

Sociology/Religious Studies 377: Social Dimensions of Religion

Spring 2009

MWF 1:10-2 p.m.
29 Ross Hall

Instructor	David Schweingruber
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Course Overview and Objective

This section of Soc/Relig 377 is a course in the sociology of religion. The major objective of the course is for students to become familiar with sociological perspectives on religion and with key issues and findings in this area of sociology.

Required Texts

Christiano, Kevin J., William H. Swatos Jr., and Peter Kivisto. 2008. *Sociology of Religion*, 2nd ed. AltaMira.

Freitas, Donna. 2008. *Sex & the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance, and Religion on America's College Campuses*. Oxford.

Emerson, Michael O., and Christian Smith. 2000. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford.

Course pack.

Students are expected to read each assigned reading before the class in which it will be discussed. The *Schedule of Assignments* (pp. 5-7) lists the readings for each day. I reserve the option of modifying the assigned readings as necessary.

Office Hours

The instructor will hold office hours Monday and Wednesday from 2:10-3 p.m. He will also meet with students by appointment. Students should take advantage of these opportunities to meet with the instructor to review and discuss class material and assignments.

Students are also encouraged to meet with classmates to review course material and work on assignments.

Assignments

1. Examinations (40% of course grade; 3 exams, 1 @ 100 pts, 2 @150 pts)

There will be three examinations. The purpose of the exams is to encourage students to attend to, study, and commit to memory course material. Each exam will consist of questions drawn from lectures and readings. Your top two exam scores will be multiplied by 1.5.

2. Quizzes (15%; 20-25 quizzes; 15 counted at 1% each)

The unannounced quizzes are designed to encourage students to keep up with their readings. The quizzes will take place at the beginning of class. Students who don't attend class or are late will not be able to take them or make them up. Each student's top 15 scores will be counted toward the course grade.

Quiz points may also be used to reward attendance at select campus events at the professor's discretion.

3. Observation assignments (35%; 3 assignments, 2@100 pts, 1@150 pts)

The observation assignment requires students to observe three religious gatherings and write a report. Detailed requirements will be provided. Your top assignment score will be multiplied by 1.5.

4. Class attendance (8%)

Class attendance is critical for learning course material. In order to encourage attendance and participation, points will be awarded as follows:

First 20 days of class attended:	1 point per day
Days 21-30 of class attended:	2 points per day
Days 31-40 of class attended:	4 points per day

Each student can earn up to 80 attendance points by attending 40 days of class. Since there are 43 class days, students can miss up to three days of class without penalty. This is a no-fault policy, i.e., the reason for the absence makes no difference.

Attendance will be recorded using an attendance sheet. Students are responsible for distributing the sheet. If no sheet is distributed, no one gets attendance credit for that day.

5. Class participation (2%; professor's discretion)

Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class, attend class and discuss the readings in class. The instructor will assign points for class participation at his discretion.

Letter grades

Students have the opportunity to earn 1000 points. Students must earn 900 points for a grade in the 'A' range, 800 for a grade in the 'B' range, 700 for a grade in the 'C' range and 600 for a grade in the 'D' range. There are no ways to earn points in the course other than those described in this syllabus either during the course or after it ends.

In general, the instructor will give grades in the 'A' range (90–100%) for work which is exceptional, e.g., in its creativity, thoroughness or insight. Grades in the 'B' range (80–89%) are for work which fulfills all of an assignment's requirements but which is otherwise unexceptional. Grades in the 'C' range (70–79%) are for work which fails to meet an assignment's requirements in some way, e.g., in its accuracy, completeness or writing. Grades in the 'D' (60–69%) and 'F' range (below 60%) are for work which fails to meet an assignment's requirements in some significant way.

The instructor will not grade assignments written in substandard English. Such assignments will be returned for a revision, which can be resubmitted for partial credit.

