

Spring, 2009
Monday 4:10 – 6:50

Professor: Benjamin Zablocki
Room B-202, Lucy Stone Hall

SOCIOLOGY 603: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this seminar, we will explore religion as it is seen and studied by sociologists. Sociology of religion is a term that includes three distinct but interrelated areas of investigation: (1) the way religion (and specific religions) influence all aspects of secular society; (2) the way societies and cultures shape and influence specific religions and religious behaviors and (3) the complex relationships between the spiritual lives of human beings and the institutionalized forms of representation of the sacred that are found in all known religions.

The first three weeks of the seminar will be devoted to defining the concept of religion, locating its various manifestations in time and space, and exploring the methods used by sociologists to study it. The following three weeks will be devoted to the three major theoretical perspectives within which most sociologists of religion work: secularization theory, social exchange theory (the so-called “new paradigm”, and the social psychology of religion. During the next three weeks of the course, we will look at the legitimacy of religious authority, fundamentalism, and pluralism in North America and South Asia. The final four weeks will focus on other specific topics within the sociology of religion: religious deviance; gender and race; health, the life-course, and death (and beliefs about life after death); and, finally, the relationships between religion and political authority during the era of globalization.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The main requirement in this seminar is to write a term paper— based on your own research and thinking— on any topic within the sociology of religion. You have very broad scope in choosing the topic for your paper— the only real criterion being that it be a topic that genuinely interests you within the sociology of religion. The length of the paper (very approximately) should be about 20 double spaced pages. A one to two page written proposal for the paper is due no later than March 9. Please feel free to discuss your evolving topic ideas for the paper both before and after the proposal is submitted. The paper itself is due on May 4.

You will also need to prepare a 15-20 minute class presentation (due May 4) based on your paper and be prepared to answer questions from the class about it.

An important secondary requirement is active weekly participation in the seminar. I'm keeping this deliberately vague until I see what the class is like in terms both of size and distribution of interests. But it will involve preparing questions about the readings each week and taking responsibility for leading class discussions from time to time.

Your grade will be determined as follows: term paper, 70%; discussion leading and participation, 30%.

BOOKS TO PURCHASE (AVAILABLE AT LIVINGSTON BOOKSTORE, ALL PAPERBACK)

Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*
Stark and Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*
Bainbridge, *Sociology of Religious Movements*
Turner, *The Ritual Process*

For short but pretty accurate statements about a great many topics in the sociology of religion, put *the Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*— edited by William Swatos into your web browser:
<http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/>

READINGS WEEK BY WEEK

Most of the readings for the course come from the paperback books you will purchase or else are available to you in electronic (cd) format supplied by the instructor. Readings not found on the cd will be distributed later in the semester.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are not expected to do all or even most of the readings listed for each week's topic. As the course progresses, I will guide you as to which readings are most essential. The others are to serve as reference for you to delve more deeply into topics in which you have greater interest.

1. JANUARY 26– WHAT IS RELIGION?

The universality of religion; its relationship to magic, science, and philosophy; psychogenic theories of the origin of religion; sociogenic theories; cognitive/evolutionary theories; foundations in myth, ritual, and revelation.

Durkheim, Emile. 1915. "Religion as Society's Self Worship" from *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Marx, Karl. "Contributions to the Critique [of Hegel]" (abridged version). There is also a fuller version of this piece on the disk in case you are interested in reading it.

- Freud, Sigmund. 1958. "Moses and Monotheistic Religion" in Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*. New York: Vintage
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Religion as a Cultural System" in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1948. "Death and the Reintegration of the Group" in *Magic, Science, and Religion*. New York: Doubleday.
- Ellison, Christopher G. and Sherkat, Darren E. 1995. "Is Sociology the Core Discipline for the Scientific Study of Religion?" *Social Forces*, vol. 73: 1255-1266.
- Bellah, Robert. 1970. "Between Religion and Social Science" in *Beyond Belief: Essays on Religion in a Post-Transitional World*. New York: Harper Row.
- Otto, Rudolf. 1964. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1959. "Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred" and "Sacred Time and Myths" in *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Atran, Scott. 2002. *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

2. FEBRUARY 2– THE COMPARATIVE/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

History and synchronicity of the major world religions; geographical origins and diffusion; boundaries; demographic growth.

