

***SOC 4309/RELS 4309***  
***Religion in American Public Life:  
Culture, Politics, and Communities***

Fall 2013  
Monday/Wednesday 1 – 2:15 pm  
Blegen 415

e-reserve website: <https://reserves.lib.umn.edu/>

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**Office Hours:** Tues 1-3 & Appt

Description:

When it comes to belief, identity, and belonging, the American religious landscape is one of diversity – and increasingly rapid change. The post-1965 wave of immigration has increased the number and visibility of new religious groups in the United States. And Americans under the age of 35 are embracing religious practices and beliefs but not organized religion – fully 30% of younger generations claim no religious affiliation or identity, a marked shift from their parents' generation.

The purpose of this course is to help you understand contemporary American religion, in all its diversity and inter-generational differences, with a special focus on the public face of religious groups and leaders. How does religion affect local communities, shape our political discourse and behavior, foster social movements, and influence national policies? We will examine sociological research on how religious groups engage in political action, foster particular understandings of democracy and styles of civic participation, influence volunteering, and shape individuals' views on issues such as race, poverty, science education, the family, and sexuality. Weekly student-led discussions will help you to use the insights of scholarly works to become more critical and educated readers of mass-media-based news about religion in our society.

Civic life is comprised of voluntary, face-to-face arenas of activity that are not controlled by the state. Civic arenas are where citizens debate ethics, broadly conceived – where ideas of “the good society” are formed, debated, shared, and contested. The civic arena is diverse, with many types of secular and religious organizations. Through its role in civic life, religion is an important and visible arena for the construction of ethical discourse and understandings of the public (and the private) good. This course will help you develop a critical understanding of the ethical claims made by spokespersons for religious organizations, viewpoints, and movements, and assess the role that such claims have in shaping public life. In a supportive environment, students will be prompted to consider their own religious and ethical beliefs in light of the range of such views in contemporary American society. The course emphasizes the diversity and variety of religious and political traditions in the United States, and that religious arenas are only one of many locations for the development of ethical discourse in American life.

**This upper-level undergraduate course is open to majors and non-majors and fulfills the LibEd requirement**

## for Civic Life and Ethics.

### Readings

**Students are expected to come to Monday's class with the readings for the week completed.**

Book Chapters: *Wilson Library Electronic Reserve*

Books at the University Bookstore:

*Organizing Urban America* by Heidi Swartz

*Living Faith: Everyday Religion and Mothers in Poverty* by Susan Crawford Sullivan

*Culture Wars* by James Davison Hunter

Articles: Available at *Wilson Library* – use electronic search resources (*JSTOR* and *Sociological Abstracts*). If not available thru such resources, then on *Wilson Library Reserve*.

### Assignments, Tests, and Grading

1) *In-class Discussions* – 2 discussions, each 20% of grade (40% total).

Each student will be assigned at random to a small discussion group of 5 or more students, which will meet most weeks of the semester. **Each student will lead 2 discussions in the small group to which s/he is assigned; each discussion is 20% of grade.**

Discussion 1. Write a 1-page summary of the class reading assigned for the discussion, and write a list of 6-8 focus questions; bring paper copies of these to class for all small group members. Lead small-group discussion of the assigned reading. Report to the larger class any problems or questions your group had with the reading. Turn in your written summary and questions, along with an attendance list for your group. The purpose of this activity is to deepen students' understanding of class readings and to catch and address any problems of misunderstanding before the tests occur. *20% of grade.*

Discussion 2. Choose an article from a major, reputable news source (national or local). Examples of acceptable sources include *Slate.com*, *The Washington Post*, *The Pioneer Press*. Photocopy the article and write a short summary (2-3 paragraphs) along with 6-8 focus questions. Bring copies of the article, summary, and questions for all small group members. Lead a discussion that relates the news article to the themes of the course lectures and readings. Turn in your written summary, article photocopy, and questions, along with an attendance list for your group. The purpose of this activity is to help students use sociological concepts to develop a critical perspective on media coverage of religion-and-society issues. *20% of grade.*

2) Attendance – 10% of grade. Calculated based on attendance lists for small-group activities. Students lose 2% points for each absence from a small-group discussion.

3) *Tests* – 25% of grade each, 50% total.

Test 1, in-class, week 8, covers material from first half of course, 25% of grade.

Test 2, in-class, week 15, covers material from second half of course, 25% of grade.

Test format:

- a. each test will have a “match the term with the definition & author” section
- b. each test will have short-answer (1 paragraph) and short essay (3-4 paragraphs) questions

## Policies

Many course-related policies are set by the College of Liberal Arts or the Sociology Department. The attached pages cover these policies in detail. These policies are instituted to be fair to all students and impose uniform deadlines and procedures. In addition:

- **I do not give make-up exams unless the student is seriously ill and has a doctor's note or there is a death in the immediate family.** If you miss an exam for any other reason, you will be penalized one letter grade.
- **I do not excuse absences for small-group discussions, or allow students to reschedule presentations to small groups, unless they are seriously ill and have a doctor's note or there is a death in the immediate family.** If you miss your in-class presentation you will lose credit for that presentation (20% per presentation); the penalty for not attending small-group presentations is outlined above (attendance portion of grade).

Class Schedule – NOTE that all readings are to be **completed** by Monday's class.

## **Unit 1 – Religion in the U.S. – Facts, Figures, and Definitions**

### Week 1      Getting Started

9/2      No Class, Labor Day

9/4      Lecture: “What is Religion?”

#### *Required Reading:*

Durkheim, Emile. *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, “Introduction,” “Chapter 1: Definition of Religious Phenomena and of Religion.” **e-reserve**

#### *Recommended Reading:*

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. “Religion as a Cultural System.” Pp.87-125 in *the Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. **e-reserve**

### Week 2      Facts and Figures

9/9      Lecture: “Background – American Religion, Facts and Figures,”

9/11     Lecture/Discussion: “Attitudes Toward Religion and Public Life”

#### *Required Reading (Complete by Monday's Class):*

Putnam, Robert D., with David E. Campbell. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. Chapter 1, pp. 1-36, “Religious Polarization and Pluralism in America.” **e-reserve**

## **Unit 2 – Movement, Mobilization, and Political Culture**

### Week 3      Cultural Division and Fragmentation

9/16     Lecture: “A Culture War?”

9/18     Discussion of Hunter

#### *Required Reading (Complete by Monday's Class)*

Hunter, James Davison. 1991. Chapter 4, “Competing Moral Visions” and Chapter 7, “The Family.” Pp. 107-132 and 173-196 in *Culture Wars*. New York: Basic Books. **e-reserve**

Week 4 Mobilization on the Left

9/23 Mobilization on the Left -- Aims and Goals, Issues and Challenges

9/25 Discussion of Swarts

*Required Reading (Complete by Monday's Class):*

Swarts, Heidi. 2008. *Organizing Urban America: Secular and Faith-Based Progressive Movements*. Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-70) and Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 91-126). **Bookstore**

Week 5 The Politicization of American Evangelicals

9/30 Then till now – historical patterns and contemporary realities

10/2 Discussion of Smith

*Required Reading (Complete by Monday's Class)*

Smith, Christian. 1998. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chapter 1, “Restructuring Engaged Orthodoxy,” Chapter 4, “Towards a ‘Subcultural Identity’ Theory of Religious Strength,” and Chapter 5, “Evangelicalism Embattled” **e-reserve**

Week 6 The Black Church

10/7 Lecture: The Black Church

10/9 Discussion of Morris (relate to Barnes)

*Required Reading (Complete by Monday's Class)*

Morris, Aldon. 1996. “The Black Church in the Civil Rights Movement.” Pp. 29-46 in *Disruptive Religion*, ed. Smith. New York: Routledge. **e-reserve**

Barnes, Sandra. 2005. “Black Church Culture and Community Action.” *Social Forces*, 84(2):967-94.

Week 7 Political Culture

10/14 “The” Public Sphere – Common Visions and Institutional Logics

10/16 Discussion of Williams (“Visions of the Good Society”)

*Required Reading (Complete by Monday’s Class)*

Williams, Rhys. 2007. “The Languages of the Public Sphere: Religious Pluralism, Institutional Logics, and Civil Society.” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612:42-61.

Williams, Rhys. 1999. “Visions of the Good Society: The Religious Roots of American Political Culture.” *Sociology of Religion* 60(1):1-34.

Week 8 Review and Mid-term Test

10/21 Wrap-up and Review, 1<sup>st</sup> half of Semester

10/23 **Test 1 – in class, 25% of grade**

**Unit 3 – Insiders and Outsiders**

Week 9 Religious Boundaries – Poverty, Family, Gender

10/28 Who “fits into” the local congregation?

10/30 Discussion – Popular Media

*Required Reading (Complete by Monday’s Class)*

Sullivan, Susan Crawford. 2011. *Living Faith: Everyday Religion and Mothers in Poverty*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 2 & 3 (pp. 27-107). **Bookstore**

*Recommended Reading*

Chaves, Mark and William Tsitsos. 2001. “Congregations and Social Services: What they Do, How they Do It, and With Whom.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 30(4):660-683.

## Week 10      Boundaries and the Non-Religious

11/4    Lecture: “Christian Nation?”

11/6    Discussion – Popular Media

*Required Reading (Complete by Monday’s Class)*

Edgell, Penny, Joseph Gerteis, and Douglas Hartmann. 2006. “Atheists as ‘Other’: Moral Boundaries and Cultural Membership in American Society.” *American Sociological Review*, 72(2):211-234.

## Week 10      Boundaries and the Non-Christian

11/11    Lecture: “Muslims in the U.S.”

11/13    Discussion – Popular Media

*Required Readings (Complete by Monday’s Class)*

Kalkan, Kerem Ozan, Geoffrey C. Ayman, and Eric M. Uslaner. 2009. Bands of Others? Attitudes toward Muslims in Contemporary American Society.” *Journal of Politics* 71(3):847–62.

Cimino, Richard. 2005. "No God in Common:" American Evangelical Discourse on Islam after 9/11.” *Review of Religious Research* 47(2): 162-174.

## **Unit 4 – Voting and Policy Preferences**

### Week 12      Religion and Voting

11/18    “The Vote”

11/20    Discussion – Popular Media

*Required Readings (Complete by Monday’s Class)*

Campbell, David E., John C. Green, and Geoffrey C. Layman. 2011. “The Party Faithful: Partisan Images, Candidate Religion, and the Electoral Impact of Party Identification.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(1):42-58.

Hirschl, Thomas A., James G. Booth, Leland L. Glenna. 2009. “The Link Between Voter Choice and Religious Identity in American Society: Bringing Classical Theory Back In.” *Social Science Quarterly*, 90(4):927-44.

## Week 13 Religion and Policy – The Environment

11/25 The Environment – Definition of Problems, Preferences for Solutions

11/27 Discussion – Popular Media

*Required Reading (To be Completed by Monday):*

Sherkat, Darren, and Christopher Ellison. 2007. “Structuring the Religion-Environment Connection: Identifying Religious Influences on Environmental Concern and Activism.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 46(1):71–85.

Taylor, Bron. 2008. “The Tributaries of Radical Environmentalism.” *Journal for The Study of Radicalism*, 2(1):27-61.

*Recommended Reading:*

Taylor, Bron. 2005. “Radical Environmentalism.” In the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, London and New York: Continuum.

Kearns, Laurel. 1996. “‘Saving the Creation’: Christian Environmentalism in the United States.” *Sociology of Religion*, 57(1): 55-70.

## Unit 5 – Course Wrap-up – Generational Changes

### Week 14 Generational Changes

12/2 Lecture: Changes in Work, Family, Religion, and Politics

12/4 Discussion – Popular Media

*Required Reading (To be Completed by Monday):*

Wuthnow, Robert. 2007. *After the Baby-Boomers: How Twenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Changing the Future of American Religion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 8, pp. 157-182.  
**e-reserve**

### Week 15

12/9 Course Wrap-up and second half review

12/11 **Test 2 – in-class, 25% of grade**



## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS POLICY

**GRADES:** University academic achievement is graded under two systems: A-F (with pluses and minuses) and S-N. Choice of grading system and course level (1xxx/3xxx/4xxx) is indicated on the registration website; changes in grade scale may not be made after the second week of the semester. Some courses may be taken under only one system; limitations are identified in the course listings. The Department of Sociology requires A-F registration in courses required for the major/minor. University regulations prescribe the grades that will be reported on your transcript.

A	Represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements (4.00 grade points)
A-	3.67 grade points
B+	3.33 grade points
B	Achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements (3.00 grade points)
B-	2.67 grade points
C+	2.33 grade points
C	Achievement that meets the basic course requirements in every respect (2.00 grade points)
C-	1.67 grade points
D+	1.33 grade points
D	Achievement worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements (1.00 grade point)
F	Performance that fails to meet the basic course requirements (0 grade points)
S	Represents achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better.
N	No credit. Its use is now restricted to students not earning an S on the S-N grade base
I	Incomplete, a temporary symbol assigned when the instructor has a "reasonable expectation" that you 1) can successfully complete unfinished work on your own no later than one year from the last day of classes and 2) believes that legitimate reasons exist to justify extending the deadline for course completion. The instructor may set date conditions for make-up work. If a course is not completed as prescribed or not made up as agreed within the year, the I will lapse to an F if registered on the A-F grade base or an N if registered on the S-N grade base.
W	Official withdrawal from a course after the end of the second week of the semester. You must file a course cancellation request before the end of the sixth week of the semester to ensure that the W, rather than the F, will be formerly entered on your record.

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS** (see schedule on the Calendar web site at <http://onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Calendars/FinalExams.html>): You are required to take final examinations at the scheduled times. Under certain circumstances, however, you may request final examination schedule adjustment in your college office. Instructors are obligated to schedule make-up examinations within the final examination period for students who have three final examinations within a 16-hour period. Instructors also are encouraged to reschedule examinations for students with religious objections to taking an examination on a given day. You must submit your request for an adjustment in your schedule at least two weeks before the examination period begins. For assistance in resolving conflicts, call the CLA Student Information Office at 625-2020. If you miss a final, an F or N is recorded. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make up the examination. Final examinations may be rescheduled by the instructor only through the official procedure for that purpose (as noted on the above web page). Final examinations may not be scheduled for the last day of class or earlier or for Study Day. If an examination is rescheduled at the instructor's request, and you have an examination conflict because of it, you are entitled to be given the final examination at an alternative time within the regularly scheduled examination period for that semester.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** As a CLA student, you are responsible for attending class and for ascertaining the particular attendance requirements for each class or department. You should also learn each instructor's policies concerning make-up of work for absences. Instructors and students may consult the CLA Classroom, Grading, and Examination Procedures Handbook for more information on these policies (<http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/>).

**COURSE PERFORMANCE AND GRADING:** Instructors establish ground rules for their courses in conformity with their department policies and are expected to explain them at the first course meeting. This includes announcement of office hours and location, the kind of help to be expected from the instructor and teaching assistants, and tutorial services, if available. The instructor also describes the general nature of the course, the work expected, dates for examinations and paper submissions, and expectations for classroom participation and attendance. Instructors determine the standards for grading in their classes and will describe expectations, methods of evaluation, and factors that enter into grade determination. The special conditions under which an incomplete (I) might be awarded also should be established. The college does not permit you to submit extra work to raise your grade unless all students in the class are afforded the same opportunity.

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR:** You are entitled to a good learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students will be asked to leave (the policies regarding student conduct are outlined in the CLA Classroom, Grading, and Examination Procedures on-line at <http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/>).

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** University instructors may restrict or prohibit the use of personal electronic devices in his or her classroom, lab, or any other instructional setting. For the complete policy, visit: <http://www.policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/CLASSROOMPED.html>

**SCHOLASTIC CONDUCT:** The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows: *Scholastic Dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.* **Students cannot evade (intentionally or unintentionally) a grade sanction by withdrawing from a course before or after the misconduct charge is reported. This also applies to late withdrawals, including discretionary late cancellation (also known as the "one-time-only drop").** For the complete policy, visit: [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)

**STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS MANAGEMENT:** As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/>.

**A REMINDER OF RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**  
**\* SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES \***

**GRADE INFORMATION:** Grades are due in the Office the Registrar within 3 business days after the final examination. No information regarding grades will be released by the department office staff to anyone except designated personnel in Records and college offices. Students may access their own grades through their computer account. They may do this by following the directions on the One Stop web site at <http://onestop.umn.edu/>.

**INCOMPLETES:** It is the instructor's responsibility to specify conditions under which an Incomplete (I) grade is assigned. Students should refer to the course syllabus and talk with the instructor as early as possible if they anticipate not completing the course work. Coursework submitted after the final examination will generally be evaluated down unless prior arrangements are made in writing by the instructor. University policy states that if completion of the work requires the student to attend class in substantial part a second time, assigning an "I" grade is NOT appropriate. Incompletes are appropriate only if the student can make up the coursework independently with the same professor.

**MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS:** Arrangements for special examinations must be made directly with the instructor who taught the course and who is responsible for approving and supervising the examination or making individual arrangements. Circumstances for missing an exam include, but are not necessarily limited to: verified illness, participation in athletic events or other group activities sponsored by the University, serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to notify faculty members of such circumstances as far in advance as possible.

**GRADE CHANGES:** Grades properly arrived at are not subject to renegotiation unless all students in the class have similar opportunities. Students have the right to check for possible clerical errors in the assignment of grades by checking with the instructor and/or teaching assistant.

Students with justifiable complaints about grades or classroom procedures have recourse through well-established grievance procedures. You are expected to confer first with the course instructor. If no satisfactory solution is reached, the complaint should be presented in writing to the department associate chair and/or the department academic advisor (909 Soc Sci). If these informal processes fail to reach a satisfactory resolution, other formal procedures for hearing and appeal can be invoked. See the departmental advisor in 923 Social Sciences to explore options.

**DISABILITY SERVICES:** Students with disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in class or to meet all course requirements are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructor so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. For more info contact Disabilities Services in 230 McNamara.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** University policy prohibits sexual harassment as defined in the December 1998 policy statement, available at the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Questions or concerns about sexual harassment should be directed to this office in 419 Morrill Hall.

**SOCIOLOGY PROGRAMS INFORMATION:** The Sociology Department offers two options for the Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Science degree. We also have an Honors Program. Students interested in majoring in Sociology should attend an information meeting about the major. Meetings are held about once a week. Sign up for a meeting in 909 Social Sciences. Further information can be obtained from the following persons and offices:

General information, Sociology Department, 909 Social Sciences - 624-4300  
Coordinator of Undergraduate Advising, Bobby Bryant, 923 Social Sciences – 624-4300  
Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Teresa Swartz, 1172 Social Sciences - 624-2310  
Sociology Honors Advisor, Professor Joachim Savelsberg, 948 Social Sciences - 624-3343  
Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Ann Meier, 1074 Social Sciences – 624-9828 and/or  
Graduate Program Associate, Becky Drasin, 931 Social Sciences - 624-2093