

Sociology of Religion
(The Graduate School Version)
Wednesday, 12 pm – 2:50 pm

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Office Hours: 4-5:30 pm, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (and by appointment)

Welcome and Overview

Hello students! This is going to be a great class. It's going to be a lot of work, but by the end of the quarter, you should have a very good sense of how categories work within social science and a good grounding in some of the major conversations in contemporary sociology of religion and religious studies. A few things are worth pointing out:

1. Each week is a combination of readings, usually a book and two articles. It's a lot of reading, and you might well have to skim the book. It's a skill to get used to, however. It will probably be around nine of hours of reading, plus the three hours of the course for around a twelve hour commitment per week (plus the papers of course). Also (see below) you are only required to read the book for class and will present on an article of your choice.
2. The second half of this course pays particular attention to Islam and the sociology of Islam.
3. This is obviously an online quarter and that's going to affect things. I'd ask you to try to be as present as possible at class, which means having your screen on if you can (I won't ask why you don't have it on, but all things being equal, it does make all of us more engaged). Working from home means all of us are probably going to be more distracted, and so I'd ask that we all try to be patient with each other and with ourselves. If anything comes up, just tell me. You probably have more important things in your life than this class or even the academy, and I want to honor that.

Attendance and Absences

We only have ten meetings. If you miss more than two, it will affect your grade. I won't ask why you're not there (you're an adult!), but if you will need to miss more than two, please do contact me. Please be respectful of each other regarding the use of smart phones and social media and other random websites in class.

Contacting Me and Office Hours.

My office hours are listed above, but I'm always happy to have longer conversations with graduate students, and I'm also always willing to make an appointment if these times don't work.

Class Presentation and Readings

You will all be required to read the book and both articles for each week. Each of you will be required to co-facilitate a conversation about the week's readings for one of the weeks.

Difficult Material

Some material in this class might be hard for some students. If you're worried that's the case, please contact me beforehand.

Academic Honesty

If you're caught plagiarizing, you get an automatic 0 on the paper. I'll also report you to the Dean.

Papers

You will write two papers, with the option of the second paper being an extension and elaboration of the first with the possibility of future publication. The papers should be no shorter than five pages (Garamond, double space, 1-inch margins). They should have a clear argument about the themes we discuss in class, either using your own data or engaging in a theoretical or methodological critique. Papers should be e-mailed to me no later than midnight on the day they're due. Late papers will be deducted one letter grade each day. I'm happy to give extensions on the first paper, but you have to ask me! Extensions on the second paper will be trickier and we might have to talk about an incomplete. Paper One is due Friday November 6 and Paper Two is due Wednesday December 16.

Grading

Paper 1: 30%

Paper 2: 30%

Class Presentations: 15%

Attendance and Participation: 25%

Food or Shelter Insecurity

If you are having trouble finding a safe, long-term place to live and/or if you are having trouble finding enough food, please know there are resources at UCLA. If this is affecting your ability to be a student in this class, let your TA or me know as well. You are not alone.

For UCLA resources for food and shelter insecurity, see UCLA's basic needs website:

<https://www.basicneeds.ucla.edu>

Children and Animals

This is normally the part of the syllabus where I talk about having children and animals in class. Because we'll be online all quarter, and I will be teaching with my own child who might or might not be making noise, I can assure you that we're all in the same boat. Let's all just do our best to ensure we're there for our adorable dependents and do our best to keep them from distracting us or our fellow learners.

Other Things

Life can be very hard, and even more so in our crazy corona virus era. If something is going on in your life that is making it hard for you to go about your day, please know there are resources at UCLA. There are more important things in your life than this class! I want you to take this class seriously, but I want even more for you to have a rich, flourishing life. Please be kind to yourself.

First, if you are experience anxiety, depression, or any other challenge to your mental health, please do see UCLA's Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://www.counseling.ucla.edu>

If you believe you might have a learning disability or need help accommodating your learning disability, please contact the Center for Accessible Education: <https://www.cae.ucla.edu/learning-disabilities-brochure>.

