

## **Sociology of Religion**

Dodd 121

Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45 pm

Assistant Professor Jeffrey Guhin

Haines Hall Room 296

[guhin@soc.ucla.edu](mailto:guhin@soc.ucla.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 2-3 pm (and by appointment)

Set up an office hours appointment here: <https://www.slotted.co/guhinfall2017>

### **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. Yet probably the most important part of this quarter will be the ethnography you conduct on a religious or quasi-religious group.

### **Attendance, Absences, Participation, and Quizzes**

Every day will begin with a multiple-choice quiz with five questions. If you are late to class or absent, you cannot make up the quiz. I will drop your three lowest quizzes.

I will also regularly use the Poll Everywhere app as part of class, and it will count for class participation. You must register yourself on Poll Everywhere.

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.

### **Contacting Me and Office Hours**

My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 2 to 3 pm. You're free to e-mail me to set up an appointment at some other time or if you'd like to talk for longer than the 15 minute slots. Drop-by visits are welcome, but those with an appointment have priority. Here's where you can sign up for office hours: <https://www.slotted.co/guhinfall2017>

### **The Readings**

Nearly all the readings will be available online except for Grewal and Elisha, which are available at the bookstore.

## **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. Reading Questions will be provided for each reading on the class website.

**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 three field visits to this site for a minimum of nine total hours on the site or with people from 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 10 to 15 page essay that incorporates some of the your literature review with your fieldwork (you can write for more pages if you wish but remember that more quantity is not necessarily more quality). This is *building upon your literature review and fieldnotes; it is not a totally new paper*. The final paper should have the following sections (based on the Winchester article):

- 1) Abstract
- 2) Introduction
- 3) Theoretical Literature Review
- 4) Research Settings and Methodology
- 5) Arguments
- 6) Conclusion
- 7) Bibliography (ASR formatting)

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 three days of observation and three units of field notes; however, three is all that is required. You are expected to integrate your literature review (described below) into this ethnography. The project is due on **Thursday December 14, 2017 at 11:59 pm. Late papers will not be accepted.**

## **Literature Review**

Your literature review should be an analysis of at least two of the readings we covered in class and then four secondary sources related to your field site. The literature review should have a specific argument and not simply be a repetition of the lectures or a summary of your sources. You will then integrate your literature review with your field notes to produce your ethnography.

## **Field notes Expectations and Grading**

Fields notes will be grades out of 5 possible points. Remember that the purpose of the fieldnotes is simply to get as much data as possible. Write down observations, quotes, and insights, but most of what you should be writing is just what you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste. Save the analysis for memos you might write to yourself or the ethnography itself. You should write at

least two double-spaced typed pages. You will be graded on whether you have turned in the full two pages and then the degree to which you provide a sense of place, character, and scene.

**Grading for Literature Review:**

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.

**Grading for Ethnography Project:**

A+/- (100/95/91 percent): A coherent, well-organized argument with original insights that integrate the field notes into an argument pulled from the literature review. Expands significantly beyond lecture and session discussion. Shows impressive use of ethnographic data and ethnographic insight and skill. No errors, minor or major. Excellent (though not necessarily perfect) style, grammar, and form.

B +/- (90/85/81): A good though imperfect argument with above average integration of ethnographic data into the argument from the literature review. Expands beyond lecture and section discussion. Minor errors. Good style, grammar, and form.

C +/- (80/75/71): Weak linking of ethnographic data to argument. 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): Almost non-existent linking of data with an argument (the argument might also be poor). Inadequate use of primary source citations. Major errors. Poor style, grammar, and form.

