This course is designed to introduce students to a broad range of sociological work on religion. The course will emphasize the social and political implications of religious dynamics, but we will also pay attention to broader elements of religion. The field is a vast one, and even a serious, graduate-level course can only skim the surface; students are encouraged to delve more deeply into their particular interests via the term paper project. The course includes a variety of theoretical approaches, and comparative-historical, survey, network-analytic, and ethnographic methodological approaches are all included. We will discuss the relative advantages that different theoretical and methodological approaches offer for generating sociological insight into religion and society.

The content of the course will be weighted heavily toward understanding religion and society in three settings: the United States, Latin America, and the Middle East. However, the theoretical and methodological tools learned will be useful for the sociology of religion in whatever settings draw your interests (and term papers can certainly be written on a wide variety of topic areas).

Goals of the course: At the end of semester (if you prepare the readings well, engage actively in thoughtful discussion, and complete the other assignments), you will have laid strong intellectual foundations for doing graduate-level scholarship on religion (comprehensive exams, master’s thesis, dissertation research, etc.). You will emerge with a concrete written product that will contribute to your progress toward degree in your graduate program. Alternatively, you will have gained understanding of religious and cultural dynamics that will enrich your insight on other scholarly terrain and help you think rigorously about how religion interacts with other phenomena in the contemporary world. You will also have gained more experience in the kind of focused, analytic, and socially-relevant dialogue that lies at the heart of good social science and good politics. And we’ll have fun and engaging conversations along the way.

Requirements:
Requirements include: Consistently doing the required readings, participating effectively in class discussion, writing an initial draft of an annotated bibliography on the sociology of religion as it relates to your specific areas of scholarly interest, and a term paper. Further details below:
1. Readings: See weekly schedule below. I will ask you to do a lot of reading; there is just no way around this in a graduate-level seminar on a terrain as broad as religion. You must do all the readings, but should definitely cultivate the ability to digest book-length readings quickly by proceeding selectively – reviewing the contents, skimming some
parts and reading carefully elsewhere, looking for the central argument, etc. Shorter readings will be available through eReserves (ereserves.unm.edu then search under my name of Soc532 – password for this course is “religion”). You should purchase the following books via the internet or the UNM Bookstore:


2. Class discussion: Participate! Active participation does not necessarily mean talking constantly or at length; indeed, neither is generally the best approach in scholarly (or any other) conversations. Rather, it means preparing readings carefully enough to have something to insightful say (comment, question, analytic insight, puzzle, intellectual excitement or critique are all good contributions), listening carefully to others, and regularly offering your own thoughts in a way that advances our discussion.

3. Annotated bibliography: You will write this over the course of the semester. It will include all the required and recommended course readings, plus the beginnings of a comprehensive bibliography of additional sources focused around your areas of interest in the sociology of religion. For the *required course readings only*, include a ~ 200 word summary of the reading (core argument, key themes, central concepts), plus your brief evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, plus two questions or comments about it for class discussion. Students can organize themselves to do the bibliographic information collaboratively, but each must write her/his own annotated notes. For this assignment only, sketchy notes in sentence fragments are fine – the point is for the bibliography to be useful to you later when preparing for comps, writing a thesis, or teaching a course. **Due Thursday, November 19** but **written week-to-week throughout the semester**. I strongly recommend doing this in Endnote (available in Soc computer lab) or another bibliographic program, as this will help you enormously when writing a thesis or articles. But a wordprocessing program is fine, too.

4. Term paper: Each student will write a research paper on a topic reflecting his/her interests: ~15-20 pages, double spaced, plus bibliography. **Due Monday, December 7**. Papers may pursue a topic you identify or a theoretical or empirical theme that emerges in the course; they may be based purely on secondary research or may involve primary research (interviews, participant observation, survey data, or analysis of documents). They can be in the form of a traditional graduate term paper, a prospectus draft, a draft of an article for
publication, or a funding proposal. Other formats possible, but should be approved by instructor. See my “Memo on Good Papers” and “Outline of Dissertation Prospectus” to be distributed in class. In any case, paper should be polished and edited for coherence of argument, fluency of writing, and grammatical perfection.

Course Outline and Readings

Week 1  Introduction
August 27
Self-introductions and interests in study of religion
Religion in social science, religion in the world
Analyzing religion: beyond spirituality versus religion

Week 2  Religious Experience: Sociological Foundations
Sept 3
Finish Religious Landscape discussion (briefly)

Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life [1912] (New York: Free Press, 1995), Introduction, Book 1, Ch. 1; Book 2, Chs. 1-4, 6-7, and Ch. 8, parts 4-5; Book 3, and Conclusion, parts 2-3 [pp. 1-44; 99-168; 190-241; 265-275; and 429-448].


Suggested:

Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy

Robert N. Bellah, Beyond Belief, Ch. 1.

William James, Varieties of Religious Experience

[September 10: No class, use time to read for next week, brainstorm idea for paper]

Week 3  Religious Organizations, Religious Community, Religious Ideas: Conceptual foundations and social consequences
Sept 17


Suggested:


Gordon Marshall, In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism


S.N. Eisenstadt (ed.), The Protestant Ethic and Modernization (especially the "Introduction").


Robert N. Bellah, Tokugawa Religion


Guy E. Swanson, Religion and Regime: A Sociological Account of the Reformation
Gianfranco Poggi, *Calvinism and the Capitalist Spirit: Max Weber's Protestant Ethic*

Benjamin Nelson, *The Idea of Usury*

Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse*

Colin Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*


Week 4  
**Religion as Foundational Culture**

Sept 24  
“Symbolic Realism,” a short article introducing Bellah’s thought


Suggested:


Khaled Abou El Fadl. “Islam and the Challenge of Democracy: Can individual rights and popular sovereignty take root in faith?” in Boston Review Online:

http://bostonreview.net/BR28.2/abou.html

Week 5:  
**Religion & Politics: U.S. and Latin America**

October 1  


Jeff Manza and Clem Brooks. On religion & voting

Week 6  Religion in the Lifecourse: Young adulthood
October 8

Week 7: [No class October 15 – UNM Fall Break]

Week 8  The Vitality of Religion: The Rational Choice Debate
October 22


Suggested:


Week 9  
October 29

Social Consequences of Religious Experience


OR


Suggested:


**Week 10 Alternative Explanations of Religion in Human Society**

**November 5**


Suggested:


**Week 11 Assessing Contemporary Religious Change**

**November 12**

Focus: Rethinking religious agency: how people actively appropriate traditions


Suggested:


Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*


James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernity*


Nancy Tatom Ammerman, Bible Believers: *Fundamentalists in the Modern World*


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**Week 12**

**Religious Change: Religion as Moral Logic, Conversion, and Spirituality**

**November 19**

**Assignment**: One-paragraph to one-page paper proposal/description: topic and format


**Suggested:**


Peter G. Stromberg, *Language and Self-Transformation*


**Week 13:** [No class: Thanksgiving Break]

**Week 14:** Globalization & Religion

**December 3:**


Suggested:

Martin Riesebrodt, Pious Passion: *The Emergence of Modern Fundamentalism in the United States and Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), Chs. 1 and 4 [pp.1-32 and 176-208].


Peter Worsley, The Trumpet Shall Sound

Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down

Robert Wuthnow, The Consciousness Reformation

William Sims Bainbridge, Satan's Power

Papers due: Monday, December 7

Week 15 Summing up: Religion in Society

December 10: Presentation and discussion of papers

Papers due: Monday, December 10

Suggested:


Suggested:
Robert N. Bellah, "Religion and Belief: The Historical Background of 'Non-Belief,'" pp. 216-228 in Beyond Belief.

S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities” in Daedalus (Winter 2000), 1-29.


David Martin, A General Theory of Secularization

Colin Campbell, Toward a Sociology of Irreligion


Owen Chadwick, The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century

Peter E. Glasner, The Sociology of Secularization: A Critique of a Concept

Lucien Febvre, The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century


Other important topics:

Congregational Studies:


Suggested:


**Variations in American Religiosity: Contemporary Society**

Suggested:


Deborah Kauffman, *Rachel's Daughters*