

## ***Sociology of Religion***

Soc 442/842  
Fall 2004

Mr. Glazier  
CPHL 120C

Course overview: This course examines religion as a social phenomenon and attempts to relate religious organizations to other aspects of social life. Topics to be considered include: belief and its institutionalization, forms of religious organization, religion and social change, processes of conversion, secularization, new religious movements, religion in other cultures, religion and material culture, and predictions concerning the future of religious organizations.

Course objectives: 1) To become familiar with methodological and theoretical tools used by social scientists in the study of religion; 2) To become familiar with the basic organizational principles underlying religious institutions, and 3) To develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of religions throughout the world, with special attention to major world religions like Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism as well as newer religions like neo-shamanism, Wicca, the Unification Church, and Scientology.

Evaluation: Students will be responsible for readings, movie and video presentations, lecture material, and class discussion. The final grade will be based primarily on **two in-class essay examinations** (a mid-term and final) and **a presentation or a term paper** on an approved topic. Class presentations may be given any time during the semester, but all presentations must be scheduled in advance. In the past, most presentations have been scheduled during the last three weeks of class. All term papers will be due at the time of the final examination. In calculating final grades, the mid-term, final, and paper or presentation will be weighted equally.

Office Hours: Regular office hours are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm and on Wednesdays from 9:00 pm to 9:30 pm. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, regular office hours are from 1:45 pm to 3:15 pm. I am also available both before and after class. Of course, I will be available at other times by appointment. Call 865-8505 or 865-8760 (voice mail) or e-mail him at "glaziers@unk.edu."

Required texts for this class: Meredith B. McGuire, *Religion: The Social Context* (5th edition); Brandon Toropov and Luke Buckles, *The Complete Idiot's Guide to the World's Religions*; Stephen D. Glazier (editor) *Anthropology of Religion: A Handbook* (1999 paperback edition); Stephen D. Glazier "Spiritual Baptist Music of Trinidad" (CD version); and Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Roxbury Press edition).

### **Course Outline**

<i>Session Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading Assignment</i>
Wednesday, Aug 25	Introduction	McGuire, Chapter 1
	What is Religion?	McGuire, Chapter 2
	James Lett "Science, Religion, and Anthropology" <i>In</i> Glazier, pp. 103-120	
	Focus question: Can religion be studied scientifically?	
Wednesday, Sept 1	Individual Religion	McGuire, Chapters 3 +4
	Jim Birckhead, "Reading 'Snake Handling'" <i>In</i> Glazier, pp 19-84	
	Church and Sect	McGuire, Chapter 5
	Focus question: Can there be religion without a church?	
Wednesday, Sept 8	Religious Conflict	McGuire, Chapter 6
	Focus question: Is religion a positive or negative force in society?	
	Social Change	McGuire, Chapter 7
Wednesday, Sept 15	Religion and Modernization	McGuire, Chapter 8
	Focus: Is the world becoming more secular?	
Wednesday, Sept 22	New Religious Movements	Toropov, Part 8
	Video: "Assault on Freedom"	
Wednesday, Sept 29	Religion and Economics	Weber, Chapters 1 + 2
	"Intro to Weber's <i>The Protestant Ethic</i> , " by Randall Collins (on reserve)	
	Focus question: Are Protestants richer and why?	



Wednesday, Nov 17 Religions of the African Diaspora

"Spiritual Baptist Music of Trinidad"

Mattias Guenther, "African Ritual" In Glazier, pp. 161-190

Video: "Voodoo and the Church in Haiti"

Wednesday, Dec 8 Shamanism, Drumming, and Altered States of Consciousness

Michael Winkelman, "Altered States of Consciousness" *In* Glazier, pp. 393- 428

Joan B. Townsend "Shamanism, *In* Glazier, pp. 394-469

Wednesday, Dec 15 at 6:30 p.m. Final Examination