paragraph of proposed objectives, due on Nov. 9 (40% of grade).

* All academic papers are to conform to conventional technical, grammatical, and stylistic standards referred to in the General Guidelines for a Research Paper. The Hartford Seminary Grading Guidelines will be the standard of evaluation for the course.

Class Meeting Schedule and Assignments

Sept. 7. Prospectus: Where Psychology and Biblical Studies Meet

Read “Approaching the Unconscious,” the first essay in Man and His Symbols (New York: Doubleday, 1964), or one of many other editions). Please come prepared with five ideas, issues, or problems for class discussion. Also, read Rollins and Kille, Psychological Insights Into the Bible: Texts and Readings (pp. v, xii-xiv, xv-xix) on the goals of psychological biblical criticism as insight into Scripture and the readers of Scripture.


PowerPoint presentation on the place where psychology, scripture, and religion meet in the life and thought of C. G. Jung.

Read PIITB, chapter 6, Biblical Symbols and Archetypal Images, 99-113. Each chapter of PIITB contains an introduction and three to five “readings.” For each, come prepared to comment on one or all of the following: (a) “A Summary In A Sentence” (what the author’s trying to get across); (b) a “Find” (something that struck you and is worth commenting on); c) a “Question.” The units to be read next session are the (1) introduction and (2) the articles by Patrick Henry on Water symbolism; (3) Rollins on Biblical archetypes; (4) Elizabeth-Ann Stewart on “Jesus the Holy Fool.”

Read Wink, Transforming Bible Study, the preface and first two chapters (pp. 11-42). Jot your response to questions on the assignment sheet (to be distributed in class): “Walter Wink’s ‘Transforming Bible Study’ and This Course.”

Wink class exercise on Luke 12:22-31 on “Anxiety”

Sept. 21. Freud, the Man, the Mission, and Scripture


Read PIITB, and chapter 3, “Freud and Jung,” 40-55. An introduction plus articles by Rollins, Rashkow (3), and Newheart on what’s to be gained from reading the Bible through a Freudian or Jungian lens.

Read the class handout excerpt of Freud’s Future of an Illusion, jotting your responses on the accompanying question sheet.


Read PIITB, chapter 4, “Behavioral, Learning, Object Relations and Developmental Approaches,” 56-78, and What do we learn about the light that different schools within the field of “psychological studies” bring to our understanding of the Bible? Bring examples from the readings. (assignment continued on next page).
Read the handout on excerpts from Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning*, jotting responses to the sheet of questions/reflections.

**Wink class exercise** on Mark 2:13-17: Eating with Sinners

**Oct. 5.** Psychological Biblical Studies From The First To The 21st Centuries: An Historical Overview With A Footnote On Eugen Drewermann’s Signal Contribution


**Oct. 12.** Psychology and Exegesis: Biblical Genres and Biblical Texts in Psychodynamic Perspective


9.2, Story of Jonah, 166-170;

9.3, Ten commandments, 171-74;

**Wink class exercise** on Matt. 25:14-30, Parable of the Talents.


Read Intro. 175-77;

10.1, Wedding at Cana, 177-80;

10.2, Christ and Antichrist, 181-88;

10.3, Theology of Paul, 188-91.

**Oct. 26.** Biblical Religious Experience in Psychodynamic Perspective, Part One


11.2, Psychology of the Prophets, 199-204;

11.3, Healing, 204-210;

Reading by Donald Capps on “Psychological Biblical Criticism.

**Wink class exercise** on “Plucking Heads of Grain on the Sabbath”. Mar. 2:23-28

**Nov. 2.** Biblical Religious Experience in Psychodynamic Perspective, Part Two

Read PIITB, Chapter 12, “Biblical Religious Experience: The Demonic and Exorcism, Glossolalia, and Conversion” Read Intro. 212-13;

12.1, “Gerasene Demoniac, 214-19;

12.2, Glossolalia – Language of the Unconscious? 219-25;


Special section on Paul and the Psychology of Biblical Ethics

**Nov. 9.** Biblical Personalities in Psychological Perspective: Ezekiel, Paul, Moses and Jesus

Read PIITB, Chapter 7, “Biblical Personalities: Ezekiel and Paul,” 116-37,

Intro. 116-18

7.1 Seeking Ezekiel , 118-26

7.2 Psychological Perspectives on the Life of Paul , 127-136

Chapter 8, “Biblical Personalities: Moses and Jesus” Intro. 138-141 (continued on next pg.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Assignment in John W. Miller, <em>Jesus at Thirty: A Psychological and Historical Portrait</em></td>
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<td>Chap. 2. The Starting Point</td>
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<td>Ch. 4 Jesus and His Father</td>
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<td>Ch. 9 Jesus at Thirty</td>
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<td>. Wink exercise on Blind Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46-52</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Psychology and Hermeneutics: What Texts Bring to Readers and Readers to Texts</td>
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<td>Read PIITB, Chapter 5, “Between Texts and Readers,” 79-96</td>
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<td>Intro. 79-81</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.1 The Psychology of Biblical Interpretation, 81-86</td>
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<td>5.2 Viewpoints: Perspectives of Faith and Christian Nurture, 86-95</td>
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<td>5.3 Personality Type and Scripture, 95-96</td>
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<td>. Class handout on Psychological Insight into Hermeneutics along with additional reading</td>
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<td>of Donald Capps, “Psychological Biblical Criticism: Envisioning Its Prospects” in the</td>
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<td>Rollins Festschrift, 53-61</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>The Pathogenic and the Therapeutic in Biblical Texts and Interpretations</td>
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<td>Read PIITB, Chapter 13, “Biblical Effects: The Pathogenic and Therapeutic,” 230-47,</td>
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<td>13.1 The Evolution of a Pauline Toxic Text</td>
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<td>13.2 ‘The Bible Made Me Do It:’ Text, Interpretation and Violence</td>
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<td>13.3 Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and</td>
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<td>. Lectures on J. P. Dourley,. <em>The Illness That We Are: A Jungian Critique of Christianity.</em></td>
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<td>Toronto: Inner City Books, 1984. And Donald Capps,. *Scripture and Therapy in Pastoral</td>
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<td>Dec. 14</td>
<td>On the Nature and Habits of the Soul in Biblical Perspective: Retrospect and Prospect</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 14 Biblical Psychology: On The Nature And Habits Of The Soul</td>
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<td>14.1 What is Biblical Psychology?</td>
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<td>14.2 Biblical Psychology in Paul and the Hebrew Bible</td>
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<td>14.3 The Human Being: Jesus and the Enigma of the Son of the Man</td>
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BOOK REVIEW SELECTION LIST FOR CREDIT STUDENTS
(Should you wish to report on a book not contained in this list,
contact Professor Rollins by e-mail or phone for possible approval)


Le Donne, Anthony. *Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.


**Additional Select Bibliography on Psychology and the Bible**

Heron, Laurence T. *ESP in the Bible*. Garden City, NT: Doubleday, 1974.


