

SOAN 228: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

Winter 2017

Carleton College

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Professor Wes Markofski

Class: MW 9:50-11:00am, F 9:40-10:40am (2a), Leighton 303

Office Hours: MW 3:15-4:30pm, F 3:30-4:30pm, Thurs 10-12pm or by appt.

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From the discipline's earliest days, sociologists have found religion to be a fascinating and perplexing object of study. Classical sociologists devoted enormous attention to the topic of religion, famously linking it to the development of capitalism and Western modernity (Weber), to social solidarity and symbolic classification systems (Durkheim), to political passivity and social conservatism (Marx), and to the varying forms of social, economic, and political life found in the world's great civilizations. A powerful social force, sociologists have explored religion's relationship to collective emotions, social solidarity, social inequality, social order, social movements, political oppression, political revolution, capitalism, discipline, democracy, and cultural conflict.

This course focuses on special topics in the contemporary sociology of religion, with a particular emphasis on the place of religion in American public and political life—a timely topic in light of the bruising presidential election of 2016. We will look at the intersection of race, religion, and politics; at secularization theory; at the culture war debate and the American civil religious tradition; and at conservative and progressive varieties of religious expression in 20th century American public and political life. As we do so, we will examine core theoretical perspectives and empirical developments in the contemporary sociology of religion.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology has specified six student learning outcomes we want students to acquire before graduating. The relevant outcomes for this course are:

- Articulating the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon in their many dimensions (e.g., temporal, structural, spatial, and symbolic).
- Applying sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena.
- Drawing upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world.

Course Materials

There are three required books for the course, which are available at the Carleton bookstore. Other required readings will be made available on the Moodle course website.

- Paul Lichterman and C. Brady Potts. (Eds.) 2009. *The Civic Life of American Religion*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Aldon D. Morris. 1984. *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: The Free Press.
- Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith. 2000. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Course Requirements

Your final grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

Reading Questions 15%	[Due each class session]
Participation 15%	[Due each class session]
Position Paper #1 10%	[Due Monday, 1/16]
Position Paper #2 10%	[Due Monday, 1/30]
Midterm Exam 25%	[Wednesday, 2/8]
Final Position Paper Presentation 5%	[Due Wednesday, 3/8]
Final Position Paper 20%	[Due Friday, 3/10]

A = 100-93; A- = <93-90; B+ = <90-87; B = <87-83; B- = <83-80; C+ = <80-77; C = <77-73; C- = <73-70; D+ = <70-67; D = <67-60; F = <60

Policy on Late Work: Late work will be penalized one grade increment (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+) per day in the absence of clear and demonstrable extenuating circumstances (e.g., extended illness, family emergency, letter from dean's office, etc.).

Readings: To do well in this course, it is imperative that you commit to several hours of active, focused reading prior to each class meeting in order to complete the readings and reading questions and be prepared to engage dynamically in class discussions.

Some questions to keep in mind while reading: What is the main argument of the section/text? Key concepts and definitions? What methods & evidence are used to support the authors' arguments? Make a note of concepts/arguments you find difficult to understand (to bring up in class). Make a note of things you agree/disagree with, or find plausible/improbable, exciting/problematic, etc. (to bring up in class discussions).

Reading Questions: In order to facilitate active, critical engagement with the readings, and to stimulate discussion & debate with one another (through which much of our learning will occur), each student is required to upload via Moodle at least two reading questions prior to each class meeting:

- (1) One (or more) question, comment, or critique about a main idea in the text. (*Examples: Is the distinction between theological communitarianism and theological individualism really all that important? I'm unconvinced. Or What exactly is secularization theory? Or I think Weber's discussion of the economic ethics of world religions is utterly [brilliant / offensive / unverifiable.]*)
- (2) One (or more) comment or question comparing, contrasting, or otherwise relating something from the readings to a prior reading, personal experience, or contemporary issue. (*Examples: I can't believe how relevant Hunter's argument a culture war between progressives and the religiously orthodox continues to be in light of the 2016 election. Or I find moral cosmology theory much more persuasive than the culture war thesis. Or My uncle talks about race and religion just like the interview respondents in Smith and Emerson's book.*)

Reading questions should be posted by 8am before each class session. You may miss two session's worth of reading questions without consequence; beyond that, each failure to upload reading questions will incrementally lower your participation/reading question grade. Reading question submissions can range from a couple sentences up to a single paragraph in length.

Participation: Your personal success in this course (as well as its collective success) depends on your active and sustained engagement throughout the entire term. I expect everyone to participate at a high level; however, I recognize we don't all have the same personalities or learning styles. While participation includes asking questions and contributing vigorously (yet respectfully) to class discussions, it also involves consistent presence and attentiveness to others throughout the term. Active participation also means refraining from non-course related use of electronic devices during class time. You may miss two class sessions without consequence; beyond that, each missed class will incrementally lower your participation grade.

Position Papers #1 and #2: 3-4 page papers, due Monday, 1/16 and Monday, 1/30, respectively, topics TBA.

Midterm Exam: A short answer/essay exam, to be given in class on Wednesday, Feb 8.

Final Position Paper Presentation: A 3-5 minute presentation, to be presented Wednesday, 3/8, describing your final position paper main idea & argument, followed by peer discussion.

Final Position Paper: An 8-10 page paper, due Friday, 3/10, discussing the possibilities and limits of religious contributions to problems of race and inequality in America.

Important Note: If at any point in the term you become concerned about your grade, a particular assignment, classroom participation or classroom climate issues, falling behind, or anything else, *please don't wait to come visit me during office hours or otherwise contact me!* The sooner we identify potential problems and concerns, the more effectively we will be able to work together to address them.

Academic Integrity

In line with Carleton's policy on academic integrity, it is assumed that a student is the author of all coursework submitted by that student. Please refer to Carleton's full policy for additional information or see me if you have questions. <http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/>

Academic Support

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Services office (Burton Hall 03) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, sensory, or physical), please contact Chris Dallager, Director of Disability Services, by calling 507-222-5250 or sending an email to cdallager@carleton.edu to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Technological Resources for Students with Disabilities: The Assistive Technology program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

Library: Ask a librarian for help with your research in this class. You can drop by the library's Research/IT desk to ask any question you have, at any point in your process. Librarians help students find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. For more information, visit the Gould Library website at go.carleton.edu/library.

The Writing Center: The Writing Center, located in 420 4th Libe, has peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the writing center website. You can reserve specific times for conferences in 420 4th Libe by using their online appointment system. Walk-ins are welcome, though writers with appointments have priority.

Writing Assistance for Students Whose First Language Is Not English: If you are a second language writer and believe you might benefit from working individually with a writing consultant on a regular basis this term, email Renata Fitzpatrick, Multilingual Writing Coordinator, call her at x5998, or stop by her office in 420D 4th Libe. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

Class Presentations and Public Speaking: Speech coaching is a student-staffed resource designed to assist you with class presentations, comps talks, and other speech-related events. Your coach can assist you with speech & communication skills including clarity, organization, articulation, projection, body language, eye contact, and effective use of aids (e.g., notes, PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.). Depending

on your goals, your coach can also work with you on the content of the presentation: organization, voice, clarity, and, ultimately, persuasive impact. For more information: go.carleton.edu/speakeasy.

Time Management, Test-Preparation Strategies, and Study Skills: All Residential Life Area Directors are trained to work with you to improve your time management and academic skills. Their goals are to heighten your awareness of your personal strengths and skills and to offer different ways you can approach your academic work so you're more efficient and effective. Meetings are by appointment; you simply need to email one of them to arrange a visit. For details and resources: Academic Skills Coaching website.

Course Outline and Reading Schedule

* Please read the selections in order as they are listed on the syllabus, and be sure to bring the day's readings with you to class. Stop and start your reading at the obvious place (section beginning/end, first/last paragraph, etc.) unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

Wed 1/4 (Week 1)

Studying Religion in the Age of Trump

- FORUM: Wes Markofski, "Return of the Monolith? Understanding the White Evangelical Trump Vote," & other essays

Fri 1/6

Religion and Difference in America

- Robert Putnam and David Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, Chapter 1, Chapter 14, Chapter 15 (excluding pp. 542-547)

RELIGION IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

Mon 1/9 (Week 2)

Religion in American Civil Society (1) (*Position Paper #1 distributed*)

- Paul Lichterman and C. Brady Potts (Eds.), *The Civic Life of American Religion*, pp. 1-11, Chapter 3 (Ammerman), Chapter 6 (Lichterman), Chapter 8 (Lichterman and Potts)

Wed 1/11

Religion in American Civil Society (2)

- Paul Lichterman, *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Attempting to Bridge America's Divisions*, Introduction, Chapter One

Fri 1/13

Religion in American Civil Society (3)

- Paul Lichterman, *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Attempting to Bridge America's Divisions*, Chapters 7-8

Mon 1/16 (Week 3)

***** Position Paper #1 Due *****

Religion in American Civil Society (4)

- Wes Markofski, "The Public Sociology of Religion."

