

THS 636: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

TWR 12:00-2:30 PM • 301 WINGATE HALL

Summer 2006

Instructor: Dr. David Yamane, Assistant Professor of Sociology

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Course Web Page: <http://www.wfu.edu/~yamaned/teaching/636/th636index.htm>

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course surveys the major developments in the sociological study of religion, beginning with its roots in Enlightenment thought and the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim and continuing through to current debates over contemporary spirituality and the reality of secularization. Along the way, we will examine the cultural and social structural factors that have transformed religion in modern society, especially the United States. We will examine these transformations at both the individual and organizational levels, and also explore the ways in which religion enters civil society and political life.

Students will be asked to engage these particular developments, but will also have the opportunity to explore, write about, and lead the class in a consideration of their own particular interests.

COURSE REQUIREMENT SUMMARY

1. Class Participation (25%)
2. Short Papers (3 @ 10% = 30%)
3. Class Presentation (15%)
4. Final Paper (30%)

COURSE MATERIALS

Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Anchor Books Edition, 1990)

Mark Chaves, *Congregations in America* (Harvard University Press, 2004)

Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (Rutgers University Press, 2005)

Timothy Nelson, *Every Time I Feel the Spirit: Religious Experience and Ritual in an African American Church* (New York University Press, 2005)

Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Plus, a packet of reading available for purchase.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are *100 total points* which can be earned in this class. They are distributed as follows:

[1] Class Participation (25 points): As in life, you do not get credit in this class just for showing up. In order to earn *any* of these 25 points, you must participate thoughtfully and actively in our class discussions. “Thoughtfully” here means that your participation is based not only on your own experiences but on your careful consideration of the course materials. Therefore, reading and thinking about the course materials is a prerequisite of thoughtful participation. “Actively” here means that you are regularly involved in the course discussions, can be expected to contribute, and do not go mentally AWOL for periods at a time. If you do not participate in the class discussions, you will receive 0 points and then the *maximum* number of points you can earn in this class will be 75, which is a “C”.

[2] Short Papers (30 points): You will write three 3-4 page papers worth 10 points each critically engaging each of the following topics:

- (A) The movie “Saved” (which we will watch in class)
- (B) The Radiant Church (www.radiantchurch.com)
- (C) A self-guided field trip to an unfamiliar religious group or organization

You will email a copy of your paper to everyone in the class by 8am on the day it is due. We will discuss what to write in class.

[3] Class Presentation (15 points): The last week of class, each student will take responsibility for making a 15-20 minute class presentation and leading a discussion on the topic they are researching for their final paper. Students will work with the instructor to select appropriate readings to assign for the day.

[4] Final Paper (30 points): Each student will write a 10-15 page paper sociologically analyzing a topic of their choosing. Although it is impossible to do a complete research paper in a summer session, it is expected that students will analyze some primary data and draw on outside readings. Students will work with the instructor early in the term to identify topics and appropriate readings in sociology. Students and the instructor will also meet individually on a regular basis to discuss the paper. More information on the parameters of this paper will be provided in class.

General Note: Please keep a copy of every assignment you turn-in and everything that is returned to you graded in case of a clerical error on the part of the instructor, a loss of information stored electronically, or other such disaster.

GRADES

I will grade your individual assignments according to the following scale:

100% = Genius
95% = Exceptionally High Achievement
85% = Superior
75% = Satisfactory
65% = Passing But Unsatisfactory
60% or less = Failure

I place a premium on good writing, especially spelling and grammar. Proofread your papers carefully before turning them in. I heartily recommend that all students make use of the Writing Center, 117 Reynolda Hall (758-5768). Poorly written and proofread papers will be graded down with increasing severity over the course of the semester.

For your overall course grade, the scale based on the number of points earned over the course of the semester is as follows:

A: 96-99
A-: 93-95
B+: 88-92
B: 87-89
B-: 84-86
C+: 79-83
C: 78
C-: 77

IT IS BETTER TO PREVENT THAN TO LAMENT

It is easier to **prevent** problems than to **undo** them once they are done. So please be in touch with me early and often and as much as necessary. My door is always open to you.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with a physical or mental impairment ("disability") are entitled to equal access, integration and the provision of reasonable accommodation by Federally-supported institutions like the Wake Forest University. The University is required to make "academic adjustments" for qualified disabled persons. These adjustments may include modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate against a qualified handicapped student. Adjustments may also include modifications to course examinations or other procedures for evaluating students' academic achievement. If these Section 504 protections apply to you, or you think that they might apply to you, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (336/758-5929) within the first two (2) weeks of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The follow course schedule is good only for now. The main course schedule will be posted on the class website so that it can be updated as necessary to accommodate changes to the class. Although I will try not to add any work beyond what is specified in the syllabus, I reserve the right to modify the course schedule or content as necessary and appropriate to meet course goals.

CR = Course Reader

WEEK OF	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
MAY 22		Welcome, Overview, Introductions	<u>Read</u> : C. Wright Mills, <i>The Sociological Imagination</i> (pp. 3-11) & Phil Zuckerman, <i>Invitation to the Sociology of Religion</i> (pp. 1-34)
		<u>Do</u> : Individual meetings with professor to discuss paper topics	<u>Do</u> : Watch movie "Saved" and discuss in terms of its themes and a sociological approach to religion
MAY 29	<p><i>What is Religion?</i></p> <p><u>Read</u>: Peter Berger, "Sociological Definitions of Religion" (pp. 175-77 in <i>The Sacred Canopy</i>); Keith Roberts, "What Do We Mean by the Term <i>Religion</i>?" (CR); Lynn Schofield Clark, "Baby Boomers and Their Millennial Kids" (CR)</p>	<p><i>The Secularization Paradigm</i></p> <p><u>Read</u>: Peter Berger, <i>The Sacred Canopy</i> (pp. 3-51, 105-153)</p>	<p><i>The "New" Paradigm</i></p> <p><u>Read</u>: R. Stephen Warner, "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States" (CR); Rodney Stark, "Secularization R.I.P." (CR)</p>
	<p><u>Due</u>: Short Paper on "Saved" (e-mail to class by 8am)</p>		
JUNE 5	<p><i>The Churching of America</i></p> <p><u>Read</u>: Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, <i>The Churching of America</i> (pp. 1-116, 156-96, 235-83)</p>	<p><i>Evangelicalism</i></p> <p><u>Read</u>: Christian Smith, <i>American Evangelicalism</i> (pp. 1-153)</p>	<p><i>Spirituality, Religious Individualism, and Whatever</i></p> <p><u>Read</u>: Robert Wuthnow, <i>After Heaven</i> (CR); Robert Bellah, et al., <i>Habits of the Heart</i> (CR); Christian Smith, <i>Soul Searching</i> (CR)</p>

WEEK OF	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
JUNE 12	<p><i>Congregations</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Mark Chaves, <i>Congregations in America</i> (chapters 1-2, 7-9)</p>	<p><i>Worship and Megachurches</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Mark Chaves, <i>Congregations in America</i> (chapter 5); Alan Wolfe, <i>The Transformation of American Religion</i> (CR); Jonathan Mahler, "The Soul of the New Exurb" (CR)</p>	<p><i>Experience and Ritual in an African American Church</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Timothy Nelson, <i>Every Time I Feel the Spirit</i> (pp. 1-208)</p>
		<p><u>Due:</u> Short paper on the Radiant Church (e-mail to class by 8am)</p>	
JUNE 19	<p><i>Religion and Civil Society: Faith-Based Social Services</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Mark Chaves, <i>Congregations in America</i> (chapters 3-4); Robert Wuthnow, <i>Saving America?</i> (pp. 1-63)</p>	<p><i>Civil Religion and Politics</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" (CR); Clinton and Bush inaugural addresses (CR); Yamane, <i>The Catholic Church in State Politics</i> (CR)</p>	<p><i>Tales from the Field</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> Others' field trip papers</p>
		<p><u>Do:</u> Listen to Presidential Inaugural Addresses for civil religious themes</p>	<p><u>Due:</u> Short paper on self-guided field trip (e-mail to class by 8am)</p>
JUNE 26	<p><i>Student Project Presentations</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> TBA</p>	<p><i>Student Project Presentations</i></p> <p><u>Read:</u> TBA</p>	
	<p><u>Do:</u> Student Research Paper Presentations and Discussion</p>	<p><u>Do:</u> Student Research Paper Presentations and Discussion</p>	

FINAL PAPER DUE: FRIDAY, JUNE 30TH, 5:00 PM