

Sociology of Religion
Bunche 1209B
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45 pm

Assistant Professor Jeffrey Guhin
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 2-3 pm (and by appointment)
Set up an office hours appointment here: <https://slotted.co/3qclm7s8>

What You Can Expect

This is going to be a great quarter. If you're here because you're interested in sociology, or religion, or the sociology of religion, you came to the right class. You also came to the right class if you want to explore the idea of religion within your own life or the lives of people very different from you. We'll be reading books and articles that have been part of important conversations about what religion is, what it does, and how it relates to other parts of social life. One of the most important questions to which we'll regularly return is whether or not we can meaningfully study a category called 'religion' at all.

Attendance, Absences, and Participation

I will take attendance at lecture using a phone app, Poll Everywhere, which we will also use for class participation. You can miss no more than three lectures. Teaching Assistants will take attendance at section. If you miss one section, it's not a big deal, but after that it will affect your grade. If you need to miss more than what we've discussed here, please be in touch with us.

Also, part of your participation grade will entail not using laptops in class. If you have a disability or some other need to use a laptop, please see me and you'll be able to do so. I apologize for the extra work this may give you if you do have to use a laptop because of your disability, but it's simply something I have to until your classmates stop watching ESPN, streaming Netflix, and checking their dating profiles.

Contacting Me and Office Hours

My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 2 to 3, but sometimes I have to be out of the office. You're free to e-mail me to set up an appointment. Here's where you can sign up for office hours: <https://slotted.co/3qclm7s8>

The Books

We'll be reading four books plus some other materials that will be available at the course website. The books are:

The Genealogy of Morals by Friedrich Nietzsche (tr. Adrian DelCaro)

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life by Emile Durkheim (tr. Karen Fields)

Religious Experience Reconsidered by Ann Taves

Islam is a Foreign Country by Zareena Grewal

The Work Load

Readings: You should not have more than three hours of reading for each class, which, depending on the text, usually comes out to between 40 to 60 pages.

Ethnography: This is the most important part of the course. Near the beginning of the semester, you'll choose a religious or quasi-religious site in the area where you can regularly conduct ethnographic fieldwork. You're required to make at least four field visits to this site for a minimum of ten total hours on the site. You also need to write field notes about each of these experiences, all of which should be at least three double-spaced pages (though more is better). We'll talk more about what field notes and ethnography entail later. Section attendance is especially important for this class because that is where you and your classmates will discuss your ethnographic work.

You will send each of the field notes as you write them to your TA via e-mail. In your final paper, you'll need to write a 8 to 10 page essay that incorporates some of the readings from the semester with your fieldwork. Your TAs and I will be in touch throughout the semester about this project, which I hope will lead to a product you're excited about. I recommend you do more than just four days of observation and four units of field notes; however, four is all that is required. You are expected to integrate your literature review (below) into this ethnography. The project is due on Saturday June 10 at 11:59 pm.

Final: You'll have a pretty straightforward final with a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. If you've read and studied a bit, you'll be fine. The final will be Thursday, June 15, 2017 from 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM.

Literature Review: The literature review should be no shorter than five pages (Garamond or Times New Roman, double space, 1 inch margins) and no longer than ten pages. They should feature at least two authors that we discussed in class and at least four additional sources related to your field site. The literature review should be e-mailed via turnitin.com on Saturday May 27 at 11:59 pm. Late assignments will be deducted one letter grade each day. Literature Reviews will be graded as follows:

A +/- (100/95/91 percent): A coherent, well-organized argument with original insights into meaningful differences and similarities between the authors and texts. Expands significantly beyond lecture and session discussion. Superior use of primary sources to make arguments. No errors, minor or major. Excellent (though not necessarily perfect) style, grammar, and form.

B +/- (90/85/81): A good though imperfect argument with a capable description of similarities and differences between the authors and texts. Expands beyond lecture and section discussion. Good style, grammar, and form.

