

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

SSP171/REL171

Spring 2006
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:45am-12:00pm
Maginnes 475

Instructor: Ziad Munson
office: Price Hall 8G
email: munson@lehigh.edu, AIM: zmunson, phone: 758-3821
office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-2:30pm or by appointment

course information available on Blackboard

This course offers an introduction to the sociology of religion. We will begin by discussing classical approaches to defining religion and studying its role in society. We will then answer three critical questions about religion. First, what do religious beliefs and practices look like in the United States? Second, how does religious change take place? Third, what effects does religion have? We will explore each of these questions at the level of society, at the level of organizations within society, and at the level of individuals.

Throughout the course the emphasis will be on emerging themes and current research in the study of religion. Doing so will bring us to consider the changing religious landscape of the United States, religious conversion, different kinds of religious practice and authority, secularization, and religion in the public arena. We will look at specific new research that examines things such as Jewish-Christian intermarriage, the religiosity of college students, the role of religion in shaping post-9/11 attitudes, conflict over homosexuality in Methodist churches, feminism in the Catholic church, and rituals within an African-American church.

Course Requirements

All students in the class are expected to complete all assigned readings, attend all class sessions, and actively participate in class discussions. In addition, students will be required to complete two fieldwork assignments, two in-class presentations, and a final exam.

fieldwork: You will have the opportunity to do two of your own fieldwork studies over the course of the semester. Prior students have found these assignments to be one of the most rewarding components of the class. The first requires that you interview 3–4 people about their religious beliefs and practices. The second requires that you attend a religious service outside of your own faith tradition. For each assignment you will write a 5-7 page paper analyzing what you learned through your fieldwork. Details about each project will be discussed in class. Due dates for these two assignments are March 3rd and April 28th. They must be turned in electronically via the ‘assignments’ section of the course website.

presentations: Everyone in the class, in teams of two, will be twice responsible for presenting and leading a discussion about a particular reading from the syllabus twice over the course of the semester. Presentations should summarize the main ideas in the reading, offer links between the reading and other ideas or issues we've discussed in class, and offer questions about the reading for the class to discuss. We will discuss further details of these presentations in class.

final exam: The final exam for the course will be open notes and consist of a combination of essays and short answer questions based on the class readings, lectures, and discussion.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

- 40% fieldwork assignments
- 30% final exam
- 15% class presentations
- 15% class attendance and participation

Course requirements are subject to change over the course of the semester. All such changes will be discussed in class, and students are responsible for meeting any new or modified requirements that are discussed.

Any student who has a documented disability and is in need of academic accommodations should notify me and/or Cheryl Ashcroft, Director of the Office of Academic Support Services (610-758-4152). Accommodations will be individualized and in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992.

An important note: Plagiarism and cheating are both forbidden by University policy (see your student Handbook). Every word in your fieldwork essays, class presentations, and exam must be your own unless contained in quotation marks and properly cited. This includes text taken from the web. Plagiarism or cheating will, at minimum, result in an F for the assignment and may, at my discretion, result in an F for the entire course. These are in addition to any sanctions imposed by the university. For more information on academic integrity, visit <http://www.lehigh.edu/~indost/integrity.html>. If you have additional questions or concerns about acceptable ways to use and cite outside material in your writing, please see me; I'm happy to help.

Readings

The following books have been ordered from the Lehigh University Bookstore (758-3374) and are also available at a discount from online retailers such as ecampus.com and amazon.com:

- Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Nelson, Timothy J. 2005. *Every Time I Feel the Spirit: Religious Experience and Ritual in an African American Church*. New York: NYU Press.
- Wuthnow, Robert. 1998. *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

All other readings for the course are available online through the course website.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The course schedule and required readings are subject to change over the course of the semester. All changes will be announced in class, and students are responsible for taking note of any such changes and adjusting their reading and homework accordingly.

Defining Religion

01/17 Introduction to class

01/19 Classical Views of Religion: Comte, Marx, and Simmel

Comte, Auguste. 1853. "On the Three Stages of Social Evolution," pp.1332-1342 in *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*, Parsons, Talcott, Shils, Edward, Naegele, Kaspar, and Pitts, Jesse, eds. New York: Free Press.

Marx, Karl. 1844 [1978]. "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction," short selection from pp.53-54 in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert Tucker, ed. New York: Norton.

Hell, Horst Jürgen. 1997. "Introduction," pp.xi-xx in *Essays on Religion: Georg Simmel*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

01/24 Classical Views of Religion: Durkheim

Durkheim, Emile. 1912. "Religion and Society," pp.677-682 in *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*, Parsons, Talcott, Shils, Edward, Naegele, Kaspar, and Pitts, Jesse, eds. New York: Free Press.

01/26 Classical Views of Religion: Weber

Weber, Max. 1904 [1997]. "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," selections in *Classical Sociological Theory: A Reader*, Ian McIntosh, ed. New York: New York University Press. (read pp.113-131)

Weber, Max. 1956. "Religion and Social Status," pp.1138-1161 in *Theories of Society: Foundations of Modern Sociological Theory*, Parsons, Talcott, Shils, Edward, Naegele, Kaspar, and Pitts, Jesse, eds. New York: Free Press.

Religious Belief and Behavior

01/31 Societal Level: Overview of Religious Traditions in America

Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America: How a 'Christian Country' Has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: Harper Collins. read chapter 1

Smith, Tom W. 2002. "Religious Diversity in America: The Emergence of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Others," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41(3): 577-585.

