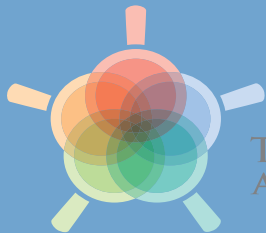


# Theology and Risk

## *Understanding Fallibility, Risk, Suffering and Harm*

A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF RISK MASTERCLASS



THE CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP  
AND LEARNING IN RISK



SOCIAL  
PSYCHOLOGY  
OF RISK



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SOCIAL  
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## Introduction

There is no way one can avoid a discussion on suffering, harm and theology in thinking about risk. All discussion of trajectories in risk must result in a thinking about harm, suffering and ultimately death. There is no point sugar coating the fact that the risk and safety industry is consumed with discourse about fatalities and loss. This is why the industry itself is profoundly religious in its discourse, symbolism and language. In many ways the language of 'safety' substitutes for the notion of god and this is observed in language about how 'safety saves', 'zero harm' and a host of absolutes that plague the discourse of risk and safety.

In thinking about risk and trajectories one must think apocalyptically, metaphorically and in transcendently. Any discussion of 'means' and 'ends' essential to method must infer a discussion of ontology, philosophy, methodology and ideas that underpin values and actions in risk and safety.

It is for this reason that this module provides an opportunity to explore the theologies hidden in much of the discourse in the risk and safety industry. It is naive to suggest that the industry is somehow neutral in matters about suffering and harm. Most recently the publication of a theology of suffering by Prof. Dekker (2017, 'The End of Heaven, Disaster and Suffering in a Scientific Age') demonstrates how central theology is to the concerns of the industry.

At the foundation of the risk and safety industry are several ideologies that confound its own self understanding namely, cognitivism, behaviourism and positivism. These ideologies form a block to self understanding and explain why the industry is so profoundly religious. The soteriology of the risk and safety industry is caught up in a discourse of hope and 'salvation' in systems, process and mechanistic fervour. It demonises non-compliance and projects denial of fallibility in the delusions of zero.

The preoccupation with risk aversion and the delusions of zero plague the ontology of the industry that can only be properly unravelled by an exploration of theological and hermeneutical assumptions hidden in risk and safety discourse.

## Expected Outcomes

By the conclusion of the unit participants will:

1. Better understand the nature of theology, metaphysics and theological worldviews.
2. Learn the basics of hermeneutics and deconstructing philosophical paradigms.
3. Examine current views in risk and safety for religious discourse, language and semiotics.
4. Enhance critical thinking through mapping theories and approaches to risk.
5. Study key theologies and theologians with respect to suffering, harm and death.
6. Understand the connections between: apocalyptic, hope, soteriology, futures, gnosticism, faith, dialectic, uncertainty, subjectivity, poetics, mimetics and belief.
7. Decode discourse and language of belief.
8. Explore the paradox of good and evil and contesting values in theodicies embedded in risk and safety discourse.
9. Review sacramentalism, ritual and faith in safety process.
10. Examine the nature of fallibility and mythologies in risk discourse.



