

## RELIGION AND SOCIETY (SOCI 3334-01)

Fall 2013 Kennesaw State University  
Monday & Wednesday 6:30pm – 7:45pm  
Social Science Building 3021

Instructor:	Lisa M. Lepard	Office:	Social Sciences Bldg. 4005
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💻:	Desire 2 Learn page		
🕒	Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday: before & after class; 2p-3p, 5p-6p; & by appointment		

### REQUIRED TEXT:

☐ Monahan, Susanne G., William A. Mirola, and Michael O. Emerson, editors. 2011. *Sociology of Religion: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston, MA: Pearson.

☐ Additional readings will be posted on D2L.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide an opportunity for the student to develop a general sociological understanding and perspective with which to evaluate, interpret, and understand religion and religious institutions. This is NOT a course in religious theology, nor will we be concerned with identifying the "truth" or "falsity" of religion in general or specific religions in particular. In short, we will confine ourselves to the scientific study of religion and not attempt to pass judgments about which religions are better or worse, true or false.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Distinguish the major classical and contemporary theoretical approaches employed by sociologists when studying religion.
- ◆ Discuss the social dynamics of religion with a degree of objectivity.
- ◆ Understand religion as it intersects with other social aspects like race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class.
- ◆ Explain the micro-level and macro-level approaches to understanding religiosity in American society.
- ◆ Enhance analytical writing through written assignments.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Do not talk during lecture, while other students are asking questions, or during movie/video presentations.
- Turn off cell phones, iPods, or other electronics during class. I prefer that students do not use laptops.
- Late arrivals & early departures disrupt not only me, but also other students; therefore, if you know that you need to leave early—please talk to me *before* class (or email me).

Sociology is one of the few academic disciplines that many students enter into with strong and established beliefs concerning the subject matter. This is especially true when controversial topics such as the ones that we will be discussing are challenged and critiqued. With this said, there are a few classroom rules that will be established:

- Acknowledging that racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and other forms of institutionalized forms of oppression exist, we agree not to blame others or ourselves for the misinformation we have learned but accept responsibility not to repeat misinformation and to use our sociological knowledge to change perceptions.<sup>i\*</sup>
- We agree not to "blame the victim(s)" for the conditions of her/his life because this type of explanation ignores the institutionalized social structures that block progress and perpetuates social inequality<sup>\*</sup>
- Never demean, devalue, or ridicule someone for ideas expressed, personal experiences shared, or dissenting opinions. <sup>\*</sup>
- Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. If personal experiences are shared with the class, it should be agreed upon that these comments are not repeated outside of the classroom and the rules of confidentiality apply. <sup>\*1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ideas based in part on: Cannon, Lynn Weber. 1990. "Fostering Positive Race, Class, and Gender Dynamics in the Classroom." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 18 (2): 126-134.

### MY ROLE AS A PROFESSOR

As the professor, I am responsible for creating a safe, creative, and (maybe) fun environment for you to learn in. As a professor I am not responsible for telling you “what to study for the test.” I will not go over every piece of information that you will need to know for the exams or quizzes. If you hoped that I, as the professor, would be a resource for you to find how you can put out the least amount of energy while still earning a good grade, I am probably not the professor you are looking for. I respect you and your other time commitments enough to share this with you up front.

### YOUR ROLE AS A STUDENT

As a student in this class your primary responsibility is to come to class prepared. That includes doing the assigned reading and taking the time to think about how it relates to your experiences and the world around you. In class you are expected to give all of us your attention and participate in class and group activities and discussion. To put it simply, if you hope to do well in this class you have to be an *active* participant in your education.

### WHAT TO EXPECT DURING CLASS TIME

In class we will talk about the main ideas discussed in the assigned readings and then apply them with activities, discussions, etc. We may also extend the discussions beyond what the readings covered by watching a video or having a guest speaker. Our class time is a supplement to the readings not a replacement for doing the readings.

### USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY DURING CLASS

Because this class is highly interactive and your participation is important to its success, the use of personal laptops, iPods, and cell phones during class is prohibited.

### ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Please be advised of the Student Code of Conduct as published in the KSU Undergraduate Catalog. Section III addresses issues on academic honesty, including cheating and plagiarism, among other violations. If you are unsure of how *plagiarism* is defined or if you are not clear on what “academic honesty” means, go to the catalog and familiarize yourself. Ignorance of the policy is not an acceptable excuse! Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be investigated and if confirmed, will receive a zero on the assignment and potentially fail the course.

### STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

If you are a student with a documented disability, come & talk to me as soon as possible (either after class or during my office hours) to discuss accommodations.

### QUIZZES:

- There will be random quizzes over the assigned readings (aka pop quizzes). Students who write their notes (in a notebook, folder, etc) can use the notes on the quizzes.
- All quizzes averaged together will be 10% of your final grade.
- Quizzes CANNOT be made up if missed due to lateness or missing class.

### EXAMINATIONS:

- There will be 4 exams (this includes a cumulative final)
  - Exams will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, and essay.



**BE ON TIME FOR EXAMS!** Students who are late for class on exam day **will not** be allowed to take the exam if they arrive after the *first* student has already turned in her/his exam. This policy is to put in place to ensure academic honesty.

### PAPER & PRESENTATION:

- Each student will be responsible for writing one 8 – 10 page paper. To receive credit for the paper, the student must present their research to the class.
- See the last page of the syllabus for directions regarding the paper and presentation.
- There will be (optional) checkpoints throughout the semester for the student to submit paper topics, drafts, or schedule meetings to get feedback on their topic (shown on the course outline as “paper advisement day”). Check

the course outline for dates. If a student prefers to participate in this, submit copies of the paper (topic, draft, information about research, etc) and I will return it within one week's time.

**Grading:**

Exam 1 = 15%  
Exam 2 = 15%  
Exam 3 = 20%  
Final Exam = 20%  
Quizzes = 10%  
Paper + Presentation = 20%

Final Grade:

A = 90 – 100    B = 80 – 89

C = 70 – 79

D = 60 – 69

F = 59 & below

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**Keep Track of Your Own Grade!!**

Exam 1: (your grade x .15) = a

Exam 2: (your grade x .15) = b

Exam 3: (your grade x .20) = c

Final Exam: (your grade x .20) = d

(Average grade all quizzes x .10) = e

Paper + pres: (your grade x .20) = f

Your Final Course Grade= a + b + c + d + e + f (out of 100)

★ Last Day to Withdraw with “W” is October 11.

## COURSE OUTLINE

★I reserve the right to change the syllabus; however, students will be notified in advance either in class or on D2L

☞denotes readings on D2L

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
M 8.19	Introduction to Course		
W 8.21	Overview of Sociology		
M 8.26	What is Sociology of Religion?	Readings 1 – 4 ☞“The Tnevnoc Cult”	
W 8.28	Methods for studying religion	☞“Scientific Studies...” ☞“Insiders, Outsiders, Advocates...”	
M 9.2	<b>NO CLASS: LABOR DAY</b>		
W 9.4	Organization of Religion	☞“The Public Perception of Cults...” ☞“Subsidizing Religious...Groups...”	
M 9.9	In-class activity (counts as quiz grade)		Paper advisement day
W 9.11	Ritual, Belief, and Experience	Readings 5 – 7	
M 9.16	Religious Authority New Religious Movements	Readings 28 – 30 Readings 31 – 34	
W 9.18	Secularization	Readings 24 – 27	
M 9.23	<b>EXAM 1</b>		
W 9.25	Religious Socialization and Identity	☞“Religious Socialization...” ☞“Religious Identity & Institutions...”	Paper advisement day
M 9.30	Religious Socialization, cont'd	In-class documentary	
W 10.2	Family and Religion	☞“Work, Family, & Religious...” ☞“Atheists & Agnostics Negotiate...” ☞“The Couple That Prays Together...”	
M 10.7	Immigration, Race, and Religion	Readings 8 – 11 ☞“Church Culture as Strategy...”	
W 10.9	Social Class and Religion	Readings 16 – 19	Paper advisement day
M 10.14	Gender and Religion	Readings 12 – 15	
W 10.16	Sexuality and Religion	Readings 20 – 23 ☞“Religion & Adolescent Sexual Activities...”	
M 10.21	Gender, Sexuality, and Religion	In-class documentary	Paper advisement day
W 10.23	<b>EXAM 2</b>		
M 10.28	Religion, Politics, and Social Change	Readings 35 – 38 ☞ “The God Strategy” ☞ “Civil Religion in America”	Sign up for presentations today; if not in class, you will be assigned to day/time available
W 10.30	Religion and Politics	In-class documentary	
M 11.4	Religious Violence	Readings 39 – 43	
W 11.6	Religion and Globalization	Readings 44 – 46	
M 11.11	<b>EXAM 3</b>		
W 11.13	Presentations Begin		<b>Papers Due!!</b>
M 11.18	Presentations		
W 11.20	Presentations		
M 11.25	Presentations		
W 11.27	<b>NO CLASS: FALL BREAK</b>		
M 12.2	Presentations End		
W 12.4	Review for Final Exam		
M 12.9	<b>FINAL EXAM 6:00 – 8:00</b>		