02/02- Societal Level: The American Congregation

02/07 Chaves, Mark. 2004. *Congregations in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (read chapters 1 and 7)

02/09- Organizational Level: Culture and Change in Different Congregations

02/16 Becker, Penny Edgell. 1999. *Congregations in Conflict: Cultural Models of Local Religious Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (read chapters 1-2, and 8; skim chapters 3-7)

02/21- Individual Level: Believing, Belonging and Practice

02/23 Wuthnow, Robert. 1998. *After Heaven: Spirituality in America Since the 1950s*. Los Angeles: University of California Press. read chapters 1-3

Bender, Courtney. 2003. *Heaven's Kitchen: Living Religion at God's Love We Deliver*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

02/28 Individual Level: The Church Attendance Debate

"Symposium on Church Attendance in the United States." 1998. *American Sociological Review* 63(1): 111-130.

Hadaway, C. Kirk, and Penny Long Marler. 2005. "How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44(3):307-323.

Religious Change

03/02 Societal Level: The Secularization Debate

Stark, Rodney. 1999. "Secularization, R.I.P." *Sociology of Religion* 60(3):249-274.

Sommerville, C John. 2002. "Stark's Age of Faith Argument and the Secularization of Things: A Commentary," *Sociology of Religion* 63(3):361-373.

[NOTE: First fieldwork assignment is due March 3]

[SPRING BREAK]

03/14- Societal Level: Rational Choice Explanations of Religious Change in America

03/16 Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. (read chapters 1-3, 7)

Chaves, Mark. 1995. "On the Rational Choice Approach to Religion." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 34:98-104.

03/21- Organizational Level: Change in Religious Groups

03/23

Katzenstein, Mary Fainsod. 1998. *Faithful and Fearless: Moving Feminist Protest inside the Church and Military*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. read chapters 5-6, pp.107-158

- Moon, Dawne. 2004. *God, Sex, and Politics: Homosexuality and Everyday Theologies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (read chapters 1, 3, and conclusion)
- Yang, Fenggang, and Helen Rose Ebaugh. 2001. "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications," *American Sociological Review* 66(2):269-288.

03/28- Individual Level: Religious Conversion

- 03/30 Lofland, John and Rodney Stark. 1965. "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective." *American Sociological Review* 30(6, December):862-75.
- Zinnbauer, Brian J. and Kenneth I. Pargament. 1998. "Spiritual Conversion: A Study of Religious Change Among College Students." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37(1):161-80.
- Lazerwitz, Bernard. 1995. "Jewish-Christian Marriages and Conversions, 1971-1990," *Sociology of Religion* 56(4):433-4??.

Effects of Religion

04/04 Societal Level: Religion and Historical Development

- Review Weber readings from first week of class.
- Zaret, David. 1989. "Religion and the Rise of Liberal-Democratic Ideology in 17th-Century England." *American Sociological Review* 54 (April):163-79.
- Sikkink, David and Mark Regnerus. 1996. "For God and the Fatherland: Protestant Symbolic Worlds and the Rise of German National Socialism," pp.147-166 in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*, Christian Smith, ed. New York: Routledge.

04/06 Societal Level: Religion in the Public Square

- Williams, Rhys H. and N.J. Demerath, III. 1991. "Religion and Political Process in an American City." *American Sociological Review* 56 (August):417-431.
- Bane, Mary Jo, et. al. 2005. "Taking Faith Seriously," introduction (pp.1-18) in *Taking Faith Seriously*, Bane, Mary Jo, Brent Coffin and Richard Higgins, eds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

04/09 Organizational Level: Religion and Conservative Social Movements

- Aho, James. 1996. "Popular Christianity and Political Extremism in the United States," pp.189-204 in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*, Christian Smith, ed. New York: Routledge.
- Munson, Ziad. forthcoming. "When a Funeral Isn't Just a Funeral," in *Religion in Everyday Life*, Ammerman, Nancy, ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

04/11 Organizational Level: Religion and Progressive Social Movements

- Morris, Aldon. 1996. "The Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement," pp.29-46 in *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*, Christian Smith, ed. New York: Routledge.

Wood, Richard. 2002. *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. read chapter 5

04/18 Individual Level: Faith-Based Social Services

Wuthnow, Robert, Conrad Hackett and Becky Yang Hsu. 2004. "The Effectiveness and Trustworthiness of Faith-Based and Other Service Organizations: A Study of Recipients' Perceptions," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43(1): 1-17.

Reynolds, Amy, and Christopher Winship. 2005. "Faith, Practice, and Teens: Evaluating Faith-Based Programs," chapter 8 (pp.245-276) in *Taking Faith Seriously*, Bane, Mary Jo, Brent Coffin and Richard Higgins, eds. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

04/20 Individual Level: The Many Impacts of Religion

Ellison, Christopher and Jason Boardman, David Williams, and James Jackson. 2001. "Religious Involvement, Stress, and Mental Health: Findings from the 1995 Detroit Area Study." *Social Forces* 80(1): 215-249.

Smidt, Corwin E. 2005. "Religion and American Attitudes Toward Islam and an Invasion of Iraq," *Sociology of Religion* 66(3): 243-262.

Religion and Society

04/25- Religion in the United States Today

04/27 Nelson, Timothy J. 2005. *Every Time I Feel the Spirit: Religious Experience and Ritual in an African American Church*. New York: NYU Press.

[NOTE: Second fieldwork assignment due April 28]