Make-Up Work

Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date and take tests at the scheduled times. Students will not be able to make up work or exams unless they have a legitimate excuse, e.g., illness, funeral, family emergency. **Quizzes cannot be made up.** Students with legitimate excuses should obtain appropriate documentation and contact the instructor AS SOON AS POSSIBLE regarding their situation.

Academic Honesty

Speaking and acting truthfully are skills acquired through practice. These skills are indispensable for successfully living and working with other people. If you practice dishonesty, you will endanger all of your relationships. You will be a bad spouse, a bad parent, a bad employee and a bad citizen.

Participating in academic life is an important opportunity to practice truthfulness since dishonesty is incompatible with and abhorrent to the purposes of the university. Therefore, students in this course are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty.

Examples of academic dishonesty include plagiarism, cheating on exams or quizzes, and signing someone else's name to the attendance sheet.

The standard punishment for academic dishonesty is failure in the course and referral to the Dean of Students. Students who are expelled from Iowa State or otherwise punished for academic dishonesty are encouraged to see their punishment as an opportunity to reflect upon their failure to practice truthfulness and to commit themselves to a new life of integrity.

Special Accommodations

Students should address any need for special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you believe you need them. Accommodations will be provided to students with a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) from the Disability Resources (DR) office (294-6624). DR is located in Room 1076 of the Student Services Building.

Sociology Code of Ethics for Human Relations

The Department of Sociology is committed to providing a professional and educational environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. The department's Code of Ethics for Human Relations and the Procedures for Filing Complaints of Discrimination or Harassment are posted on the bulletin boards on all five floors of East Hall.

Guidelines for Success

The following are guidelines for success in this class. They are what I expect from students. They are designed to help individual students and to create a positive learning environment in the class.

Attend class regularly and on time.

Class attendance is critical for learning course material. Come to class on time and stay until class is over. Do not set appointments that would require you to miss any class time. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet each class period.

Be an active participant.

Read the assigned readings before class, attend class and discuss the readings in class. Be on the lookout for material from media, conversations, and other classes that you can use to illuminate class material. Your active participation will contribute to a more enjoyable class for everyone.

Communicate with your professor.

Talk to your professor about any problems you are having with the course. If you do not understand the material or have questions about any assignments, make an appointment to talk. If you have problems with other students or any other issues that are impeding your learning process, tell your professor.

Develop high standards for yourself.

I have high standards for all students. I expect that students will submit carefully developed and revised papers, be prepared for class, and take the course seriously. The best way to meet these standards is to adopt high standards for yourself. Your job is to be a student. Be a professional at your job. You will take the skills and attitudes you develop as a student with you when you leave school.

Employ effective study skills.

Before class, read the assigned readings. After class, review your notes and the readings. The ability to apply the material (in exams and papers) takes a deeper understanding than a casual reading of the text will give you. The course material requires you to learn new ideas and ways of thinking. You need to be patient with yourself and commit enough time to the material before you will “get it.” Do not be satisfied with a surface understanding of the course material. This type of understanding does not generally translate to excellent work in the assignments or to an ability to apply the material outside of class.

Follow common rules of respect.

Turn off your cell phones. Do not have “side conversations” during class. The noise that you make makes it difficult for others to listen and concentrate. Speak loudly when participating in class discussion so that everyone in the class can hear. When others are talking, please listen quietly. Show courtesy toward other students even if you disagree with them.

Adopted from Nancy Berns, Department for the Study of Culture and Society, Drake University.

Schedule of Assignments

Mon 1/12 (1) Course overview

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

Wed 1/14 (2) Introduction to Sociology of Religion, part 1
"By Way of Introduction" (Christiano et al., chapter 1)

Fri 1/16 (3) Introduction to Sociology of Religion, part 2
"Studying Religion" (Christiano et al., chapter 2)

Mon 1/19 NO CLASS

Wed 1/21 (4) Classical Theorists, part 1: Emile Durkheim
Pals, Daniel L. 2006. "Society as Sacred: Emile Durkheim." Chapter 3 in *Eight Theories of Religion*. Oxford. (CP)

Fri 1/23 (5) Classical Theorists, part 2: Karl Marx
Pals, Daniel L. 2006. "Religion as Alienation: Karl Marx." Chapter 4 in *Eight Theories of Religion*. Oxford. (CP)

Mon 1/26 (6) Classical Theorists, part 3: Max Weber
Pals, Daniel L. 2006. "A Source of Social Action: Max Weber." Chapter 5 in *Eight Theories of Religion*. Oxford. (CP)

Wed 1/28 (7) Religion and the Social Construction of Reality, part 1
Berger, Peter. 1967. "Religion and World Construction." Chapter 1 in *The Sacred Canopy*. Anchor. (CP)

Fri 1/30 (8) Religion and the Social Construction of Reality, part 2
Berger, Peter. 1967. "Religion and World-Maintenance." Chapter 2 in *The Sacred Canopy*. Anchor. (CP)

Mon 2/2 (9) Rational & Phenomenological Foundations of Religion
Smith, Christian. 2007. "Why Christianity Works." *Sociology of Religion* 68(2):165-178. (CP)
Stark, Rodney, and Roger Finke. 2000. "Rationality and the 'Religious Mind.'" Chapter 2 in *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. University of California. (CP)

THE SECULARIZATION DEBATE

Wed 2/4 (10) Secularization Overview
"Secularization." (Christiano et al. Chapter 3)

Fri 2/6 (11) Secularization is Myth
Stark, Rodney. 1999. "Secularization, R.I.P." *Sociology of Religion* 60(3):249-273. (CP)

Mon 2/9 (12) Secularization is Real
Bruce, Steve. 2001. "Christianity in Britain, R.I.P." *Sociology of Religion* 62(2):191-203. (CP)
Sommerville, C. John. 2002. "Stark's Age of Faith Argument and the Secularization of *Things*: A Commentary." *Sociology of Religion* 63(3):361-372. (CP)

Wed 2/11 (13) Living with Secularism
Cimino, Richard, and Christopher Smith. 2007. "Secular Humanism and Atheism beyond Progressive Secularism." *Sociology of Religion* 68(4):407-424. (CP)
Blumenfeld, Warren J. 2006. "Christian Privilege and the Promotion of 'Secular' and Not-So 'Secular' Mainline Christianity in Public Schooling and in the Larger Society." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39:195-210. (CP)

Fri 2/13 (14) Assignment #1 due/Review for exam

Mon 2/16 (15) Exam #1

RELIGION, YOUTH & IDENTITY

Wed 2/18 (16) Religion in the United States
"Religion in the United States" (Chrisiano et al., chapter 4)

Fri 2/20 (17) American Adolescent Religion, part 1
Smith, Christian et al. "God, Religion, Whatever." Chapter 4 in *Soul Searching*. Oxford. (CP)

Mon 2/23 (18) American Adolescent Religion, part 2
Smith, Christian et al. "American Adolescent Religion in Social Context." Chapter 5 in *Soul Searching*. Oxford. (CP)

Wed 2/25 (19) Developing a Religious Identity
Peek, Lori. 2005. "Becoming Muslim: The Development of Religious Identity." *Sociology of Religion* 66(3). (CP)

Fri 2/27 (20) Religion and Romance at College, part 1
Freitas, Donna. 2008. "The Varieties of College Religious Experience." Section One in *Sex & the Soul*. Oxford. (Also read the Preface & Introduction)

Mon 3/2 (21) Religion and Romance at College, part 2
Freitas, Donna. 2008. "The Romantic Ideal" and "The Truth about Sex on Campus" Sections Two and Three in *Sex & the Soul*. Oxford.

Wed 3/4 (22) Religion and Romance at College, part 3
Freitas, Donna. 2008. "Reconciling Sex and the Soul (Or Not) on Campus" Section Four in *Sex & the Soul*. Oxford.