Weber, Max. *Sociology of Religion*. "Forward" by Ann Swidler & chs. 1,2,3

Weber contra Marx in 1958 *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner's

Asad, Talal. 1993. "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category" in Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Greeley, Andrew M. 1979. "The Sociology of American Catholics". *Annual Review of Sociology*, 5: 91-111.

Neusner, Jacob and Lazerwitz, Bernard. 1992. "Judaism in Contemporary America" in *A Short History of Judaism* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Mensching, Gustav. 1959. "Folk and Universal Religion" in *Die Religion*. Stuttgart: Curt E. Schwab.

Lawson, Thomas E. 1990. *Religions of Africa: Traditions in Transformation*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

3. FEBRUARY 9– OBSERVATION AND MEASUREMENT

Participant Observation by unbelievers; the validity of self-reports accounting for religious experiences; the East-West typology; church-sect typologies; variations on universal religious themes; measuring religiosity; intrinsic vs. extrinsic religion.

American Religion Data Archives– <http://www.thearda.com/> (browse for soc of religion data sets)

Zablocki, Benjamin. 2001. "Vulnerability and Objectivity in the Participant Observation of the Sacred". *Religion and the Social Order*, vol. 9: 225-245.

Lieberman, Kenneth. 2001. "Ethnographic Practice and the Critical Spirit" in *Toward Reflexive Ethnography: Participating, Observing, Narrating*, David G. Bromley and Lewis F. Carter, eds. New York: JAI.

Orr, H. Allen. 2006. "The God Project" in *The New Yorker*, April 3.

David Yamane, 2000. "Narrative and Religious Experience" *Sociology of Religion* 61:171-189

Hout, Michael. 2003. "Demographic Methods for the Sociology of Religion" in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Michele Dillon, ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wuthnow, Robert. 2003. "Studying Religion, Making it Sociological" in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Michele Dillon, ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Glock, Charles Y. and Stark, Rodney. "A Study of Religion in American Life". Survey Research Center, University of California-Berkeley.

Troeltsch, Ernest. 1931. "Sect-Type and Church-Type Contrasted" in *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. London: Allen and Unwin.

4. FEBRUARY 16– SECULARIZATION THEORY (THE MACRO/HISTORICAL APPROACH)

Evidence for and against secularization theory; American exceptionalism; encroachment of the profane upon the sacred

Wallis, Roy and Steve Bruce. 1991. "Secularization: Trends, Data, and Theory." *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 3: 1-31.

Yamane, David. 1997. "Secularization on Trial: In Defense of a Neosecularization Paradigm," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36: 109-122.

Bruce, Steve. 1999. *Choice and Religion: A Critique of Rational Choice Theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bruce, Steve. 1998. "Cathedrals to Cults: The Evolving Forms of the Religious Life" in Paul Heelas (ed.) *Religion, Modernity, and Post-Modernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Berger, Peter. 1999. "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview" in Peter Berger (ed.) *Desecularization of the World*. Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Douglas, Mary. 1966. "Secular Defilement" in Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*. New York: Praeger.

Ellison, Christopher G. and Darren E. Sherkat. 1995. "The 'Semi-Involuntary Institution' Revisited: Regional Variations in Church Participation among Black Americans". *Social Forces*, vol. 74: 1415-1437.

5. FEBRUARY 23– THE NEW PARADIGM (THE SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY APPROACH)

The rational choice paradigm; controversies and limitations; denominational competition– the struggle for market share; brand loyalty and socio-spiritual niches; why strict churches are strong.