Wed 1/18

Religion in American Civil Society (5)

- Mark Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy*, Introduction, Chapter 2

Fri 1/20

Religion in American Civil Society (6)

- Mark Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy*, Chapter 7, Chapter 9

Mon 1/23 (Week 4)

Culture War (*Position Paper #2 distributed*)

- *Is There a Culture War?: A Dialogue on Values and American Public Life*, pp. 1-4, Chapter 1
- Nancy Davis and Robert Robinson, "Religious Orthodoxy in American Society: The Myth of a Monolithic Camp."

Wed 1/25

Moral Cosmology Theory

- Nancy Davis and Robert Robinson, "The Egalitarian Face of Islamic Orthodoxy: Support for Islamic Law and Economic Justice in Seven Muslim-Majority Nations."

Fri 1/27

American Civil Religion

- Philip Gorski, *American Covenant: A History of Civil Religion from the Puritans to the Present*, Preface, Chapter 1, pp. 191-203

SECULARIZATION AND RELIGIOUS VITALITY

Mon 1/30 (Week 5)

***** Position Paper #2 Due *****

Secularization Theory

- Phil Gorski and Ates Altinordu, “After Secularization?”

Wed 2/1

Religious Vitality & American Evangelicalism (1)

- Christian Smith, *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want*, Chapter 1 and *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, Chapter 3

Fri 2/3

Religious Vitality & American Evangelicalism (2) (*Midterm Course Evaluations*)

- Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, Chapter 4, Conclusion

Mon 2/6 (Week 6)

Midterm Break

Wed 2/8

***** Midterm Exam *****

RACE, RELIGION, AND AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

Fri 2/10

The Black Church in America (1)

- W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Chapter X
- Robert Wortham, “W.E.B. DuBois and the Philadelphia Black Church: An Early Sociological Study,” pp. 31-33, 46-50, 52 (from “Finally”)-54
- Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, “The Sacred as the Basis for Human Creativity and Agency in the Black Church.”

Mon 2/13 (Week 7)

Civil Rights and the Black Church in America (1) (*Final Position Paper Assignment distributed*)

- Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2 (stop at p. 25), Chapter 3

Wed 2/15

Civil Rights and the Black Church in America (2)

- Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, Chapter 4, Chapter 6

Fri 2/17

Civil Rights and the Black Church in America (3)

- Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*, xi-xiii (stop at "The book was originally"), pp. 1-9, 56-66, 98-106
- Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, Chapter 7

Mon 2/20 (Week 8)

Civil Rights and the Black Church in America (4)

- Aldon Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*, Chapters 8-9, pp. 286-290

Wed 2/22

The Black Church in America (2)

- Mary Patillo, "Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community."
- Omar McRoberts, "Beyond Savior, Victim, and Sinner: Neighborhood Civic Life and 'Absent Presence' in the Religious District." Chapter 5 in *The Civic Life of American Religion*.
- Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "Plenty Good Room: Adaptation in a Changing Black Church."
- Barack Obama, selection from "A More Perfect Union."

Fri 2/24

Evangelicalism and the Problem of Race in America (1)

- Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, Introduction, Chapters 1-2

Mon 2/27 (Week 9)

Evangelicalism and the Problem of Race in America (2)

- Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, Chapters 4-6

Wed 3/1

Evangelicalism and the Problem of Race in America (3)

- Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*, Chapters 7-8

Fri 3/3

Evangelicalism and the Problem of Race in America (4)

- Eric Tranby and Douglas Hartman, "Critical Whiteness Theories and the Evangelical 'Race Problem': Extending Emerson and Smith's *Divided by Faith*."
- Paul Lichterman, Prudence Carter, and Michele Lamont, "Race-Bridging for Christ? Conservative Christians and Black-White Relations in Community Life."

Mon 3/6 (Week 10)

Multiracial Congregations and Racial Inequality

- Korie Edwards, Brad Christerson, and Michael Emerson, "Race, Religious Organizations, and Integration."
- Korie Edwards, "Bring Race to the Center: The Importance of Race in Racially Diverse Religious Organizations."

CONCLUSION

Wed 3/8

***** Final Position Paper Presentations *****

Fri 3/10

***** Final Position Paper Due by 5pm *****

Conclusion (TBA) (*Final Course Evaluations*)