

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
JUNE 2012 EXAMINATION SESSIONS**

**PLC 2820/2821 RELIGION: PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS/
PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS MATURITY**

Wednesday 6th June 2012

10.30am – 12.30pm

Answer **ONE** question from **EACH** section
Use a different script for each answer.

SECTION A

1. “The universality of religion suggests that the need to repair some kind of basic brokenness is present among all peoples. An etymological look at *religion*, therefore, would lead one to the idea that religion involves peoples’ striving for a sense of wholeness or completeness or to that which has a claim on one’s commitment.” (Paloutzian, 1996, p.8). Elaborate and illustrate by referring to authors who have approached the subject from the field of psychology.
2. Are psychological accounts of religious experience a threat to the religious or supernatural accounts? Does a scientific explanation make the latter invalid?
3. Freud’s understanding of religion was that it is a product of the mind meant to cope with life’s existential issues, an “illusion”. While his intention was undoubtedly a reductive one, that is, meant to explain away religion, in proposing this concept he actually opened an interesting path in the field of psychology of religion. Elaborate.

SECTION B

1. Critics have pointed out that Kohlberg's theory of moral development overemphasizes the concept of justice when making moral choices. Other factors such as compassion, caring, and other interpersonal feelings may play an important part in moral reasoning (Carol Gilligan). Despite these differences, what is the link between psychological development and moral behavior?
2. Religious socialization is an undoubtedly important factor in the religious upbringing of children. Being born and raised within a religious family is very often a sure contributor for the religiousness of children. However, the surrounding culture could be an equally determining factor later on in life for the abandonment of the same religion. Elaborate.
3. While religious conversions can surprise many, especially when they are unexpected. However, a number of psychological and situational factors could be at stake that could explain the dynamics of conversion. Elaborate.