

# Sociology of Religion

SO398.HY

Fall 2016

Class meets Mondays 4:30 – 7:20, Pozycki Hall 214

September 12 – December 12, 2016

Instructor: Roger Baumann

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Office Hours: Mondays 3:00 – 4:00 (in-class weeks) and by appointment; Location TBD

## *Course Description*

As an introduction to the sociology of religion, this class will explore questions such as: What *is* religion? Where does religion come from? How has religion shaped the modern world? How has the modern world shaped religion? What does it mean to study religion sociologically? With these questions in mind, we will explore and analyze the ways that religion is embedded in specific social, cultural, and historical contexts—paying attention to how they shape religious beliefs and practices. We will also investigate some of the ways that religion intersects with other institutions and categories that matter to understanding social life—such as race, class, gender, politics, nationality, family, education, etc.

## *Learning Objectives*

In this course, students will develop and understanding of the sociological study of religion and what makes this approach different from other approaches to religion (e.g., theological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical). In doing so, students will generally learn what it means to study religion from an academic sociological perspective and some of the limits of that perspective in terms of evaluating religions and answering religious questions. By engaging with the course readings, lectures, and discussions, students will become familiar with some of the key concepts of sociological inquiry. Further, the course will expose students to various methods and tools for research in the social sciences, comparing their relative strengths and weaknesses through the lens of the study of religion. Through the various course assignments and assessments, students will develop and refine their reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills.

## *Class Format*

The class format will be a mix of lectures, discussions, and debates. Short lectures will orient students to the material for each module, helping students to identify the main arguments and the significance of each reading with respect to the overarching themes of the course. Both in-class and online discussions will help students process, understand, and apply the readings to the questions the course explores and to their own broader intellectual interests.

The topics of religion and society are difficult and personal to many. This class will be a place open to all perspectives on the topics within the limits of civility and respectful engagement. By civility and respectful engagement, I mean that we will all commit to listening to each other, practicing charity in interpreting each other's views, positions, and experiences, and speaking to each other with appreciation and respect. That being said, we will all benefit most in an environment that is open to freely and critically investigating difficult ideas related to how religion matters in societies. We will not always agree with each other on matters that tend to be highly divisive, but we can agree to make an honest effort to understand each other's views and to treat each other with respect.

## *Attendance and Participation*

Because of the discussion-based format of the course, student participation is absolutely essential. We will spend most of our time in class discussing the readings and other relevant topics. Students are expected to come to class having done the readings and should be prepared to discuss their content, implications, and related questions. Missing more than one class or online discussion (for any reason) will result in a participation grade penalty. Please see below for further details on participation grading.

Computers may be used during lectures, for the purposes of taking notes, etc. but should not be used during discussions. Phones should not be used at any time during class. If an emergency arises and you need to use your phone during class, please excuse yourself and rejoin the class when you are ready.

## *Course Requirements*

**Participation** – Attendance and active participation are key components to this class. Our classes will be conversational in nature and will require regular active engagement in-class and online. Students must come prepared to discuss the readings each day and will participate regularly in small and larger group discussions and debates on the material. Each student will also be expected to help lead the class discussion at least once during the semester (details about this will be forthcoming). Participation requirements for online and in-class weeks will differ, and we will discuss this in our first meeting.

**Reading Responses** – On the second day of each module, each student will post a 500-750 word response to the readings from that module. These short essays should speak to one or more of the main themes from the readings. Please note that the reading responses are *not summaries* of the content of the readings. Rather, they require an *engagement with* the arguments presented in the texts. Some possible approaches to writing the reading responses include: (1) a comparison of methods and approaches the texts use and engage, (2) a discussion of a critical question or issue that emerges from your reading, (3) a discussion of how the text(s) inform the sociological study of religion. The reading responses must be clear, concise, and cogent, demonstrating careful thought and composition.

**Midterm Exam** – The midterm exam will be an open book time-limited take-home exam comprised of several long answer essay questions focusing on the content of the course readings and classroom discussions.

**Book Review** – Each student will select one of the “Book Review Books” listed throughout the syllabus. I suggest choosing a book that you find particularly interesting and related to your research interests. A book review is not simply a summary of the book’s content (although it will briefly summarize the book’s main argument and contributions). It is primarily an assessment of the book’s strengths and weaknesses, aimed at the reviewer’s audience (in this case, sociologists of religion). Book reviews are due at 11:59 PM on the second Monday of the module in which they are listed (Exception: Book reviews for Modules 1 and 2 will be due on October 10). They should be submitted online. We will discuss how to write a book review in the first two weeks of class.

