

COURSE SYLLABUS: SEMINAR IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

I. Introductory Information

- A. Department Name:** Sociology/Anthropology/Social Work/Geography Department
- B. Catalog number:** SOCI 328
- C. Course Title:** Social Science Seminar: The Sociology of Religion
- D. Semester Hours of Credit:** 3
- E. Clock Hours Per Week:** 3
- F. Overlays:** Writing Emphasis
- G. Restrictions Upon Student Registration:** Prerequisite SOCI 101 and at least 30 hrs of college credit or with permission of instructor.

II. Catalog Description: Analyzes the functions of religion, both as a social institution and as an ideological construct by which individuals direct and give meaning to their lives. Emphasis is placed on the forms that religion and religious experience have taken in the United States. Larger global aspects of religion will be examined where they contribute to a greater understanding of the United States experience.

Comprehensive Description: Considers the mutual influences of religion on society and society on religion. It is a key premise of this course that understanding this didactic relationship between religion and society is absolutely necessary for understanding more fully either religion or society. While primarily a “sociological” approach to the study of religion, it will be inevitable to occasionally consider the anthropology, history, and psychology of religion. It is hoped that this sociocultural critical analysis will help students gain a greater understanding, appreciation, and respect for religion and its importance to the individual and its functions in society.

III. Exposition

- A. Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:
 - 1. Apply and describe the classical approaches to religion in sociology as evidenced in the work of Durkheim, Marx, and Weber.
 - 2. Describe the basic functions and roles of all religious systems for the individual and society as a result of the particular type of “truth claims” religions make.
 - 3. Demonstrate how specific social and historical forces affect

religion and how religion affects individuals, groups, and societies.

4. Explain how religion is similar to other types of social institutions, such as political and educational institutions, and to analyze it as such.
5. Describe important facets of religious history in the U.S. including several contemporary social conflicts when religious claims and beliefs are paramount.
6. Develop an understanding and appreciation of a religious group other than their own.
7. Develop their observational, analytical, and critical capabilities and demonstrate an improved ability to express themselves and their thoughts in writing.

B. Activities and Requirements: Students are expected to:

1. Attend class, read assignments, and participate in class discussion.
2. Complete an activity to acquaint the student with a religious system different from their own.
3. Complete an analytical or research writing exercise.
4. Complete exams and other assessment activities.

C. Major Units and Time Allotted:

Hours

1. Sociological approaches to, and theoretical understandings of, religion.	12
2. Writing within the discipline.	1
3. Sociocultural history of religion in America	4
4. The individual's experience of religion	4
5. The institutional and organizational aspects of religion	4
6. The didactic interaction between religion and society	12
7. Secularization and "civil religion"	6
8. The future of religion	<u>2</u>
	45

D. Materials and Bibliography

1. Suggested Textbooks: A textbook(s) may be required. Possible texts include the following:

Sargeant, Kimon Howland. 2000. *Seeker Churches: Promoting Traditional Religion in a Nontraditional Way*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Smith, Christian with Melinda Lundquist Denton. 2005. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zuckerman, Phil. 2003. *Invitation To The Sociology of Religion*. New York: Routledge.

2. Other Materials: None
3. Bibliographic Support: All books are either in the LHUP library or available to students through interlibrary loan.

Aldridge, Alan. 2000. *Religion in the Contemporary World*. Cambridge, England: Polity Press.

Batson, C. Daniel, Patricia Schoenrade, and W. Larry Ventis. 1993. *Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Berger, Peter. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Anchor Books.

Billingsley, Andrew. 1998. *Mighty Like a River: The Black Church and Social Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bruce, Steve, ed. 1992. *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Castelli, Elizabeth. 2001. *Women, Gender, and Religion*. 2001. New York: Palgrave.

Durkheim, Emile. 1915. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

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

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America 1776-1990*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Religion as a Cultural System." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Greeley, Andrew. 1995. *Sociology and Religion*. New York: Harper Collins.

Hartman, Keith. 1996. *Congregations in Conflict: The Battle Over Homosexuality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Johnstone, Ronald. 1997. *Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Manning, Christel, and Phil Zuckerman. 2004. *Sex and Religion*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Stark, Rodney, and Roger Finke. 2000. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Thrower, James. 1999. *Religion: The Classical Theories*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Weber, Max. 2002 [1904]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company

Wuthnow, Robert. 1989. *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

IV. Standards: Grades will be awarded in a manner consistent with University policy based upon a demonstrated mastery of course material by students as assessed by means of exams, quizzes, written work, and other class assignments.

V. Rationale and Impact:

- A. This is a sociology course to be offered to sociology majors and B.A. students needing Social Science Seminar credit.
- B. This course provides a learning experience for all students who have at least achieved sophomore status (30 semester hours).
- C. There will be no impact on existing departments or programs.

VI. Cost and Staff Analysis:

- A. The University can anticipate normal operating costs as the course will be taught by existing faculty.
- B. This course will be offered once every two years or more frequently as necessary.

VII. Date approved by University President:

Signature of the President

Date

**Request of General Education Overlay
Writing Emphasis (WE)**

Course # <u>SOCI328</u>	Section(s) <u>01</u>	Title <u>Seminar in the Sociology of Religion</u>	<u>3</u> sh
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Sections of courses designated WE are recommended by the department each semester as part of the scheduling process. Completed criteria sheets for each WE course should accompany the proposed schedule of courses submitted to the Deans for approval. Available resources may limit the number of WE courses that can be offered during a semester. For each criterion list from the course syllabus the objectives and activities that fulfill it. Provide examples of actions, procedures, or exercises that illustrate how each criterion will be met. All bullets of the criteria must be met. Please type.

Criteria for Writing Emphasis (WE)

The purpose is to maintain the writing skills developed in the first-year composition course.

Criteria	Course Objectives and Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment in WE courses is limited to twenty-five students (with twenty-two as a target). 	<p>Enrollment in this course is limited to 22 students.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice writing within the discipline through, but not limited to, the following contexts: informal in-class writing, discipline-focused essays, and essay exams. Essay exams alone do not constitute a writing emphasis class. 	<p>Objectives 1 & 7</p> <p>Students will engage in a variety of in-class and out-of-class writing exercises to help develop their general writing skills as well as more discipline specific writing skills.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive writing training through instructor modeling, sample essays, discussion, lectures, and/or instructor-student conferences. Writing conventions particular to the discipline should be emphasized. 	<p>Objectives 7</p> <p>Instructor will provide general instruction in good writing practices, and writing conventions relevant to specific writing assignments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise a portion of his/her writing by applying suggestions from the instructor, comments from peer review editors, and/or advice from Writing Center tutors. 	<p>Objectives 1 & 7</p> <p>All student writing will receive written feedback from the instructor. In addition, at least one student writing assignment will undergo multiple drafts based on feedback received from</p>

	<p>peers and the instructor.</p> <p>Students will also be made aware of the Writing Center and encouraged to seek additional support there as needed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate writing proficiency, which the instructor will evaluate as a percentage of the final course grade.	<p>A substantial portion of students' grades will be based on their level of demonstrated writing proficiency in their written work.</p>