

## SOC 445 – NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: THE SOCIOLOGY OF CULTS & SECTS

<http://faculty.washington.edu/kitts/soc445.html>

**Professor James A. Kitts**

**Office Hours: Friday 10:00-12:00, Savery 121G**

*jkitts@u.washington.edu*

**CLASS MEETINGS:**

**Mon, Wed 10:30-12:50 pm**

**Parrington Hall, Room 108**

---

### DESCRIPTION

This course will investigate the organizational dynamics of new religious movements. We will seek to understand why “cults” emerge and how they proliferate, as we explore processes of recruitment, conversion, and charisma. We will also examine conflicts of these movements with established churches, anti-cult organizations, and the state.

### REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete course readings *before* the assigned date. Due to the importance of discussions, oral presentations, and peer feedback, class participation will be essential. Our activities outside of class will often require use of computers and access to the Internet. These facilities are available in university libraries for all students. ***All assignments must be typed and double-spaced. All underlined items on syllabus are required in-class activities.***

### TEXTS

- Dawson, Lorne L. 1998. *Cults in Context: Readings in the Study of New Religious Movements*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- Galanter, Marc. 2004. *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, William A., Richard P. Rettig, Gregory M. Scott, Stephen Garrison. 2004. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Plus additional articles.

Readings marked with “\*” on the syllabus are available on Electronic Reserve. You may download reserve articles from the link on our course web page, and you may legally print a personal copy for class use. *All electronic reserves require the Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is included with most web browsers (and is also available free of charge at [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)).* Problems with downloading or printing these articles will not excuse you from the readings.

### GROUND RULES

- Exam dates are not flexible. There will be no “make-ups” for exams or papers.
- Early papers will be accepted. Late papers will be severely penalized.
- There is no “curve,” so grades will not be competitive and I encourage group study.
- Grades are never negotiable, but I do accept *substantial* projects for “extra credit.”
- Make frequent backups of your files. Lost papers and failed disks do not earn extensions.

## GRADES

Final Grade Breakdown		0-100 Scale	Letter Grade	4.0 Scale
First Paper (5-6 pgs)	15%	93+	A	3.9 - 4.0
		90-92	A-	3.5 - 3.8
Major Exam	30%	88-89	B+	3.2 - 3.4
		83-87	B	2.9 - 3.1
Research Paper (10-12 pgs)	35%	80-82	B-	2.5 - 2.8
		78-79	C+	2.2 - 2.4
Class Participation	20%	73-77	C	1.9 - 2.1
		70-72	C-	1.5 - 1.8
		68-69	D+	1.2 - 1.4
		63-67	D	0.9 - 1.1
		60-62	D-	0.7 - 0.8
		<60	E	0

“Class participation” includes constructive involvement in discussions and activities, and *will also include numerous written exercises* that look a lot like “pop quizzes.” While those exercises will not be individually graded, they will be assembled into a portfolio that summarizes your level of preparedness for class. This portfolio will be a major part of your class participation grade. If you miss a class meeting or fail to read the assignment, you can submit a *typed* rewrite of the exercise for your portfolio *at the next class meeting*. See our web page for details and guidelines on exercises.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

You *may* study for exams together, and I encourage you to do so.

You *may* share drafts of your papers with your peers, and I encourage you to give each other feedback. However, as with all academic courses, you may *not* copy (or paraphrase) text from any other source without citation and/or quotation, as appropriate. You also may not speak with anyone else or consult any written materials during an exam. *Cheating and plagiarism have severe disciplinary consequences.*

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I will gladly provide fair and reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, at the recommendation of Disabled Student Services (488 Schmitz Hall, 206-543-8924). Please show me the letter from DSS indicating accommodations that you may need for this class.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK ONE – INTRODUCTION

*Monday, January 3*

*Bring all books to class today and come prepared for an active first meeting. Feel free to preview the readings assigned for Wednesday.*

*Wednesday, January 5*

Dawson, Lorne L. “The Nature and Study of Cults.” in Dawson, pp. 1-3.

Barker, Eileen. “The Scientific Study of Religion? You Must be Joking!” in Dawson, (pp. 5-27).

Richardson, James T. “Definitions of Cult: From Sociological-Technical to Popular-Negative” in Dawson, (pp. 29-38).

### WEEK TWO – NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND THEIR ADHERENTS

*Monday, January 10*

Wallis, Roy. “Three Types of New Religious Movements.” in Dawson, (pp. 39-68).

Also, students will give oral presentations briefly summarizing one of the following profiles from Timothy Miller’s (1995) *America's Alternative Religions*. Bring two copies of your presentation notes, and submit one copy (labeled w/ name & date) with your exercise.

