**SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course seeks to introduce undergraduate students to the nature and functions of religious beliefs and institutions in modern societies, with a primary emphasis on conditions in the contemporary United States. Throughout the course, a distinctively sociological perspective is employed to evaluate claims about the viability of religion in what has come to be called a "post-traditional," "post-Christian" or "post-modern" world.

**Grade breakup:**

Class participation and attendance 10%

Quizzes 20%

Mid-term exam 30%

Final Exam 40%

**I. Basic Sociological Definitions:**

a. Norm  
b. Status  
c. Role  
d. Institution  
e. Organization

See also: Mills, C. Wright, The Sociological Imagination  
  
**II. Sociological Theoretical Approaches and the Sociological Study of Religion**  
  
REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4  
     McNamara, pp. 3-28, Preface  
  
SUGGESTED:  
Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "Sociology of Religion and Sociology of  
    Knowledge," in Norman Birnbaum and Gertrud Lenzer (eds.), Sociology and Religion   
     (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 410-418; also in Roland Roberts (ed.), Sociology of Religion   
    (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1969), pp. 61-73;  
Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), Appendix I,  
    "Sociological Definitions of Religion"  
**III. Social Scientific Definitions of Religion and the Origins of Religion**  
  
a. Freud  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion.  
     Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo.  
  
b. Durkheim  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life.  
  
c. Marx  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Marx and Engels on Religion.  
     L. Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, selections.  
     Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right,   
         Introduction," in Robert C. Tucker, Marx-Engels Reader.  
     Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," in Tucker  
  
d. Weber  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in From Max Weber.  
     Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.  
     R. Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait.  
  
e. Geertz  
  
   REQUIRED:  
     Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in McNamara.  
  
f. Religion and the Human Condition: Authentic Religion  
  
  
**IV. Religion and Social Class**  
  
   REQUIRED READING:  
     Roberts, Chapts. 10, 11  
  
  
IV. Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Religion  
  
REQUIRED:  
     Roberts, pp. 55-63  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, Chapters 6-9.  
     Berger, The Sacred Canopy, esp. Chapter 6;  
     Peter L. Berger, A Rumor of Angels (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969);  
     Thomas Luckmann, The Invisible Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1967).  
  
 **V. Types of Religious Organizations**  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, Chapters 4 and 5   
  
  
**VI. Forms of Religious Leadership**  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     David O. Moberg, The Church as a Social Institution, Chapter 18.  
  
  
**VII. Forms of Religiosity**  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor  
     J. K. Hadden and T. E. Long (eds.), Religion and Religiosity in America  
     Dean Hoge, Commitment on Campus (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974, Chs. 2 and 6, pp. 34-71 and 156-192.  
     The Gallup Report, May, 1985, "Religion in America, 50 Years: 1935-1985," pp. 16-28.  
     Rodney Stark and Charles Y. Glock, American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment (Berkeley: University of                    California Press, 1968), Chs. 2, 4-6 (skim), pp. 22-56 and 81-140.  
     Wade Clark Roof, Community and Commitment: Religious Possibility in a Liberal Protestant Church (New York: Elsevier,          1978), parts of Chs. 2 and 3; Chs. 4, 5, and 10, pp. 39-47, 62-67, 79-125, and 203-217.  
     Wade Clark Roof, "America's Voluntary Establishment: Mainline Religion in Transition," pp. 130-149 in Mary Douglas and          Steven M. Tipton (eds.), Religion and America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982).  
     Will Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew.  
     Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," pp. 168-192 in Beyond Belief.  
     Andrew Greeley, The Denominational Society.  
     Herve Varenne, Americans Together, Ch. 5.  
  
  
**VIII. The Cultural Captivity of American Religion**  
  
a. The Feminization of Protestantism  
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, pp. 318-319  
  
b. The Protestantization of Catholicism and Judaism  
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     McNamara, pp. 21-25; 117-201  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Richard P. McBrien, "Roman Catholicism: E Pluribus Unum," in Mary Douglas and Steven M. Tipton (eds.), Religion and          America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982).  
     Peter Hebblethwaite, "The Popes and Politics:Shifting Patterns in Catholic Social Doctrine'" in Mary Douglas and Steven M.          Tipton (eds.), Religion and America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982).  
  
c. Religion and Prejudice  
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapter 12   
  
  
**IX. Conversion and Commitment**  
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapters 5 and 6  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Meredith McGuire, Religion: The Social Context, pp. 58-73  
     James T. Richardson, "Studies of Conversion: Secularization or Re- Enchantment?", in Hammond, pp. 104-121.  
     Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riecken, and Stanley Schachter, When Prophecy Fails (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota          Press, 1956);  
     John Lofland, Doomsday Cult: A Study of Conversion, Proselytization, and Maintenance of Faith (New York: Irvington,          1977).  
     Steven M. Tipton, "The Moral Logic of Alternative Religions," pp. 79-107 in Mary Douglas and Steven M. Tipton (eds.),          Religion and America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982).  
     Max Heirich, "Change of Heart: A Test of Some Widely Held Theories About Religious Conversion," American Journal of          Sociology 83 (1977), pp. 653, 680.  
     Clifford Geertz, "'Internal Conversion' in Contemporary Bali," pp. 179-189 in The Interpretation of Cultures.   
     Steven M. Tipton, Getting Saved from the Sixties (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).  
     Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective (Cambridge,          MA: Harvard University Press, 1972).  
  