Stark, Rodney and William Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*. New Brunswick: Rutgers U. Press (read entire book).

Iannaccone, Lawrence R. 1994. "Why Strict Churches are Strong." *American Journal of Sociology* 99:1180-1211.

Warner, R. Stephen. 1997. "Convergence toward the New Paradigm: A Case of Induction" in *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment*, Lawrence A. Young, ed. New York: Routledge.

6. March 2– BELIEVING AND BELONGING (THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH)

Joining leaving and staying; interaction between beliefs and relational ties; religious experience; religious behavior; religiosity; zeal fanaticism and true belief; apostasy and becoming an ex.

Turner, Victor. 1995. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. San Francisco: Aldine.

Weber, Max. *Sociology of Religion*. Chs. 9, 10, 11.

Zablocki, Benjamin and John Martin. 1999. "Believing and Belonging" (unpublished)

Granqvist, Pehr and Lee Kirkpatrick. 2004. "Religious Conversion and Perceived Childhood Attachment: A Meta-Analysis" *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 14:223-250.

Roof, Wade Clark and McKinney, William. 1987. "The Demography of Religious Change" in *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Lofland, John and Stark, Rodney. 1965. "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective". *American Sociological Review*, vol. 30.

Sherkat, Darren E. and Wilson, John. 1995. "Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in Religious Markets: An Examination of Religious Switching and Apostasy". *Social Forces*, vol. 73: 993-1026.

Roof, Wade Clark. 1981. "Alienation and Apostasy" in *In Gods We Trust: New Patterns of Religious Pluralism in America*. T. Robbins and D. Anthony, eds. New Brunswick: Transaction Press.

Hoge, Dean R. 1981. *Converts, Dropouts, Returnees: A Study of Religious Change among Catholics*. New York: The Pilgrim Press.

7. MARCH 9– RELIGIOUS LEGITIMACY: CHARISMA, DISCIPLESHIP, AND ROUTINIZATION

The birth of religions; crises of succession; crises of authentication; theories of charismatic authority and discipleship

Weber, Max. *Sociology of Religion* ch 4, 5

Zablocki, Benjamin. 1980. *excerpt from Alienation and Charisma: A Study of Contemporary American Communes*. New York: The Free Press.

Oakes, Len. 1997. *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Lindholm, Charles. 1990. *Charisma*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Toth, Michael. 1981. *The Theory of the Two Charismas*. Washington, DC: University Press of America.

Zablocki, Benjamin. 2000. "The Birth and Death of Religious Movements." (unpublished)

Dawson, Lorne 2006. "Psychopathology and Charisma" *Nova Religio*

MARCH 16—NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

8. MARCH 23– FUNDAMENTALISM AND PLURALISM IN NORTH AMERICA

The Protestant Ethic; fundamentalism; utopianism; millennialism, religious radicalism; effects of religion on political and economic attitudes behaviors and status

Bainbridge, William Sims. 1997. *The Sociology of Religious Movements*. New York: Routledge.

Weber, Max *Sociology of Religion* ch 15

- Weber, Max. 1958. "Asceticism and the Spirit of Capitalism" in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*. New York: Scribner's.
- Bainvel, S.J. 1979. *Is There Salvation Outside the Catholic Church?* Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers
- Bloom, Harold. 1992. *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Kirkpatrick, Lee A., Hood, Ralph W. and Hartz, Gary. 1991. "Fundamentalist Religion Conceptualized in Terms of Rokeach's Theory of the Open and Closed Mind: New Perspectives on Some Old Ideas". *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 3: 157-179.
- Zablocki, Benjamin. 1971. *The Joyful Community: An Account of the Bruderhof, A Communal Movement Now in its Third Generation*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Eisenstadt, S.N. 1967. "The Protestant Ethic Thesis." *Diogenes*, no. 59, 25-46.
- Marx, Gary T. 1967. "Religion: Opiate or Inspiration of Civil Rights Militancy Among Negroes?" *American Sociological Review*, vol. 32.
- Hunt, Larry L. and Hunt, Janet G. 1977. "Black Religion as Both Opiate and Inspiration of Civil Rights Militance: Putting Marx's Data to the Test". *Social Forces*, vol. 56.
- Miller, Arthur H. and Wattenberg, Martin P. 1984. "Politics from the Pulpit: Religiosity and the 1980 Elections". *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. 48: 301-317
- Brasher, Brenda E. 2001. *Give Me that Online Religion*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