F (60): Poor ethnographic data with no meaningful 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](http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/UCLACodeOfConduct_Rev030416.pdf) **I expect you to read this website and to know the definition of plagiarism.**

### **How it Works Out:**

15%: Section Attendance and Participation

5%: Lecture Attendance and Participation

15%: Field Notes (5% each)

15%: Literature Review

20%: Ethnography Project

30%: Quizzes

### **The Ethnography Schedule**

Monday October 16, 11:59 pm:	pick a field site
Monday October 30, 11:59 pm:	field notes 1
Monday November 6, 11:59 pm:	field notes 2
Monday November 13, 11:59 pm:	field notes 3
Monday November 20, 11:59 pm:	literature review due
Thursday November 30, 11:59 pm:	literature reviews returned
Thursday December 14, 11:59 pm:	ethnography project due

### **Difficult Topics**

We will discuss some issues that might be personally difficult for you. If you anticipate you might have a problem with something we discuss in class, please let me know.

### **Basic Needs, Safety, and Health**

If at any point in the quarter you feel unsafe or unable to meet your needs for food, housing, or healthy living (physical or mental), please contact the dean and/or a health professional. If these challenges interfere with your ability to complete the class, please let your TA and me know as soon as possible. Please also let the dean or me know if the current political climate makes you feel unsafe or affects your ability to take the class. Please know you are not alone.

### **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 Class Schedule**

### **Week 0: Introduction**

Thursday, Sep 28: What is Religion?

### **Week 1: Ethnographies of Religion**

Tuesday, Oct 3 (Quiz): What Does Religion Do?

Winchester, Daniel. "Embodying the faith: Religious practice and the making of a Muslim moral habitus." *Social Forces* 86.4 (2008): 1753-1780.

Thursday, Oct 5 (Quiz): How is Religion Different?

Yukich, Grace. "Boundary work in inclusive religious groups: Constructing identity at the New York Catholic Worker." *Sociology of Religion* 71.2 (2010): 172-196.

### **Week 2: Ethnographies of Religion (Continued)**

Tuesday, Oct 10: Where is Religion Found?

Pagis, Michal. "Religious Self Constitution: A Relational Perspective." *Religion on the Edge* (2012): 92-114.

Thursday, Oct 12: How Does Belief Work in Religion?

Brophy, Sorchia A. "Orthodoxy as Project: Temporality and Action in an American Protestant Denomination." *Sociology of Religion* 77.2 (2016): 123-143.

### **Week 3: Durkheim**

Tuesday, Oct 17: What is the definition of religion?

Durkheim, *Elementary Forms* (pp. 21- 44)

Thursday, Oct 19: Where does religion come from?

Durkheim, *Elementary Forms* (pp. 207-241)

### **Week 4: Weber**

Tuesday, Oct 24: What is Religion?

"The Social Psychology of the World Religions" (pp. 267-301)

Thursday, Oct 26: How Does Religion Work?

"Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions" (pp. 323-357)

**Week 5: Edward Said**

Tuesday, Oct 31: What is the Danger of Religion?  
Edward Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 1-48

Thursday, Nov 2 (no class)

**Week 6: Geertz and Asad**

Tuesday, Nov 7: What is Religion in Relation to Everything Else?  
Clifford Geertz "Religion as a Cultural System."

Thursday, Nov 9: How is Religion Shaped by Everything Else?  
Talal Asad "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category"

**Week 7: Grewal**

Tuesday, Nov 14: What is Islam in America?  
Zareena Grewal, *Islam is a Foreign Country*, pp. 1-60

Thursday, Nov 16: What Has Islam Been in America?  
Zareena Grewal, *Islam is a Foreign Country*, pp. 61-124

**Week 8: No Class**

Tuesday, Nov 21: (No Class)

Thursday, Nov 23 (No Class)

**Week 9: Grewal; Elisha**

Tuesday, Nov 28: How has Immigration Changed American Islam?  
Zareena Grewal, *Islam is a Foreign Country*, pp. 124-176

Thursday, Nov 30: What are American Evangelicals Trying to Do?  
Omri Elisha, *Moral Ambition*, pp. 1-84

**Week 10: Elisha**

Tuesday, Dec 5: How do Evangelicals Change Society?  
Omri Elisha, *Moral Ambition*, pp. 85-152

Thursday, Dec 7: How does Religion Relate to Morality?  
Omri Elisha, *Moral Ambition*, pp. 153-213