**X. Growth and Decline of Contemporary Denominations  
  
XI. Church, Sect, and Cult**

a. Typologies of Church/Sect  
b. The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy  
c. Social Sources of Denominationalism  
d. Social Functions/Dysfunctions of Sects and Cults  
e. The Life Cycle of Sects and Cults

REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapters 7, 8, 9  
     McNamara, pp. 25-33, 95-142, 283-316, 322-342  
  
SUGGESTED:  
     John Wilson, Religion in American Society: The Effective Presence.  
     Ernest Troeltsch, The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches.  
     H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism  
     Reinhold Niebuhr, Christ and Culture  
     James A. Beckford, "Religious Organizations," in Hammond, pp. 125-138;  
     Meredith McGuire, Religion: The Social Context, Chapter 5;  
     Rodney Stark, "Church and Sect," in Hammond, pp. 139-149.  
     William Sims Bainbridge, "Utopian Communities: Theoretical Issues," in Hammond, pp. 21-35;  
     Anson Shupe and David G. Bromley, "Social Responses to Cults," in Hammond, pp. 58-72.  
     John A. Hostetler, Hutterite Society (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).  
  
  
**XII. Church and State: Political Issues and Involvement**  
  
**a. Fundamentalisms**

1. **Definitions of Fundamentalism**
2. **The Moral Majority & the Christian Coalition**
3. **The Electronic Church**

REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapter 15  
     McNamara, pp. 277-316  
  
SUGGESTED:  
     [An excellent Internet site is: http://www.mother.com/~dlh/]  
     Lloyd J. Averill, Religious Right, Religious Wrong: A Critique of the Fundamentalist Phenomenon.  
     Greven, Philip, Spare the child.  
     Sam S. Hill and D. E. Ownen, The New Religious-Political Right in America.  
     James D. Hunter, American Evangelicalism.  
     James D. Hunter, Culture Wars.  
     George M. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture.  
     Jeffrey K. Hadden and C. E. Swann, Prime Time Preachers.  
     Dallas A. Blanchard and Terry J. Prewitt, Religious Violence and Abortion: The Gideon Project.   
     Dallas A. Blanchard, The Anti-Abortion Movement and the Rise of the Religious Right: From Polite to Fiery Protest.  
     Dallas A. Blanchard, The Anti-Abortion Movement: References and Resources.   
  
b. Mainline Religion  
  
   SUGGESTED:   
     Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy.  
     W. C. Roof and W. McKinney, American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future.  
  
c. Civil Religion  
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapter 16  
     McNamara, pp. 39-52, 225-235  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     C. Glock and R. Stark, Religion and Society in Tension.  
     W. Herberg, Protestant, Catholic, Jew.  
     T. Luckmann, The Invisible Religion.  
     W.G. McLoughlin and R.N. Bellah (eds.), Religion in America.  
     R. Bellah, Beyond Belief.  
     M. Novack, Choosing Our King.  
     H.R. Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America.  
     James Davison Hunter, "Conservative Protestantism," in Hammond, pp. 150-166.  
     Benton Johnson, "Religion and Politics in America: The Last Twenty Years," in Hammond, pp. 301-316.  
     Meredith McGuire, Religion: The Social Context, Chapter 6.  
     Roland Robertson, "The Sacred and the World System," in Hammond, pp.347- 358.  
  
  
**XIII. Religion and Social Change**  
  
a. The Black Church and Civil Rights   
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapter 12  
  
   SUGGESTED READINGS:  
     Achebe, C. Things Fall Apart.  
     Baer, HY., and M. Singer. African-American Religion in the Twentieth Century.  
     Egerton, John. Speak Now Against the Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South.  
     Griffin, John H. Black Like Me.  
     Sernett, M. Afro-American Religious History: A Documentary Witness.  
     Wilmore, Gayraud. Black Religion and Black Radicalism.  
  
b. The White Church and Civil Rights  
  
c. Religion and Capitalism  
  
d. Religion and Socialism  
  
e. Religion and Abortion  
  
   REQUIRED:  
    McNAMARA, PP. 240-272  
  
f. Religion and Sexism  
  
   REQUIRED:  
     Roberts, Chapter 13  
  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Joseph Washington, Black Sects and Cults, Chapters 2 and 4.  
     Eric Lincoln, The Black Muslims in America.  
     M. Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.  
     R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.  
     R. Bellah, Tokugawa Religion.  
     G. Lenski, The Religious Factor.  
     S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), The Protestant Ethic and Modernization.  
     R. Bendix, M. Weber, An Intellectual Portrait.  
     R.K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure.  
     G. Poggi, Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit.  
     G. Marshall, In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism.  
     Meredith McGuire, Religion: The Social Context, Chapter 7.  
     Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York: Scribners, 1958.  
     Michael W. Cuneo, Catholics Against the Church: Anti-Abortion Protest in Toronto, 1969-1985.  
     Kristin Luker, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood.  
     Dallas A. Blanchard and Terry J. Prewitt, Religious Violence and Abortion: The Gideon Project.  
     Dallas A. Blanchard, The Anti-Abortion Movement and the Rise of the Religious Right: From Polite to Fiery Protest.  
  
  
**XIV. Secularization**  
  
**a. Origins of Secularization  
  
b. Secularization and the Future of Religion**  
  
   REQUIRED READINGS:  
     Roberts, Chapter 14  
     McNamara, pp. 104-111, 345-352  
   SUGGESTED:  
     Meredith McGuire, Religion: The Social Context, Chapter 8 and Epilogue;  
     Bryan Wilson, "Secularization: The Inherited Model," in Hammond, pp. 9-20.  
     Schluchter, Wolfgang, "The Future of Religion," in Religion in America, Mary Douglas and Steven Tipton, eds.  
  
**XV. Globalization of Religion**