## Paper and Presentation Information

As you will have learned throughout the semester, the goal of social scientific research is to locate, describe, and analyze social phenomena. Sociologists are interested in how social facts are produced and reproduced, and the consequences of such reproduction on communities and society at large. In particular, Sociologists of Religion are interested in how religion as an institution and/or “as lived” contributes to the social construction of the realities we live.

Throughout the class you have also learned about the importance of using a sociological imagination to critically analyze the role of religion in society; how religion intersects with identity, race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality; religion as a group phenomenon; and how religion works with other social institutions (family, religion). Within this general sociological framework of analysis and in light of your own empirical interests in the Sociology of Religion, students are allowed to choose from one of the following options:

- A. Research paper: This option allows the student to choose a topic within the Sociology of Religion and explore it more thoroughly.
  - This is more of a literature review than a “research” paper.
  - Find a topic that interests you within the sociology of religion (I prefer that you discuss it with me before you do a great deal of research).
  - You need at least 6 scholarly sources. You’re welcome to use the excerpts in the book, any assigned articles, journals, and books. \*see list of journals that might be useful in your search
- B. Current Events paper: This option allows the student to choose a topic that has been in the news (within the past year—no later than August 20, 2012) and explain it from a sociological perspective.
  - What does (CURRENT SOCIAL ISSUE) tell us about the way our society works and the role religion plays in maintaining or challenging social structures?
  - What theories can be applied to this (CURRENT SOCIAL ISSUE) to explain its relevance to the sociology of religion?

### PAPER EXPECTATIONS:

The student is expected to engage in a critical analysis by demonstrating knowledge of the concepts and topics covered in class. The paper should introduce the reader to the topic before the in-depth analysis. It has a CLEAR THESIS STATEMENT (Every paper should have the following: “In this paper I address/argue/analyze...”). The arguments presented are complex and not mere descriptions or summaries. It integrates class readings and lectures in a clear, comprehensive, and creative way. The paper addresses ALL the points. It is spellchecked and all works are cited properly. It also has a bibliography of the works cited.

NOTE: Wikipedia, websites, magazines (i.e., *Times Magazine*, *News Week*, and the *National Geographic*), and newspapers ARE NOT considered scholarly sources and will not be counted as such. You may choose to use the above material ONLY as additional supportive evidence. By scholarly sources I refer to academic journal articles and books. Email me if you are not sure you are using the right sources.

Websites that contain relevant (and academic) information that can be used for supplemental material:

- The Association of Religion Data Archives <http://www.thearda.com/>
- Pew Research Center <http://www.pewresearch.org/>
- Hartford Institute for Religion Research <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/index.html>
- Association for the Sociology of Religion <http://www.sociologyofreligion.com>
- Society for the Scientific Study of Religion <http://www.ssrweb.org/>
- Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry <http://www.assj.org/>

### Directions:

- The paper should be 8 – 10 pages (not including the reference/bibliography)
- I’ve posted an ASA Style Guide on D2L which you should use for citations and the reference page.
- Everyone will need to submit an electronic version of the paper through [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) AND a copy in class on Wednesday November 13. **please make sure your paper is stapled; no folder**
- The paper should be double-spaced, with standard one-inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman

PRESENTATION:

- To receive credit for the paper, each student is expected to give a **brief** presentation to the class on their paper research and findings.
  - Students should plan to spend 5 – 10 minutes presenting their research to the class.
  - Presentations **MUST** include a handout of the main points; however, power point presentations are optional and at the discretion of the student.
  - Sign up for presentations will be in class on October 28. If a student is absent from class, s/he will be given what date/time is available.
  - Presentation material is subject to be part of the final exam; therefore, students are expected to come to class during everyone's presentation and take notes.
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