C +/- (80/75/71): A simple comparison that might not necessarily be an argument, but nonetheless adequately describes the similarities and differences between the texts. Expands at least slightly from discussion in lecture. Inconsistent use of primary sources to make arguments. No major errors though more minor. Adequate style, grammar, and form.

D +/- (70/65/61): An adequate description of similarities and differences that does not significantly advance beyond what was discussed in lecture. Inadequate use of primary source citations. Major errors. Poor style, grammar, and form.

F (60): An inadequate description with no argument. Very poor style, grammar, and form. No primary sources.

Incomplete: (0 percent): Not turned in or plagiarized.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Please note I turn in all plagiarism and cheating to the dean without exception. Please also note that a 60 for a terrible paper is much better for your grade than a 0 for a plagiarized paper. Plagiarism is at once a lie and a theft. Please do not lie, and please do not steal. For more information on plagiarism and cheating at UCLA, please see the UCLA student code of conduct:

http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/UCLACodeOfConduct_Rev030416.pdf

How it Works Out:

15%: Section Attendance and Participation

10%: Lecture Attendance and Participation

20%: Field Notes

20%: Literature Review

10%: Ethnography Project

25%: Final

Contacting Me

Please let me know if you need help with the class or if you're confused (about the class that is, though you're welcome to talk to me about more general existential confusion; however, UCLA employs people much more qualified to discuss this with you than I). You can contact me at the email above and in my office hours. We will be in touch about your ethnography throughout the semester. If you contact me, I will get back to you within 48 hours. Don't send a "where are you? the world is ending!" e-mail until 48 hours have passed, in which case, generally speaking, I will have either e-mailed you back or the world will have ended.

The Schedule

Week One: What is Religion?

Tuesday April 4

Introduction

Thursday April 6

"Religion, Religions, Religious" by Jonathan Z. Smith

"Religion as Theoretical Case, Lens, and Resource for Critique: Three Ways Social Theory Can Learn from the Study of Religion" by Daniel Winchester

Honors Reading

Winnifred Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, pp. 1-31.

Week Two:

Tuesday April 11

Genealogy of Morals: First Essay

Thursday April 13

Genealogy of Morals: Second Essay

Honors Reading

Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 21-71

Week Three:

Tuesday April 18

Genealogy of Morals: Third Essay

Thursday April 20

Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1-31)

Honors Reading

Jeffrey Guhin and Jonathan Wyrzten, "The Violences of Knowledge: Edward Said, Sociology, and Post-Orientalist Reflexivity"

Week Four:

Tuesday April 25

Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion* (1-59)

Thursday April 27

Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion* (138-183))

Honors Reading

Robert Bellah, "Max Weber and world-denying love: a look at the historical sociology of religion"

Week Five:

Tuesday May 2

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (1-44)

Thursday May 4

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (303-373)

Honors Reading

Ann Warfield Rawls: "Durkheim's Epistemology: The Neglected Argument"

Week Six:

Tuesday May 9

The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (374-448)

Thursday May 11

Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (36-50; 160-172; 196-220)

Honors Reading

Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, pp. 1-38

Week Seven:

Tuesday May 16

Clifford Geertz "Religion as a Cultural System"

Thursday May 18

Talal Asad "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category"

Honors Reading

Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam"

Week Eight:

Tuesday May 23

Religious Experience Reconsidered (introduction, chapters 1)

Thursday May 25

Religious Experience Reconsidered (chapters 2-3)

Honors Reading

David Sloan Wilson, *Darwin's Cathedral: Evolution, Religion, and the Nature of Society*, pp. 1-46

Week Nine:

Tuesday May 30

Religious Experience Reconsidered (chapters 4, conclusion)

Thursday June 1

Islam is a Foreign Country (introduction, chapters 1-2)

Honors Reading

Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age*, pp. 1-44

Week Ten:

Tuesday June 6

Islam is a Foreign Country (chapters 3-5)

Thursday June 8

Islam is a Foreign Country (chapters 6-7, epilogue)

Honors Reading

“American Muslim Women’s Activism in the Twenty-First Century” from Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution, The Veil’s Resurgence, from the Middle East to America*, pp. 265-306.