

**Sociology of Religion**  
**Wednesday, 9 am to 11:50 pm**  
**Bunch 2121**

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:30-3:15 pm  
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**Welcome and Overview**

Hello students! This is going to be a great class. It's going to be a lot of work, but by the end of the quarter, you should have a very good sense of how categories work within social science and a good grounding in some of the major conversations in contemporary theory. A few things are worth pointing out:

1. Each week is a combination of readings, usually a book and two articles. It's a lot of reading, and you might well have to skim the book. It's a skill to get used to, however. It will probably be around nine of hours of reading, plus the three hours of the course for around a twelve hour commitment per week (plus the papers of course). Also (see below) you are only required to read the book for class and will present on an article of your choice.
2. The second half of this course pays particular attention to Islam and the sociology of Islam.

**Attendance and Absences**

We only have ten meetings. If you miss more than two, it will affect your grade. I won't ask why you're not there (you're an adult!), but if you will need to miss more than two, please do contact me. Please be respectful of each other regarding the use of smart phones and social media and other random websites in class.

**Contacting Me and Office Hours.**

My office hours are listed above, but I'm always happy to have longer conversations with graduate students.

**Class Presentation and Readings**

You will all be required to read the book and both articles for each week. Each of you will be required to facilitate a conversation about the week's readings for one of the weeks.

**Papers**

You will write two papers, with the option of the second paper being an extension and elaboration of the first with the possibility of future publication. The papers should be no shorter than eight pages (Garamond, double space, 1 inch margins). They should have a clear argument about the themes we discuss in class, either using your own data or engaging in a theoretical or methodological critique. Papers should be e-mailed to me no later than midnight on the day they're due. Late papers will be deducted one letter grade each day. The papers will be due May 5 and June 9. I'm happy to give extensions on the first paper, but you have to ask me for it.

**Academic Honesty**

If you're caught plagiarizing, you get an automatic 0 on the paper. I'll also report you to the Dean.

## Grading

Paper 1: 30%

Paper 2: 30%

Class Presentations: 15%

Attendance and Participation: 25%

## Difficult Material

Some material in this class might be hard for some students. If you're worried that's the case, please contact me beforehand.

### Week 1: Emile Durkheim

1. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*
2. "Useful Durkheim" by Mustafa Emirbayer
3. "Civil Religion in America" by Robert Bellah

### Week 2: Max Weber

1. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* by Max Weber
2. "Religious Rejections of the World" by Max Weber
3. *Weber and Islam* (selections) by Bryan Turner

### Week 3: Interpretive Approaches to Religion (and their Discontents)

1. *Crossings and Dwellings* by Thomas Tweed
2. "Religion as a Cultural System" by Clifford Geertz
3. "The construction of religion as an anthropological category" by Talal Asad

### Week 4: Religion and Modernity

1. *Powers of Distinction* by Nancy Levene
2. "Religion, Religions, Religious" by J.Z. Smith
3. "A Cultural Sociology of Religion: New Directions" by Penny Edgell

### Week 5: What is Islam?

1. Sociology of Islam by Armando Salvatore
2. "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam" by Talal Asad
3. "Science Islamized: Localities and Fields of Knowledge" by Mona Abaza

### Week 6: Practicing Religion

1. *Politics of Piety* by Saba Mahmood
2. "Religious Self-Constitution: A Relational Perspective" by Michal Pagis
3. "A Hunger for God: Embodied Metaphor as Cultural Cognition in Action" by Daniel Winchester

### Week 7: A Sociology of Theology

1. Modern Islamic Thought in a Radical Age by Muhammad Zaman
2. "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements" by Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge
3. "Religion of Non-Privileged Classes" and "Intellectualism, Intellectuals, and the History of Religions" by Max Weber

Week 8: Global Religion

1. *The Idea of the Muslim World* by Cemil Aydin
2. “Immigration and Religion” by Wendy Cadge and Elaine Ecklund
3. “Redefining the Boundaries of Belonging: The Institutional Character of Transnational Religious Life” by Peggy Levitt

Week 9: Secularism Debates

1. *Islam & Secularity* by Nilüfer Göle
2. “Historicizing the Secularization Debate” by Philip Gorski
3. *Public Religions in the Modern World* by Jose Casanova (selections)

Week 10: Boundaries of Religion

1. *The Edge of Islam* by Janet McIntosh
2. “From the Outside In: Crossing Boundaries to Build Collective Identity in the New Atheist Movement” by Katja M. Guenther and Kerry Mulligan
3. “The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences” by Michele Lamont and Virag Molnar