

World Religions

Part 1: Introduction

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World Religions

Part 1: Introduction

What religions will we study?

➤ Indigenous Religious Traditions	➤ Confucianism
➤ Hinduism	➤ Daoism
➤ Buddhism	➤ Judaism
	➤ Islam

Optional Text Book
Cooper, Derek, Christianity & World Religions: An Introduction to the World's Major Faiths (P & R Publishing, 2013).

Why Study World Religions?



Understanding Our History

Painting from Lascaux
caves, near
Montignac, France

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lascaux/>

Why Study World Religions?

Understanding Our Ourselves

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV), see
also 1 Corinthians 13:8-11

What Is Religion?

Discussion

What Is Religion?

Origin

From the Latin, *religare*, meaning "to bind fast", carrying the notion of "place an obligation on," or "bond between humans and gods."

What Is Religion?

Immanuel Kant (1788)

“...the recognition of all duties as divine commands...”

Critique of Practical Reason, (trans. T. Abbot, 226)



IMMANUEL KANT
From a painting

Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immanuel_Kant

What Is Religion?

Ludwig Feuerbach (1843)

**“Religion is the dream of
the human mind.”**

*The Essence of Christianity , 10 (trans.
M.Evans, 1854)*




Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Feuerbach

What Is Religion?

Émile Durkheim (1912)

“A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden— beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”



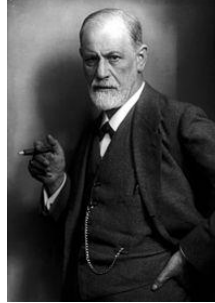
The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, 47 (trans. J. Swain, 1915)

Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Durkheim

What Is Religion?

Sigmund Freud (1927)

“Religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neuroses of children, it arose out of the Oedipus Complex, out of the relation to the father.”



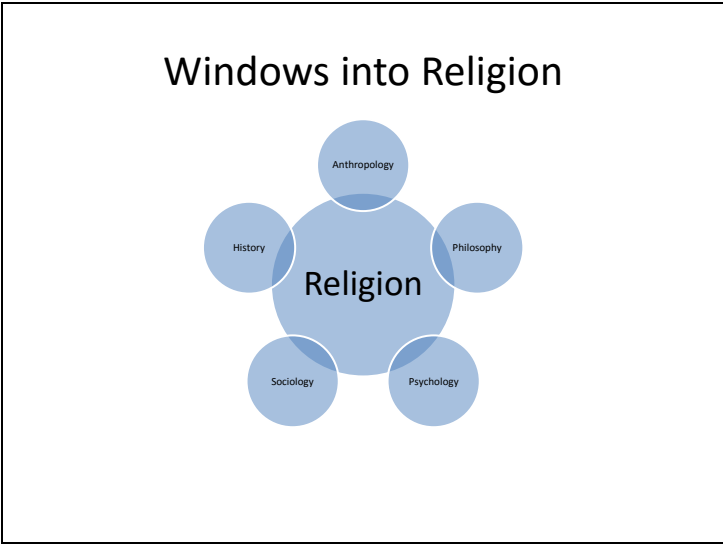
The Future of an Illusion, 43 (trans. J. Strachey, 1961)

Image source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmund_Freud

What Is Religion?

Our Definition

Collections of beliefs, practices and people that seek to explain the transcendence of human experience.



Windows into Religion

Anthropology of Religion

The study of religion as a cultural phenomenon that spans all of human time and geography

Windows into Religion

Philosophy of Religion

The study of the rational
basis and concepts that
inform religious belief

Windows into Religion

Philosophy of Religion

- **Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688)** Regarded as the leader of the “Cambridge Platonists”, he is credited with first using the English phrase “philosophy of religion” as he defends the rational basis of theism and other religious truth claims.
- **Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)** Argues that synthetic knowledge can only be based upon experience, so we cannot ultimately know God, since by definition He exists outside of our experience. Religious truth therefore rests on Practical Reason which, by human consensus, provides ethical direction to our lives.

Windows into Religion
Psychology of Religion

The study of religion as a
basis for self-understanding
and human behavior

Windows into Religion
Sociology of Religion

The study of how religion
influences social institutions,
beliefs and behavior

Windows into Religion

History of Religion

The study of how religion developed over the centuries throughout various cultures

Reflection Question #1

*Is Biblical Christianity a religion? Why or
why not?*
