

## SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION (W4700)

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Office hours: Wed. 4-6

Spring 2001  
Tues-Thurs 11-12.15  
Kent 628

This course is designed to teach advanced undergraduate and graduate students tools and concepts with which to understand the social organization of religion. We will analyze religion as it is embedded in and related to other aspects of social and cultural systems. Analyzing religion in relation to non-religious systems provides opportunity to develop understanding of both the changes and continuities in the structure and role of religion in modern societies and the shifting boundaries of religious and non-religious activity. Our primary (but not exclusive) focus will be on contemporary North American religions.

### REQUIREMENTS

**Class attendance** and participation (20%);

A bi-weekly topical **essay** on the readings (more below) (30%);

Four **quizzes** on the readings and lectures (20%);

a 12-15 page **term paper** (30%)

A two page description of your paper topic is due in class on March 20 and counts for 10% of the paper grade.

Enrolled graduate students will write a 12-15 page research proposal.

### TOPICAL ESSAY

Topical essays are short (4-5 page) essays on the required readings' main themes. You will turn in an essay on each of the course topics (with the exception of "taking stock"). Essays are not summaries. You should demonstrate your knowledge of the text's arguments through one or more of the following: (a) comparing approaches and methods; (b) raising questions or critical comments (c) discussing the relevance (or lack thereof) for designing a sociological study. The essays should exhibit cogent prose and be proofread carefully for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

### TERM PAPER

Your term paper will provide the opportunity to delve into a topic addressed in the class or to research an area that is related to, but not directly touched on by, the course readings. A sociology of religion bibliography will be available for you to consult on line as you think about what topic to pursue for your paper. You should also consult the journals *Sociology of Religion* and *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. And of course, you should come talk to me as well about your paper topics - well before the 20

March topic submission due date.  
Details on format will follow.

## TEXTS

Books will be available for purchase at Labyrinth Books. A reader of required readings is available for purchase at CopyQuick (Amsterdam Avenue and 119th St.). Copies of the reader and the required books are on reserve at Butler Library.

Berger, *Sacred Canopy*

Brown, *The Channeling Zone*

Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*

Davie *Women in the Presence*

Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*

Hall, ed. *Lived Religion in America*

Kertzer, *Ritual, Power, Politics*

Roy, *Some Trouble with Cows*

Weber, *Sociology of Religion*

Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

## FINE PRINT

No late work will be accepted under any circumstances.

Essays may be emailed to me, as a Microsoft Word or equivalent attachment. Emailed essays must be sent to me **before** class.

You must complete each element of the course requirements to receive a passing grade.

University rules on plagiarism apply in this course. Please see me if you have questions about how to cite materials in written work.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

16 January

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

18 January, 23 January, 25 January, 30 January

### 1.2. CULTURE/ WORLDVIEW

Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* chapters 1-4 (pp. 3-101).

\*Swidler, Ann. "Culture in Action," *ASR* 1986.

\*Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions"

Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

Suggested:

\*Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System" in *Interpretation of Cultures*.

1 February

### 3. PRODUCING THE SACRED: TAKING STOCK

\*Orsi, Robert. "Snakes Alive: Resituating the Moral in the Study of Religion"

\*Marvin, Carolyn and David Ingle. "Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Revisiting

Civil

Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

\*Wuthnow, Robert. "Beyond the Problems of Meaning," *Meaning and Moral Order*, ch. 2.

6 February, 8 February, 13 February, 15 February

### 4. 5. AUTHORITY AND LEGITIMATION: SECULARIZATION

Weber, Max *The Sociology of Religion*, chs.

Berger, Peter *The Sacred Canopy* chs. 5-7

Casanova, Jose, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, chs.1, 2, 6, 7.

\*Stark, Rodney. "Secularization RIP" *Sociology of Religion* 1999.

20 February, 22 February, 25 February, 1 March

### 6.7. RITUALS AND PRACTICES

Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, selections

\*Douglas, "Preface," "A Rule of Method," "The Two Bodies" in *Natural Symbols*

\*Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties." *Comparative Studies in*

*Society and History*. 26 (1988):1, 126-66.

McNally, Michael. "The Uses of Ojibwa Hymn Singing at White Earth: Toward a History of Practice" in *Lived Religion in America*.

\*Rosaldo, Renato. "Grief and the Headhunter's Rage" Introduction to *Culture and Truth*.

Forbes, Cheryl. "Coffee, Mrs. Cowman, and the Devotional Life of Women Reading in the Desert" pp. 116-132 in *Lived Religion in America*

\*Radway, Janice. "Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies: The Functions of Romance Reading" pp. 465-486 in *Rethinking Popular Culture*

6 March, 8 March, 20 March, 22 March

### **8.9. IDENTITY/CREATING RELIGIOUS SELVES**

\*Lawless, Elaine. "Rescripting their Lives and Narratives: Spiritual Life Stories of Pentecostal Women Preachers." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. 7: (Spring 1991) 53-71.

Griffith, R. Marie. "Submissive Wives, Wounded Daughters" in *Lived Religion in America*, David Hall, ed.

\*Cain, Carole. "Personal Stories in Alcoholics Anonymous," ch. 4 in *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Dorothy Holland et al.

Brown, Michael. *The Channeling Zone*. Harvard.

Suggested:

Emirbayer and Mische, "What is Agency?" *American Journal of Sociology*.

Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7: 1 (1988)

27 March, 29 March, 3 April, 5 April

### **10. 11. ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUP PROCESSES**

Stark, Rodney and William Sims Bainbridge. "Of Churches, Sects and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements," *JSSR* 18 (1979): 117-131.

\*Finke and Stark "Religious Mobilization in America Cities, 1906" *ASR* 1988

\*Kaufman, Jason. "The Political Economy of Inter-denominational Competition in

Late Nineteenth Century America Cities" *Journal of Urban History*

the  
\*Cormode, Scott. "Churches and Secular Voluntary Associations in the Turn of

Century City" in *Sacred Companies*

Davie, Jody Shapiro. *Women in the Presence*

10 April, 12 April, 17 April, 19 April, 24 April

**12. RELIGIOUS/POWER: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE**

\*Billings, D. "Religion as opposition: A Gramscian analysis" AJS 96(1990) 1:1-31.

Roy, Beth. *Some Trouble with Cows*. University of California.  
Kertzer, *Ritual, Power, Politics* selections

\*Bellah, Robert *Habits of the Heart* "Religion"

Ammerman, Nancy. "Golden Rule Christians" in *Lived Religion in America*

\*Putnam, "Bowling Alone"

\*Wuthnow, "Angel Awakenings" and "Spirituality of the Inner Self" in *After Heaven*

26 April

**13. Review**