Fri 3/6 (23) Religion and Romance at College, part 4
Freitas, Donna. 2008. "Conclusions and Practical Implications." Section Five in *Sex & the Soul*. Oxford. (Also read "A Practical Guide...")

Mon 3/9 (24) Another Perspective on Religious Abstinence
Wilkins, Amy. 2009. "Unconventional Heterosexualities and Intimacy Talk: Recuperating Masculinity in Two Young Adult Subcultures." *Signs*. (CP)

RELIGION AND SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

Wed 3/11 (25) Religion & Social Class
"Social Class, Religion & Power." (Chrisiano et al., chapter 5)

Fri 3/13 (26) Religion & Ethnicity
"Religion and Ethnicity." (Chrisiano et al., chapter 6)

***** Spring Break (March 16-20) *****

Mon 3/23 (27) Evangelicals & Race, part 1
Emerson, Michael O., and Christian Smith. 2000. Introduction and Chapters 1, 2 & 3 in *Divided by Faith*. Oxford.

Wed 3/25 (28) Evangelicals & Race, part 2
Emerson, Michael O., and Christian Smith. 2000. Chapters 4, 5 & 6 in *Divided by Faith*. Oxford.

Fri 3/27 (29) Evangelicals & Race, part 3
Emerson, Michael O., and Christian Smith. 2000. Chapters 7, 8 & 9 in *Divided by Faith*. Oxford.

Mon 3/30 (30) Assignment #2 due/Review for exam

- Wed 4/1 (31) Exam #2**
- Fri 4/3 No Class**
- Mon 4/6 (32) Gender, Sexuality & Religion**
 "Gender, Sexuality & Religion." (Christiano et al. Chapter 7)
- Wed 4/8 (33) Men & Women Negotiating Gender & Religion**
 Ecklund, Elaine Howard. 2003. "Catholic Women Negotiate Feminism: A Research Note." *Sociology of Religion* 64(4):515-524. (CP)
 Heath, Melanie. 2003. "Soft-Boiled Masculinity: Renegotiating Gender and Racial Ideologies in the Promise Keepers Movement." *Gender & Society* 17(3):423-444. (CP)
- Fri 4/10 (34) Families Negotiating Gender & Religion**
 Gallagher, Sally K., and Christian Smith. 1999. "Symbolic Traditionalism and Pragmatic Egalitarianism: Contemporary Evangelicals, Families, and Gender." *Gender & Society* 13(2):211-233. (CP)
- Mon 4/13 (35) Gay Men Negotiating Sexuality & Religion**
 Wolkomir, Michelle. 2001. "Wrestling with the Angels of Meaning: The Revisionist Ideological Work of Gay and Ex-Gay Christian Men." *Symbolic Interaction* 24(4):407-424. (CP)

RELIGION, CULTURE & CHANGE

- Wed 4/15 (36) Religious Change**
 "Religious Change." (Christiano et al. Chapter 8)
- Fri 4/17 (37) The Next Christianity**
 Jenkins, Philip. 2002. "The Next Christianity." *The Atlantic Monthly*, October. (CP)
- Mon 4/20 (38) Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism**
 "Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism." (Christiano et al. Chapter 9)
- Wed 4/22 (39) Religion & Culture**
 "Mediating Meaning" (Christiano et al. Chapter 10)
- Fri 4/24 (40) Recovery Religion**
 Lowney, Kathleen. 1999. "Recovery Rules" & "Morality for Whom?" Chapters 4 & 6 in *Baring our Souls: TV Talk Shows and the Religion of Recovery*. Aldine. (CP)
- Mon 4/27 (41) New Religions**
 "Boundary Issues." (Christiano et al. Chapter 11)
- Wed 4/29 (42) Constructing New Religions**
 Walker, Jesse. 2003. "Inside the Spiritual Jacuzzi." *Reason*, May. (CP)
 Allen, Charlotte. 2001. "The Scholars and the Goddess." *The Atlantic Monthly*, January. (CP)
- Fri 5/01 (43) Assignment #3 due/Review for exam**
- TBA Final Exam**