- **A** Van Zandt, D. E. “The Children of God.” 127-132.\*
- **B** Barker, E. “The Unification Church.” 223-229.\*
- **C** Paden, R. “The Boston Church of Christ.” 133-140.\*
- **D** Bednarowski, M. F. “The Church of Scientology.” 385-392.\*
- **E** Rochford, E. B. J. “Hare Krishna in America.” 215-221.\*
- **F** Bromley, D. G. and S.G. Ainsley. “Satanism and Satanic Churches.” 401-409.\*
- **G** Matthews, C. “Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft.” 339-345.\*
- **H** Ellwood, R. S. “UFO Religious Movements.” 393-399.\*

*Wednesday, January 12 [Meet in MARY GATES HALL ROOM 044]*

*Sociology Student Writer’s Manual, (pp. 108-143)*

**WEEK THREE – PAPER #1 AND GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

*Monday, January 17*

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY HOLIDAY

*Wednesday, January 19*

**PAPER #1 DUE; ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

**WEEK FOUR – CHARISMA, ATTRACTION TO NRMs**

*Monday, January 24*

Weber, Max. 1968. “The Nature of Charismatic Authority and Its Routinization” in *Charismatic Authority. Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building*. S. N. Eisenstadt. Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press. 48-65.\*

Zablocki, Benjamin. 1980. *Alienation and Charisma*. New York: The Free Press. 10-12.\*  
Chapter 1, “The Charismatic Group.” In Galanter, (pp 1-12)

*Wednesday, January 26*

Dawson, Lorne L. “Who Joins New Religious Movements and Why?” in Dawson, pp. 141-145

Glock, Charles Y. “The Role of Deprivation in the Origin and Evolution of Religious Groups.” in Dawson, pp. 147-158.

Levine, Saul. “The Joiners.” in Dawson, (*only* pp. 181-189).

**WEEK FIVE – MODELS OF CONVERSION TO NRMs**

*Monday, January 31*

Lofland, John and Rodney Stark. 1965. “On Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective.” in Dawson, (pp. 159-180).

Snow, David A. and Cynthia L. Phillips. 1980. “The Lofland-Stark Conversion Model: A Critical Assessment.” *Social Problems* 27:430-447.\*

***Wednesday, February 2***

Stark, Rodney and William S. Bainbridge. 1980. "Networks of Faith: Interpersonal Bonds and Recruitment to Cults and Sects." *American Journal of Sociology* 85:1376-1395.\*

Snow, David, Louis Zurcher, and Sheldon Ekland-Olson. 1980. "Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment." *American Sociological Review* 45:787-801.\*

**WEEK SIX – BRAINWASHING AND COERCIVE CONVERSION**

***Monday, February 7***

Enroth, Ronald. "The Seduction Syndrome." in Dawson, (pp. 203-215).

Conway, Flo and Jim Siegelman. 1995. "Black Lightning." *Snapping*. New York: Stillpoint Press. 57-73.\*

Appel, Willa. 1983. "Getting Out." *Cults in America: Programmed for Paradise*. New York, Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston. 138-153.\*

***Wednesday, February 9***

Dawson, Lorne L. "The Coercive Conversion Controversy." in Dawson, (pp. 199-201).

Richardson, James T. "A Critique of 'Brainwashing' Claims About New Religious Movements." in Dawson, (pp. 217-224).

Robbins, Thomas and Dick Anthony. 1982. "Deprogramming, Brainwashing, and the Medicalization of Deviant Religious Groups." *Social Problems* 29 (3): 283-297.\*

**WEEK SEVEN – A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL MODEL**

***Monday, February 14***

Chapter 2, "Group Cohesiveness." In Galanter, (pp 15-33)

Pages from Chapter 3, "Shared Beliefs." In Galanter, (pp 34-37, 45-59)

Pages from Chapter 6, "The Cult as a Social System." In Galanter, (pp 103-109)

***Wednesday, February 16***

**FINAL PAPER THESIS LIST DUE**

Pages from Chapter 8, "The Unification Church." In Galanter, (pp 126-136, 152-166)

**WEEK EIGHT – CULTS, CONFLICT, AND VIOLENCE**

*Monday, February 21*

PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY

*Wednesday, February 23*

Chapter 7, “Trouble at the System’s Boundary.” In Galanter, (pp 113-121)

Pages from Chapter 9, “The Millennium Approaches.” In Galanter, (pp 167-**178**)

Robbins, Thomas and Dick Anthony. “Sects and Violence: Factors Enhancing the Volatility of Marginal Religious Movements.” in Dawson, (pp. 343-360).

**WEEK NINE – FINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

*Monday, February 28*

**IN-CLASS MAJOR EXAM**

*Wednesday, March 2*

**FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

**WEEK TEN – FINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

*Monday, March 7*

**ABSTRACT & OUTLINE FOR FINAL PAPER DUE**

*Wednesday, March 9*

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE**