

SOC 4309 -- Religion and Public Life in the U.S.

Spring 2007
Monday 6:20 – 8:50 pm
Blegen Hall 150

<<http://blog.lib.umn.edu/edgell/soc4309/>>

Instructor: Prof. Penny Edgell
Office Hrs: Monday 12 – 2 pm
Thursday 3:30 – 4:30 pm

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Description:

Almost two-thirds of Americans belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque, and over one-third attend religious services regularly. This course will focus on the role of religion in public life in the contemporary United States. The purpose of the course is to help you understand how the diversity and vitality of American religion shapes our local communities, political discourse, and social movements. We will explore how religious groups engage in political action, foster particular understandings of democracy and styles of civic participation, influence volunteering and service activities, and form individuals' views on issues such as race, poverty, the family and sexuality. This upper-level undergraduate course is open to majors and non-majors.

Readings

At Campus Store and Wilson Library Reserve:

Eck, Diana. 2001. *A New Religious America*.
Ginsberg, Faye. 1998. *Contested Lives*.
Casanova, Jose. 1994. *Public Religion in the Modern World*.
Nabhan-Warren, Kristy. 2005. *The Virgin of El Barrio*.
Wood, Richard. 2002. *Faith in Action*.
Course Packet.

Wilson Library Reserve Only:

Hunter, James Davison. 1991. *Culture Wars*
Durkheim, Emile. *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*

Assignments:

In-Class Participation: 15%. Based on attendance, ability to answer questions in class and participation in regular discussion activities.

Mid-term exam: 30% of grade. Short Answer/essay, covers weeks 1-6. In class, March 5.

Final exam: 30% of grade. Short Answer/Essay, covers weeks 7-14. In class, April 30.

Note: Exams will cover readings and materials presented in-class, including in-class discussion activities.

Paper: 25% of grade. 7 pages. Due April 9, **to be turned in at beginning of class.**

Option 1:

Use articles from major news outlets (*e.g. The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Minneapolis Star-Tribune*) to research an example of a religious group's public activism or involvement in a public or political debate. Be able to describe the group (name of group, constituency, size, resources) and summarize its stance on the issue in question and the tactics it uses to make its stance publicly known. Your paper should analyze why the group is able to have an effective public presence and what kind of public impact it has, drawing on the readings covered in class. *Your paper should be in a thesis-defense format.*

Option 2:

Use articles from major news outlets (*e.g. The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Minneapolis Star-Tribune*) to research a conflict over church-state relations and religion's role in public life. Be able to describe the incident, the groups involved, and the issues involved. Analyze the conflict by applying concepts learned through class readings. Example: You could write a paper about the controversy over keeping the 10 Commandments in an Alabama courtroom. *Your paper should be in a thesis-defense format.*

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.

Additional Course Policies:

- I do not give make-up exams unless you are seriously ill and have a doctor's note or there is a death in your immediate family. If you miss an exam for any other reason, you will be penalized one letter grade.

- I do not give extensions on papers unless you are seriously ill and have a doctor's note or there is a death in your immediate family. Papers that are turned in late are penalized one letter grade.

These policies are instituted to be fair to all students and impose uniform deadlines and procedures.

Class Schedule

Course Introduction – Facts and Figures, Definitions, Standard Approaches

01/22 *Religion in the U.S.*

Reading:

Eck, Diana. 2001. Preface, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. xiii-77 in *A New Religious America*. San Francisco: Harper.

01/29 *What is Religion?*

Reading:

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Religion as a Cultural System." Pp.87-125 in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. **packet**

Recommended: Durkheim, Emile. *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, "Introduction," "Chapter 1: Definition of Religious Phenomena and of Religion." **on reserve**

Public Religion – Identity, Culture, and Organizational Resources

02/05 *Religion and Public Life*

Reading:

Casanova, Jose. 1994. Chapters 1, 2, 8 (pp. 11-66 and 211-235) in *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

02/12 *Religion and Identity*

Reading:

Smith, Christian. 1998. "Toward a 'Subcultural Identity' Theory of Religious Strength." Pp. 89-119 in *American Evangelicalism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **packet**

02/19 *Religious Cultural Resources*

Reading:

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

McNally, Michael. 1997. "The Uses of Ojibwa Hymn-Singing at White Earth: Toward a History of Practice." Pp. 133-160 in *Lived Religion in America*, ed. David D. Hall. Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press. **packet**

02/26 *Religious Organizational Resources*

Reading:

Zald, Mayer N. and John D. McCarthy. 1987. "Religious Groups as Crucibles of Social Movements." Pp. 67-96 in *Social Movements in an Organizational Society*, eds. Zald and McCarthy. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books. **packet**

Chaves, Mark. 2004. Chapter 4, pp. 94-126, in *Congregations in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. **packet**

Religion, Discourse, and Mobilization -- Topics

Religion and Race

03/05 **In-Class Midterm Exam**

Racial Discourse in Local Religious Communities

Reading:

Becker, Penny Edgell. 1998. "Making Inclusive Communities: Congregations and the 'Problem' of Race." 45(4):451-472. **packet**

McRoberts, Omar. 2003. "Worldly or Otherworldly?" Pp. 412-422 in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon. New York: Cambridge University Press. **packet**

Emerson, Michael O., with Rodney M. Woo. 2006. Pp. 173-194, "A Brief History of Metaphors for U.S. Race and Ethnic Relations," in *Multiracial Congregations in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. **packet**

03/12 **No Class – Enjoy Spring Break!**

03/19 Race and Activism

Reading:

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

Patillo-McCoy, Mary. 1998. "Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community." *American Sociological Review* 63(6):767-784.
packet

The Family and Sexuality

03/26 The Family and Politics

Reading:

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. **on reserve**

Edgell, Penny. 2003. "In Rhetoric and in Practice: Defining 'the Good Family' in Local Congregations. Pp. 164-178 in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon. New York: Cambridge University Press.
packet

04/02 The Abortion Debate

Reading:

Ginsberg, Faye. 1989. *Contested Lives*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. Chapters 5 & 6, 8-10, Pp. 76-110 & 133-200.

Poverty and New Kinds of Activism

04/09 Fervent religion and outreach in Phoenix

Nabhan-Warren, Kristy. 2005. *The Virgin of El Barrio*. Chapters 1 and 4-6, pp. 25-51 and 103-179.

Paper Due at Beginning of Class

04/16 Faith-Based Networks

Wood, Richard L. 2002. Chapters 1, 2, 5, 7 in *Faith in Action*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Religion and Politics

04/23 Imagined Community, Political Behavior

Reading:

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. **packet**

Manza, Jeff and Nathan Wright. "Religion and Political Behavior." Pp. 297-314 in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon. New York: Cambridge University Press. **packet**

04/30 Course Review and **Final Exam**

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 Handbook on-line at <http://advisingtools.class.umn.edu/cgep/>).

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. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the description above. It could also be said that scholastic dishonesty is any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student's own work. Also included would be cheating on assignments or examinations, inventing or falsifying research or other findings with the intent to deceive, submitting the same or substantially similar papers (or creative work) for more than one course without consent of all instructors concerned, depriving another of necessary course materials, and sabotaging another's work. Should misconduct arise, the college's Scholastic Conduct Committee in cooperation with the Office of Student Academic Integrity/Student Judicial Affairs (OSAI/SJA) assists instructors in resolving cases, reviews cases in which students believe themselves unfairly treated, and checks for multiple offenses in different courses. Faculty members who suspect students of scholastic misconduct must report the matter to OSAI/SJA. **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").**

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: Each semester the Sociology Department arranges a special time for make-up examinations, with proctors arranged by the department. This exam is mainly for students who need to make up work from the previous semester, (i.e. quiz, midterm, or final) and who have made arrangements with the instructor to do so. A make-up session is held near mid term each semester, including summer session. Information about the make-up session is available from the front office (909 Soc Sci). Students who wish to take the exam must contact the front office early in the semester and get approval to attend the make-up session from their instructor. Any other 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.

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.

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

Undergraduate Advisor, Ann Miller, 923 Social Sciences – 624-6013

Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Rob Warren, 1172 Social Sciences - 624-2310

Sociology Honors Advisor, Professor Joachim Savelsberg, 1181 Social Sciences - 624-0273

Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Penny Edgell, 1074 Social Sciences – 624-9828 and/or Robert Fox, Graduate Program Associate, 931 Social Sciences - 624-2093