9. MARCH 30—FUNDAMENTALISM AND PLURALISM IN SOUTH ASIA

Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism in South Asian societies; religious nationalism; religious tolerance; evolving role of women in these religions

- Weber, Max. *Sociology of Religion* ch. 16
- Smith, David. 2003. "Modernity and Hindu Nationalism" in David Smith (ed.) *Hinduism and Modernity*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Esposito, John. 2002. *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*. Oxford: Oxford U. Press.
- Dalton, Dennis. 2003. *Gandhi: Selected Political Writings*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
- Lawrence, Bruce. 1998. "From Fundamentalism to Fundamentalisms" in Paul Heelas (ed.) *Religion, Modernity, and Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harris, Marvin. 1974. "Pig Lovers and Pig Haters" in Marvin Harris, *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*. New York: Random House.
- Van der Veer, Peter. 1994. *Religious Nationalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Falk, Monica. 2000. "Women In Between: Becoming Religious Persons in Thailand" in Findley Ellison (ed.) *Women's Buddhism, Buddhism's Women*. Boston: Wisdom Publishers.

10. APRIL 6– THE SEVEN SINS OF RELIGIOUS DEVIANCE: TERRORISM, VIOLENCE, SEDUCTION, BRAINWASHING, INTOLERANCE, FRAUD, AND CLERGY MALFEASANCE

Bad religions vs. religions behaving badly; deviance in religious leadership; why religions sometimes turn to violence; the brainwashing debate; fanaticism and true belief.

“Final Instructions to the Hijackers of September 11, Found in the Luggage of Mohammed Atta” in Bruce Lincoln. 2003. *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, Miriam. 1998. *Heaven’s Harlots: My Fifteen Years as a Sacred Prostitute in the Children of God Cult*. New York: William Morrow.

Zablocki, Benjamin. 2001. “Toward a Demystified and Disinterested Scientific Theory of Brainwashing” in *Misunderstanding Cults*, Benjamin Zablocki and Thomas Robbins, eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hall, John R. 2003. “Religion and Violence: Social Processes in Comparative Perspective” in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Michele Dillon, ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Balch, Robert W. and Langdon, Stephan. 1998. “How the Problem of Malfeasance Gets Overlooked in Studies of New Religions: An Examination of the AWARE Study of the Church Universal and Triumphant” in *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, Anson Shupe, ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Rochford, Jr., E. Burke. 1998. “Reactions of Hare Krishna Devotees to Scandals of Leaders’ Misconduct” in *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, Anson Shupe, ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Krebs, Theresa. 1998. “Church Structures that Facilitate Pedophilia Among Roman Catholic Clergy” in *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, Anson Shupe, ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Jenkins, Phillip. 1998. “Creating a Culture of Clergy Deviance” in *Wolves Within the Fold: Religious Leadership and Abuses of Power*, Anson Shupe, ed. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Kimball, Charles. 2002. *When Religion Becomes Evil*. San Francisco: Harper.

Stern, Jessica. 2003. *Terror in the Name of God*. San Francisco: Harper.

Hoffmann, John P. And Stephen J. Bahr. 2005. “Crime/Deviance” in *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, Helen Rose Ebaugh ed. New York: Springer.

11. APRIL 13– GENDER, RACE, AND RELIGION

Gender differences in religiosity and religious commitment; gender and the clergy; race and ethnic differences in religious behavior and expression; Sunday morning segregation

De Vaus, David, and Ian McAllister. 1987. "Gender Differences in Religion." *American Sociological Review* 52:472-481.