**Final Paper** – The final 12-15 page term paper is an opportunity for you to spend more time working on and thinking about an aspect of the course beyond the core lectures and discussions. You should choose a topic that interests you and that will further your academic and/or professional goals. While final papers can draw on insights from the required readings and class discussions, they should go beyond these too. You may want to consult the recommended readings for possible topics. Another source of paper topics might be the major academic journals in the sociology of religion (e.g., *Sociology of Religion* and the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*).

The final paper is due via online submission on December 12, 2016 at 11:59 PM. No extensions or incompletes will be granted for the final paper except in the most extreme cases of medical or personal crisis. **A one-page summary description of your paper topic is due via online submission by November 21 at 11:59 PM. This summary is worth 10% of your paper grade.**

## *Grading*

Participation:	15%
Six Reading Responses (1 per module):	30% (5% each)
Midterm Exam:	15%
Book Review:	10%
Final Paper:	30%

## *Late Assignments*

Late assignments will be penalized 10% (one letter grade) per day.

## *Academic Integrity*

Cheating and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will be handled appropriately within the University's guidelines. If there is any doubt about what constitutes cheating and academic dishonesty, please consult the *Monmouth University Student and Residential Life Handbook* and/or ask me.

Assignments in this course may be checked for plagiarism using *Turnitin*, a Web-based resource that compares the text of student papers to an extensive electronic database. I will inform you in advance about which assignments will be checked for originality using *Turnitin*. Students agree that, by taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

## *Special Accommodations*

Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this course are encouraged to meet with the appropriate disability service provider on campus as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations, students must be registered with the appropriate disability service provider on campus as set forth in the Student Handbook and must follow the University procedure for self-disclosure, which is stated in the University Guide to Services and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. Students will not be afforded any special accommodations for academic work completed prior to the completion of the documentation process with the appropriate disability service office.

### *Readings and Books to Purchase*

You should purchase the following books from the bookstore or wherever you typically buy your class books:

Roberts, Keith A. and David A. Yamane. 2015. *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. SAGE Publications.

Weber, Max. 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Routledge. (Translated by Talcott Parsons)

Books on the book review lists are not ordered to the university bookstore, you should obtain a copy of the book you plan to read for your book review from the library or a book seller as soon as possible.

### *Other Readings*

Additional required readings will be provided as PDFs or online readings for articles, select book sections, chapters, etc. Recommended readings will not be provided online.

### *Contacting Me*

Email is the best way to be in touch with me throughout the semester. I will always email you back within 24 hours.

# Course Schedule

## Introduction

### **Day 1: September 12 (In Class)**

**Topics:** How do we define *sociology*, *religion*, and the “*sociology of religion*”? What is religion and how do we look for it/study it?

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapters 1-2 (“What Do We Mean by the Term *Religion*?” and “A Social Scientific Approach to Studying Religion”) [Textbook]

Robert Wuthnow, “Studying Religion, Making It Sociological” [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

Daniel Pals, *Nine Theories of Religion*

Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation*

## Module 1: Religion, Modernity & Secularization

**Topics:** How does religion change in the modern world? What is *secularization* and can we predict it? What is *civil religion*?

### **Day 2: September 19 (In Class) – Religion: From Traditional to Modern**

Required Reading:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (pg. xxviii-125) [Book]

### **Day 3: September 26 (Online) – Religion & Secularization**

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 13 (“Secularization: Religion in Decline or in Transformation?”) [Textbook]

Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Selections) [PDF]

Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chapter 1 (“Secularization, Enlightenment, and Modern Religion,” pg. 11-39) [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

Philip Gorski and Ates Altınordu, “After Secularization”

Robert Bellah, *Civil Religion in America* (1967)

Book Review Books:

- Lynn Davidman, *Tradition in a Rootless World*
- Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven*
- John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*
- David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory\**

## **Module 2: Religion, Nationalism & Politics**

**Topics:** How is religion related to ritual? What is *religious nationalism*? How does religion become *political*?

### **Day 4: October 3 (In Class) – Religion and Ritual (Traditional to Modern)**

Required Readings:

Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Selections) [PDF]

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapter 2 (“Cultural Roots”) [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

Rogers Brubaker, “Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches”

David Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*

### **Day 5: October 10 (Online) – Religion, Politics & Nationalism**

Required Reading:

Connor Cruise O’Brien, “Chosen Peoples, Promised Lands” in *God Land* [PDF]

Braden Anderson, “Nationalism in the American Christian Right” in *Chosen Nation* [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

James Moorehead, “The American Israel: Protestant Tribalism and Universal Mission” in *Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism*

Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

Book Review Books:

- Jon Shields, *The Democratic Virtues of the Christian Right*
- Geneviève Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz*
- Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*
- Robert Smith, *More Desired Than Our Own Salvation*
- Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *Lords of the Land*
- Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed*

**\*\* Note: No class meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup>, in class or online! \*\***

### **Module 3: Religion and Inequality I – Religion, Economy & Social Change**

**Topics:** How does religion relate to work and the economy? Does religion influence economic behavior? Does religion encourage or suppress movements for social change? Is religion an oppressor, opiate, or liberator?

#### **Day 6: October 24 (In Class) – Religion, Labor & Class**

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 9 (“Religion, Economics, and Social Class”) [Textbook]

Karl Marx (Selections) [PDF]

George González, *Shape-Shifting Capital* (Selections) [PDF]

#### **Day 7: October 31 (Online) – Religion & Social Movements**

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 12 (“Religion, Inequality, and Social Activism”) [Textbook]

Richard Wood, *Faith in Action* (Selections) [PDF]

Book Review Books:

- Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Walmart*
- Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon*
- Paul Lichterman, *Elusive Togetherness*
- Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood*

#### **Module 4: Religion and Inequality II – Religion, Race & Ethnicity**

Topics: How does religion relate to race and ethnicity? Why are religious communities so segregated? Does religion foster or mitigate racial prejudice?

#### **Day 8: November 7 (In Class) – Religion & Race in America**

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 10 (“Religion and Race”) [Textbook]

C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Selections) [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*

James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*

Tamelyn Tucker-Worgs, *The Black Megachurch: Theology, Gender, and the Politics of Public Engagement*

#### **Day 9: November 14 (Online) – Religion & Ethnicity**

Required Reading:

Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street* (Selections) [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

Jamillah Karim, *American Muslim Women*

Margarite Fernandez Olmos, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*

Book Review Books:

- Sherman Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*
- Omar McRoberts, *Streets of Glory*
- Jonathan Walton, *Watch This!: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Televangelism*

- Margarita Mooney, *Faith Makes Us Live*
- Marla Frederick, *Between Sundays*

**\*\* Note: Final paper topic summaries due at 11:59 PM! \*\***

## **Module 5: Religious Organization, Identification & Authority**

**Topics:** How is religion *organized*? What about people who are “*not religious*”? What is a “*cult*”? How does religious leadership influence a group? How are *sex* and *gender* related to religion?

### **Day 10: November 21 (In Class) – Religious Identity & Organization**

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 7 (“Organized Religion”)

Courtney Bender, *The New Metaphysicals* (Selections) [PDF]

Recommended Reading:

Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*

### **Day 11: November 28 (Online) – Religious Authority, Sex & Gender**

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 11 (“Religion, Gender, and Sexuality”) [Textbook]

Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Selections) [PDF]

Book Review Books:

- T.M. Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back*
- Wes Markofski, *New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism*
- Marla Frederick, *Between Sundays*
- Jody Shapiro Davie, *Women in the Presence*
- Melissa Wilde, *Vatican II*
- Sue Fishkoff, *The Rebbe’s Army*
- Melvyn Hammarberg, *The Mormon Quest for Glory*
- R. Marie Griffith, *God’s Daughters*

## **Module 6: Religion and Globalization**

**Topics:** What is *globalization* and how does it relate to religion? Does migration matter to religion? What is the role of religion in global affairs (violence, *warfare* and *terrorism*)? What is religious *pluralism*? How might we study religion/religions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### **Day 12: December 5 (In Class) – Religion, Globalization & Violence**

Required Reading:

*Religion in Sociological Perspective*, Chapter 15 (“Religion and Globalization”) [Textbook]

Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Selections) [PDF]

### **Day 13: December 12 (Online) – Religion & Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Required Reading:

Alan Wolfe, *The Transformation of American Religion* (Selections) [PDF]

Diana Eck, “From Diversity to Pluralism” [Online]

Book Review Books:

- Lihi Ben Shitrit, *Righteous Transgressions*
- Jonathan Lyons, *Islam Through Western Eyes*
- Roxanne Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror; Terror in the Mind of God*
- Monica Toft, et al., *God’s Century*
- Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*