

SOCIOLOGY 301/RELIGION 351: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

**Fall 2006, MWF 12:00-12:50 PM
302 CARSWELL HALL**

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Office Hours: 11:00-11:45 a.m. on Monday and Wednesday, and by appointment

Course Web Page: <http://www.wfu.edu/~yamaned/teaching/301/soc301index.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 religious growth and decline, contemporary spiritual transformations, 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 public life.

As a 300-level seminar, this course is reading and writing intensive, and discussion-based. If you are not willing and able to put in the time and effort to read the course materials before each class, give due attention to the writing assignments, and offer well-considered ideas in class on a regular basis, it will be extremely difficult for you to pass this class. With all due respect, there are easier courses you can take.

COURSE REQUIREMENT SUMMARY

1. Class Participation (20%)
2. Short Papers (3 @ 10% = 30%)
3. Class Presentation (10%)
4. Take Home Essay Exams (2 @ 20% = 40%)

COURSE MATERIALS

The following required books are available at the campus bookstore, as well as being widely available at used bookstores (e.g., <http://www.bookfinder.com>):

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).

David Yamane, *The Catholic Church in State Politics: Negotiating Prophetic Demands and Political Realities* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

Phil Zuckerman, *Invitation to the Sociology of Religion* (Routledge, 2003)

In addition, a packet of reading materials will be available for purchase at the campus bookstore (readings from this packet will be designated as "CR" below).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

[1] Class Participation (20 points): As in life, you do not get credit in this class just for showing up. In order to earn *any* of these 20 points, you must participate thoughtfully and actively in our class discussions. "Thoughtfully" here means that your participation is based not only on your own opinions and experiences but on your careful consideration of the course materials. Therefore, reading and thinking about the course materials is a prerequisite of thoughtful participation. Of course, the sharing of personal opinions and experiences are important in a class like this, but participation that is limited to that is inadequate. "Actively" here does not mean constantly. It 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 80, which is a "C+".

[2] Short Papers (30 points): You will write three 1,000 word papers (that is about three pages of text), worth 10 points each, that critically engage the following topics:

(A) The movie "Saved!": What does this movie tell us about evangelicalism and youth

religion in America today? Your paper must engage at least the following readings: Smith (*American Evangelicalism*), Wuthnow (*After Heaven* in CR), and Smith (*Soul Searching* in CR).

(B) The Radiant Church: What does the success of The Radiant Church in terms of membership growth and activity tell us about traditional and innovative religious organizations and worship styles in contemporary society? Your paper must engage at least the following: Chaves (*Congregations in America*), Thumma (CR), Mahler (CR), Wolfe (CR), and your examination of the church's website (www.radiantchurch.com).

(C) Self-guided field trip to an unfamiliar religious group: What religious ideas are reflected in and what sorts of religious experiences are the group's worship service meant to convey? Your paper must engage at least the following: Nelson (*Every Time I Feel the Spirit*), Chaves (*Congregations in America*), and Wolfe (CR). More information about this field trip is provided below.

[3] Class Presentation (10 points): The last four classes are set aside for student presentations on the self-guided field trips. You will have 7 minutes to coherently and thoughtfully convey your findings to your classmates. You are not required to use visual aids such as handouts or PowerPoint, but these can often be helpful in transmitting information.

[4] Two Take-Home Essay Exams (20 points/each): Each exam will consist of a single question which you will have at least three days and 1,500 words to answer. The first exam will cover the material from weeks 2 through 5, and the second exam will cover the material from weeks 11 and 12.

GRADES

According to the bulletin of the College, letter grades correspond to levels of achievement as follows:

A = Exceptionally High Achievement
A-, B+, B = Superior
B-, C+, C = Satisfactory
C-, D+, D = Passing But Unsatisfactory
F = 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.

The scale for grades based on the number of points earned over the course of the semester is as follows:

A: 96-100	A-: 92-95	B+: 89-91	B: 86-88	B-: 82-85	C+: 79-81
C: 76-78	C-: 72-75	D+: 69-71	D: 66-68	F: Less than 65	

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT CLASS

1. Mas vale prevenir que lamentar: It is better to prevent problems than to lament them once they occur. Similarly, 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.
2. Computers in class: Because students have abused this privilege in the past, computers are *not allowed* at all in this class, unless you are required to use one and can provide documentation to that effect from the Learning Assistance Center.
3. Confidentiality: Given our topic, we may have discussions of highly personal matters. Everything that is said in class of a personal nature, therefore, should be considered confidential. Students who violate the confidentiality of their classmates will be failed.
4. Electronic mail communication: I check my e-mail regularly and you are welcome to contact me by e-mail with questions or comments. However, please be aware that *e-mail is not an appropriate medium for highly personal or confidential correspondence. Finally, because I may not immediately receive or reply to your messages, pressing issues should be handled in person whenever possible.*
5. On handing in assignments: Whenever you hand in an assignment, be sure to *make a hard copy* to keep for yourself in case the assignment you turn in disappears (this is known to happen quite often, unfortunately). Simply keeping a "copy" on a computer disk is *not* a recommended backup (although you should do that *too*), since difficulties frequently arise with magnetic media, especially around the time papers are due!
6. On late assignments: Assignments must be handed in by the *beginning* of class time on the due date. Any assignments submitted after that time will be graded down one full grade (e.g., from A to B, B to C) *per day late*. One second late = one day late, 24 hours + one second late = two days late, etcetera. If you know you will not be in class when the assignment is due, you must turn in the assignment *before* your absence. If you have a medical or other emergency causing you to miss class unexpectedly, you must submit along with your late assignment a signed note to that effect from an appropriate authority. If for some reason you cannot turn an assignment in directly to me, take it to the Sociology Department Office (232 Carswell Hall), have the secretary *sign and date* the assignment, and have her put it in my mailbox. If the assignment is not signed and dated by a secretary, I will assume you turned it in the day I pick it up (which will not necessarily be the same day you turn it in). Under no circumstances should you put assignments under my door. *Most of all, just stay in touch with me about your circumstances (see note #1 above). I cannot run 25 different classes, but I am a pretty reasonable guy.*
7. On disabilities: 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 Wake Forest. 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 protections apply to you, or you think that they might apply to you, please contact the Learning Assistance Center (758-5929) within the first two (2) weeks of the semester.

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

The purpose of this field trip is to allow you to apply your sociological imaginations to empirical observations you make in an unfamiliar setting. You will choose an unfamiliar religious group to visit, observe a worship service at that group, record what you observe (called "field notes"), and write a 1,000 word paper.

(1) Unfamiliar: This basically means a group from a tradition other than the one you were raised in. It doesn't have to be from an entirely different religion (e.g., if you were raised as a Christian, you do not have to study a non-Christian group), but there needs to be some significant difference, either theological or social. For example, a mainline Presbyterian could observe an Evangelical Presbyterian service. Or a white Catholic could observe a Black Catholic service. Or a Southern Baptist could observe a Baptist megachurch. Your professor must approve your choice before your observation. Look in the Yellow Pages, ask a friend or classmate, or ask your professor for suggestions if there is not a group that interests you already.

(2) Observe: You will attend a regular (typically, weekly) worship service for the group you chose. Muslims typically worship on Friday, Jews on Saturday, and Christians on Sunday, though there can be special service times in many groups. For example, a Christian church might have a "youth service" on a Friday or Saturday night. As long as the service you attend is part of the regular schedule of the group, it is acceptable. For most groups, worship services are considered public events and you do not need to make arrangements to visit. For some groups, however, it is appropriate—and even necessary in some cases—to make contact with a member of the staff before visiting. For example, smaller groups or groups that are outside the Christian tradition (e.g., Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus) may want to know ahead of time that you will be attending. If they express concerns, simply find another group.

(3) Record: During your visit, you will want to record what you are observing. Pay attention to such things as the physical setting and material culture, the demographics of the worshipers, the style and structure of the worship itself, the language people use during the service (e.g., testimonials given and/or sermons preached), how people relate to one another during the service, what is expected of worshipers, who is in charge, and what the message of the worship service is.

(4) Write: See course requirement 2C above.

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.

NOTE: DIAGONAL LINES INDICATE NO CLASS MEETING.

WEEK OF...	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
August 21	[1] OVERVIEW/ADMINISTRATION		
		Welcome, Overview, Introductions	How to read a book
August 28	[2] WHAT IS RELIGION? HOW DO WE STUDY IT?		
	<u>Read:</u> Phil Zuckerman, <i>Invitation to the Sociology of Religion</i> (pp. 1-34); Peter Berger, "Sociological Definitions of Religion" (pp. 175-77 in <i>The Sacred Canopy</i>);	<u>Read:</u> Keith Roberts, "What Do We Mean by the Term <i>Religion</i> ?" (CR)	<u>Read:</u> Zuckerman, <i>Invitation</i> (pp. 35-60)
September 4	[3] THE SECULARIZATION PARADIGM		
	<u>Read:</u> Peter Berger, <i>The Sacred Canopy</i> (pp. 3-51)	<u>Read:</u> Peter Berger, <i>The Sacred Canopy</i> (pp. 150-53)	<u>Read:</u> Bryan Wilson, "Secularization: The Inherited Model" (CR)
September 11	[4] THE "NEW" (ANTI-SECULARIZATION) PARADIGM		
	<u>Read:</u> Jeffrey Hadden, "Toward Desacralizing Secularization Theory" (CR), and Rodney Stark, "Secularization R.I.P." (CR)	<u>Read:</u> R. Stephen Warner, "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States" (CR)	<u>Read:</u> Laurence Iannaccone, "Rational Choice: Framework for the Scientific Study of Religion" (CR)
September 18	[5] THE CHURCHING OF AMERICA		
	<u>Read:</u> Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, <i>The Churching of America</i> (pp. 1-116)	<u>Read:</u> Finke and Stark (pp. 156-96, 235-83)	Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, "A Theoretical Model of Religious Economies" (CR)

WEEK OF...	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
September 25	[6] EXAM WEEK		
	<i>Distribution of Take Home Exam #1</i>	Begin Movie: "Saved!"	Conclude Movie: "Saved!"
			<i>Take Home Midterm Examination Due: Beginning of Class</i>
October 2	[7] EVANGELICALISM IN AMERICA		
	<u>Read:</u> Christian Smith, <i>American Evangelicalism</i> (pp. 1-66)	<u>Read:</u> Smith, <i>American Evangelicalism</i> (pp. 67-153, 218-20)	<u>Read:</u> Robert Wuthnow, <i>After Heaven</i> (CR)
October 9	[8] SPIRITUALITY, YOUTH, AND WHATEVER		
	<u>Read:</u> Christian Smith, <i>Soul Searching</i> , pp. 3-71 (CR)	<u>Read:</u> Christian Smith, <i>Soul Searching</i> , pp. 118-171 (CR)	
		<u>Due:</u> Short paper #1 on "Saved!"	
October 16	[FIELD TRIPS AND READING WEEK]		
October 23	[9] CONGREGATIONS AND MEGACHURCHES		
	<u>Read:</u> Mark Chaves, <i>Congregations in America</i> (chapters 1-2, 7-8)	<u>Read:</u> Scott Thumma, et al. "Megachurches Today 2005" (CR)	<u>Read:</u> "Jesus CEO" (online); Jonathan Mahler, "The Soul of the New Exurb" (CR) and explore the Radiant Church website (radiantchurch.com)
October 30	[10] WORSHIP, RITUAL, AND EXPERIENCE		
	<u>Read:</u> Mark Chaves, <i>Congregations in America</i> (chapter 5); Alan Wolfe, <i>The Transformation of American Religion</i> (CR)	<u>Read:</u> Timothy Nelson, <i>Every Time I Feel the Spirit</i> (pp. 1-115)	<u>Read:</u> Nelson, <i>Every Time</i> (pp. 116-208)

WEEK OF...	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
	<i>Due: Short paper #2 on the Radiant Church as a megachurch</i>		
	[11] RELIGION AND CIVIL SOCIETY		
November 6	<u>Read:</u> Zuckerman, <i>Invitation</i> (pp. 75-114)	<u>Read:</u> Robert Wuthnow, <i>Saving America?</i> (CR); Mark Chaves, <i>Congregations in America</i> (chs. 3-4);	<u>Read:</u> Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" (CR); Clinton and Bush inaugural addresses (CR)
	[12] RELIGION AND POLITICS		
November 13	<u>Read:</u> Jose Casanova, <i>Public Religions in the Modern World</i> (CR)	<u>Read:</u> David Yamane, <i>The Catholic Church in State Politics</i> (pp. 1-100)	<u>Read:</u> Yamane, <i>Catholic Church</i> (pp. 101-150)
	[13] TALES FROM THE FIELD		
November 20	Student Presentations		
	[14] TALES FROM THE FIELD		
November 27	Student Presentations	Student Presentations	Student Presentations
			<i>Due: Field trip paper #3</i>
			<i>Distribution of Take Home Exam #2</i>

FINAL EXAMS DUE: DECEMBER 8TH