Greeley, Andrew M. 1981. "The Womanliness of God" in *The Religious Imagination*. Chicago: William Sadlier, Inc.

Feltey, Katherine M. and Poloma, Margaret M. 1991. "From Sex Differences to Gender Role Beliefs: Exploring Effects on Six Dimensions of Religiosity". *Sex Roles*, vol. 25.

Nason-Clark, Nancy and Barbara Fisher-Townsend. 2005. "Gender" in *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, Helen Rose Ebaugh ed. New York: Springer.

Berger, Helen. 1999. *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

Bartkowski, John P. And Todd L. Matthews. 2005. "Race/Ethnicity" in *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, Helen Rose Ebaugh ed. New York: Springer.

Simpson, David et al. 2008. "Sex and Gender Differences in Religiousness and Spirituality" *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 36:42-52.

Maselko, Joanna and Laura Kubzansky. 2006. "Gender Differences in Religious Practices, Spiritual Experiences, and Health: Results from the US General Social Survey" *Social Science and Medicine* 62: 2848-2860.

Gruber, Mayer. 1992. excerpts from *The Motherhood of God*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

12. APRIL 20– HEALTH, AGE, DYING, LIFE AFTER DEATH

The effect of religious belief and practice on physical and psychological health; religion through the lifecourse; stability of beliefs over time; religious comfort in illness; religion in the last year of life

Strawbridge, William et al. 1997. "Frequent Attendance at Religious Services and Mortality over 28 Years." *American Journal of Public Health*, 87:957-961.

Idler, Ellen et al, 2001. "Patterns of Religious Practice and Belief in the Last Year of Life," *Journal of Gerontology*.

Hummer, Robert A. et al. 1999. "Religious Involvement and U.S. Adult Mortality." *Demography* 36: 273-285.

Shand, Jack Douglas. 1990. "A Forty-Year Follow-up of the Religious Beliefs and Attitudes of a Sample of Amherst College Grads". *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, 2: 117-136.

Eliassen, A. Henry, John Taylor, and Donald A. Lloyd. 2005. "Subjective Religiosity and Depression in the Transition to Adulthood". *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 44: 187-199.

Kirkpatrick, Lee A. 1997. "A Longitudinal Study of Changes in Religious Belief and Behavior". *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, vol. 36: 207-217.

Hackney, Charles H. and Sanders, Glenn S. 2003. "Religiosity and Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis of Recent Studies". *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 42: 43-55.

Copen, Casey and Merrill Silverstein. 2008. "Transmission of Religious Beliefs across Generations: Do Grandparents Matter?" *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*.

13. APRIL 27– CIVIL RELIGION AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF RELIGION

The demise of state religions; the globalization of ethnic religions; the varieties of civil religion.

Bellah, Robert. 1985. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Liebman, Charles S. and Don-Yehiya, Eliezer. 1983. *Civil Religion in Israel: Traditional Judaism and Political Culture in the Jewish State*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Podus, Deborah. 2000. "Should Churches be Tax Exempt? (...And How Do You Know a Church When You See One?)" in *Introduction to Sociology*, George Ritzer, ed. New York: McGraw Hill.

Robertson, Roland. 1989. "Globalization, Politics, and Religion" in James Beckford and Thomas Luckman (eds.) *The Changing Faces of Religion*. London: Sage.

Berger, Peter. 2002. "Globalization and Religion" *Hedgehog Review* vol 4 Summer

Beyer, Peter. 2005. "Globalization" in *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*. Helen Rose Ebaugh, ed. New York: Springer.

Burnouf, Eugene. 1994. "The Construction of Buddhism" in Stephen Batchelor (ed.) *The Awakening of the West*. Berkeley: Parallax Press.

14. MAY 4—COURSE WRAP-UP & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS