

Religion is All Around Us

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BEFECTETÉS A JÖVŐBE

Welcome!

Dear Students,

Welcome to the course of 'Religion is All Around Us'! We are looking forward to the opportunity to work together during the course. An online course is much like a face-to-face one; it requires a significant commitment in time. The course content is organized into six modules, and each module contains reading and a quiz for practice.

This course is not a typical series of lectures on the basics of Religious Studies, neither in its content or approach. This course differs from other general lectures on Religious Studies in terms of selecting and defining the topics. Our primary aim is to focus on sensibility concerning religion and religious phenomena. We intend to promote systematical thinking and communication about religion by using contemporary theoretical approaches and methodologies from Religious Studies.

Of course, it is impossible to outline all the topics related to religions and religiosity in one course, as it is a vast and complex topic. Therefore, the aim of the course is not to provide a comprehensive description of Religious Studies. Thus the lecturers tended to present some snatched but central topics related to each other and other issues and research areas of Religious Studies in many respects. We hope to have put together valuable and interesting lessons that will also provide a sound basis for a more in-depth study of the topic.

The Content of the Course

Homo Religiosus

The first lesson of the course is intended as an introduction, in which we explore the topic of Homo Religiosus, the term which signifies the person with religious motivation, from different points of view. The dialogues here are related to the issues of the lessons that will be presented later on. With Homo Religiosus, we would like to introduce a perspective that helps to tune in to the topics and the conceptual basis of the other lessons of the course. All the lecturers of the course took part in preparing the material of these few short videos. The lecturers' conversations about the central idea and topics of the course provided the material for this lecture.

Rite and Sacrifice

Observation and analysis of rites have been one of the most popular topics since the late 19th century, having played a central role in defining fundamental issues not only of religion but also of society and culture. The lectures of 'It's all rite' are held by Gabriella Hegedüs and Péter Tóth, both of whom have been committed researchers of the rites for years. In addition to the introductory and summary parts, five short videos present some defining aspects and theories of this diverse and complex topic.

Materiality of Religious Communication

All religions have material imprints, material memorabilia, as well as create objects, buildings, etc. The lesson given by Csaba T. Szabó provides an insight into the world of representation of divine and religious memorabilia and religious buildings, the concept of space sacralization, and forms of religious communication.

Religious Experience

In this lesson, by Zsuzsanna Szugyiczki we are going to explore the topic of religious experiences. The variety of religious experiences is impressive and often very challenging for scholars who want to describe it. Some call these: religious/numinous/mystical or spiritual experiences. In the videos, Zsuzsanna Szugyiczki will explain direct personal experiences of the divine: mystical experiences. Furthermore, she will talk about mysticism in culture and the varieties of religious experiences in the past and present.

The Place of Religion in Psychology

This lesson held by Krisztina Barcsa focuses on the role of religion in psychology and psychotherapy. Since every human being lives in a socio-cultural environment that is fundamentally shaped by certain religious factors, it is crucial to consider these when it comes to the psychological analysis of a person. Therefore, regardless of a person is religious or not, the socio-cultural context has a significant effect on their thinking processes and mental health - in short, on their cognitive world, it is necessary to highlight that the dimensions of religion and spirituality cannot be bypassed in psychology. This lecture provides insights into the relationship between religion and psychology, including the models of psychology of religion and the history of its discipline; furthermore the biopsychosocial-spiritual model. This lecture also touches on the issue of coping and religion.

The One Beyond - The Source of (both) Anxiety and Security

Our world is so vast and complex that it is impossible to comprehend it in its totality for limited beings as we humans are. Thus, coping with the unknown means a constant struggle, which is a permanent aspect of human existence, causing constant anxiety. That is why making the world homey and safe is one of our most fundamental needs. Humans look for orientation, which is related to the sacred or holy and religious phenomena. This lesson held by Sándor Cserháti gives you insights into these issues, which has three main focal points: 1) homemaking - the struggle to inhabit (to domesticate/to make our own) the reality surrounding us; to make it safe, where life in peace (without fear) is possible; 2) the Other - the threat from outside. The constant urge for expansion (pushing the limits) is inherent to the logic of homemaking. That makes the question of 'what is beyond the boundaries' a permanent concern; 3) the transcendent (holy) - the one also beyond our world, can guarantee peace and order; control the threat from outside, in case of a good relationship between the community or individual with the sacred.

Who we are?

We are a group of young scholars and doctoral students with teaching experiences within the field of Study of Religion. Most of us graduated from and work at the Department for Study of Religions at University of Szeged. Although our research fields are very diverse, the bottom line is that all of these are related to Religious Studies in the name of interdisciplinarity. Examining an issue or a phenomenon by using the scope and methodology of different scientific domains is the fundamental characteristic of Religious Studies that we represent throughout this course. We are very committed to promoting the ideas and approaches of Religious Studies to advance intercultural dialogue.



Gabriella Hegedüs

Researcher of religions, PhD doctoral candidate, lecturer. Dissertation topic: Ritual theories and their practical use in the study of the religion of archaic societies without writing. She worked for more than two decades in the archeology department of the János Damjanich Museum in Szolnok, in the domain of archeology and religion.



Péter Tóth

Researcher of religions, PhD candidate, lecturer. Dissertation topic: René Girard's mimetic theory. He is interested in cultural anthropology, applied religious studies, issue of religion and violence.



Dr. Csaba T. Szabó

Since October 2018 Dr. Csaba T. Szabó is an assistant lecturer at the University of Lucian Blaga, Sibiu (Romania). After finishing his undergraduate studies in Cluj-Napoca in 2012, he has continued his studies at the University of Pécs (2012-15) and the Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt as member of the Sanctuary Project (2014-16). His current research project hosted by the University of Szeged, Department of Religious Studies is focusing on Roman religious communication and space sacralisation in the Danubian provinces (2018-2021). Csaba is also working also on the history of archaeology in Transylvania and public archaeology in Romania.



Zsuzsanna Szugyiczki

Researcher of religions, PhD candidate, assistant lecturer at the Department for the Study of Religion at University of Szeged. Disstertation topic: Philosophy of mysticism - traditional and modern mysticism. Her research interests include: contemporary examples of religious and mystical experiences and the theoretical approach towards them; the works of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross and Thomas Merton.



Krisztina Barcsa

Researcher of religions, PhD student at the University of Vienna, and works as a lecturer and a project implementer at the Department for the Study of Religion at University of Szeged. Her current research topic is: Teaching religious and spiritual competencies in the psychology programs accredited in Hungary.



Sándor Cserháti

Lutheran pastor, PhD candidate and lecturer. Main area of interests: Mimetic theory, Christian Soteriology, Deconstruction and Theology, the Christian sources of Secularization.