Finally, it's important to stay healthy! Be sure to check in with the Student Health and Wellness Center. <http://www.studenthealth.ucla.edu/CustPages/Insurance.aspx>

I am not the most qualified person to help you with these other elements of your life, but I will do what I can to support you or to help you find support. Please let me know if something in your life is affecting your ability to do this class and we'll see what we can do to help you. You are not alone.

The Syllabus

Week 1: Religion as Culture

1. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* by Emile Durkheim
2. Lofton, Kathryn. "Religion and the Authority in American Parenting." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 84.3 (2016): 806-841.
3. Williams, Rhys H. "Assuming Whiteness in Twentieth-Century American Religion." *Religion Is Raced: Understanding American Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (2020): 74-91.

Week 2: Religion as Response

1. *Sociology of Religion* by Max Weber
2. Stark, Rodney, and William Sims Bainbridge. "Of churches, sects, and cults: Preliminary concepts for a theory of religious movements." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1979): 117-131.
3. Iannaccone, Laurence R. "Why strict churches are strong." *American Journal of Sociology* 99.5 (1994): 1180-1211.

Week 3: Interpretive Approaches to Religion (and their Discontents)

1. *Confucianism as a World Religion* by Anna Sun
2. "Religion as a Cultural System" by Clifford Geertz
3. "The construction of religion as an anthropological category" by Talal Asad

Week 4: Religion and Modernity

1. *The Myth of Disenchantment* by Jason Josephson Storm
2. Mahomed, Nadeem, and Farid Esack. "The Normal and Abnormal: On the Politics of Being Muslim and Relating to Same-Sex Sexuality." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 85.1 (2017): 224-243.
3. Part One: The 'Invention of Caste' (chapters 1-3) in *Castes of Mind* by Nicholas Dirks, pp. 1-60

Week 5: What is Islam?

1. *Sociology of Islam* by Armando Salvatore
2. Asad, Talal. "The idea of an anthropology of Islam." *Qui parle* 17.2 (2009): 1-30.
3. Grewal, Zareena. "Destabilizing Orthodoxy, De-territorializing the Anthropology of Islam." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 84.1 (2016): 44-59.

Week 6: Practicing Religion

1. *Suburban Islam* by Justine Howe
2. Winchester, Daniel. "A hunger for God: Embodied metaphor as cultural cognition in action." *Social Forces* 95.2 (2016): 585-606.
3. Ammerman, Nancy T. "Rethinking religion: Toward a practice approach." *American Journal of Sociology* 126.1 (2020): 6-51.

Week 7: A Sociology of Theology

1. *Islamic Exceptionalism* by Shadi Hamid
2. Qadir, Ali. "When Heterodoxy Becomes Heresy: Using Bourdieu's Concept of Doxa to Describe State-Sanctioned Exclusion in Pakistan." *Sociology of Religion* 76.2 (2015): 155-176.
3. Simko, Christina. "Rhetorics of suffering: September 11 commemorations as theodicy." *American Sociological Review* 77.6 (2012): 880-902.

Week 8: Global Religion

1. *Pious Practices and Secular Constraints* by Jeanette Jouili
2. Husain, Atiya. "Moving beyond (and back to) the black–white binary: a study of black and white Muslims' racial positioning in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42.4 (2019): 589-606.
3. Yazdiha, Hajar. "Exclusion through acculturation? Comparing first-and second-generation European Muslims' perceptions of discrimination across four national contexts." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42.5 (2019): 782-800.

Week 9: Secularism Debates

1. *For Love of the Prophet* by Noah Salomon
2. Bigelow, Anna. "Lived Secularism: Studies in India and Turkey." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 87.3 (2019): 725-764.
3. Taylor, Charles. "The polysemy of the secular." *Social Research* (2009): 1143-1166.

Week 10: Boundaries of Religion

1. *The Promise of Patriarchy* by Ula Y. Taylor
2. Blankholm, Joseph. "Secularism and secular people." *Public Culture* 30.2 (2018): 245-268.
3. Schäfer, Saskia. "Renegotiating Indonesian secularism through debates on Ahmadiyya and Shia." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 41.4-5 (2015): 497-508.