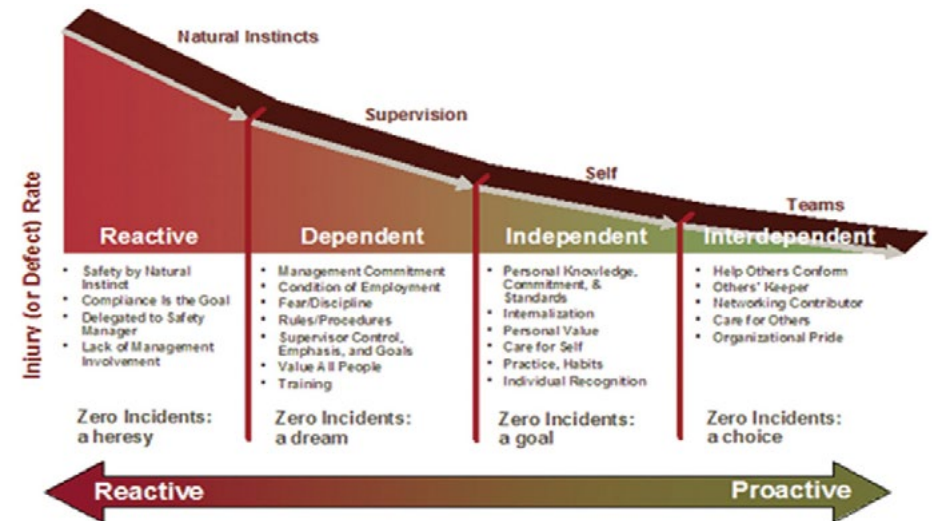
# Program Structure

## Day 1

Session	Focus/Activity	Outcome
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Metaphysics, theology and hermeneutics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking, deconstruction and ontology</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of theologies</li> <li>• Faith paradigms and worldviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreting filters and scripts that limit understandings</li> <li>• Understanding assumptions and limitations</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading text semiotically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the paradox of faith-belief</li> <li>• Dialectic</li> </ul>
Break		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technique</li> <li>• Case studies in religious discourse in risk and safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dekker's theology of suffering</li> <li>• DuPont theology and original sin</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thinking theologians</li> <li>• The nature of Empire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruggemann</li> <li>• Ellul</li> <li>• Kierkegaard</li> <li>• Elliot</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theologies in Art, semiotics and poetry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blake</li> <li>• Durer</li> <li>• Bosch</li> <li>• Caravaggio</li> </ul>
Lunch		

Session	Focus/Activity	Outcome
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamentalisms</li> <li>• The nature of Cults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiential Learning</li> <li>• Constructing belief</li> <li>• Binary worldviews</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious Symbolology</li> <li>• Babel and Jerusalem</li> <li>• Chaos and uncertainty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archetypes and typologies</li> </ul>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of faith and belief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leap of faith</li> </ul>
10	Close	

## Bradley Curve



# Program Structure

## Day 2

Session	Focus/Activity	Outcome
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foundations in Ontology, The philosophies of risk and safety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A language and discourse review</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orthodoxies and political theologies</li> <li>The quest to eliminate faith-belief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postmodernist critique</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observational walk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Gallery</li> <li>Cathedral</li> </ul>
Break		
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observational Walk</li> <li>Debrief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The architecture and design of belief</li> </ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The design of Canberra as a cultic act</li> <li>Walter and Eliza Griffin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The construction of political meaning</li> <li>Political myths</li> <li>Political metaphor</li> </ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fallibility</li> <li>Original Sin and Substitutionary Atonement Myths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bradley Curve and Zero</li> </ul>
Lunch		

Session	Focus/Activity	Outcome
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The challenge of suffering, pain and harm</li> <li>Existential dialectic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dealing with paradox</li> <li>Humanising risk</li> </ul>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Debrief</li> </ul>	
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close</li> </ul>	

## Presenter



### Dr Robert Long

#### Executive Director - Centre for Leadership Learning and Risk

Rob is an accomplished author, presenter and educator. He is the founder of the discipline of The Social Psychology of Risk and is applies this Body of Knowledge to the risk, safety and security industries. Rob's work and pioneering perspective is highly sought after by organisations that seek to do more than just maintain compliance with systems. The work of Dr Long and Human Dymensions is delivered globally with a new office opened in Linz Austria in 2016. Rob has worked in building and construction, transport and logistics, risk and safety, education and training, community services, public service and corrections sectors. He has published seven highly successful books on the social psychology of risk and publishes extensively on the Internet. Rob lives in Canberra and enjoys his spare time with grandchildren.

Rob has a particular interest in theology, ethics, philosophy and risk that all coalesce in this module.



Required reading:  
*Fallibility and Risk, Living  
With Uncertainty*

All participants will receive  
a Certificate from the Centre  
for Leadership and Learning  
in Risk for the workshop.

