

Soc 265 Sociology of Religion
Fall 2006 (fulfills M3 requirement)
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:20 – 11:30; Memorial 302

Professor Daniel Jasper
PPHAC 316

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00, Fridays 9:30 – 10:15, or by appointment

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Course Overview: From the beginning of the sociological endeavor, the study of religion has been central to the understanding of modern societies. Early sociologists such as Max Weber and Emile Durkheim made inquiries into religion the foundations of their larger research agendas. This course will continue in this tradition by surveying the interactions between religion and society while developing the sociological approach to the study of religion as a social institution. In particular, we will look at the ways in which religion is transformed by, and plays a role in the transformation of, a global society. Students will:

- develop a basic understanding of the world religions;
- learn how religion is shaped by and, in turn, shapes the larger social field in which it exists;
- become familiar with the dynamics of secularization, new religious movements, and other developments;
- develop an understanding of the ways in which religion interacts with other social institutions such as the state and economy, and culture;
- analyze the changing nature of religious pluralism in the United States and around the world.

Course Requirements and Expectations: It is expected that all students will have thoroughly and thoughtfully completed the weekly readings, and be prepared to discuss these, by our first meeting of each week. Students are expected to regularly contribute to in-class discussions with reactions and responses that deal directly with the issues and texts being considered. This participation will count for 20 % of the final grade. Reading the required texts and participating in class discussions is not a sufficient amount of work for this course. For students to do well in this course, they will need to read and think systematically about religion over the course of the semester. Towards this end, all students will keep a journal of their observations, thinking, and reflection about religion (these will be discussed the first week of class). Journals will account for 20% of the final grade.

Other requirements:

- Comparative Review of 2 Academic Journal Articles – 20 % of final grade
- Analytic Review of cultural text that involves religion – 20 % of final grade
- Final Exam – 20 % of final grade

Repressive Policies and other mechanisms of social control: It is expected that all students conduct themselves as professional scholars in this course. This means that students will arrive for class on time, prepared to participate in the collective work of the

course. Students will have all necessary materials with them—including the texts under discussion, and leave unnecessary distractions (such as cell phones) behind.

Students must abide by the conventions of scholarly work, most importantly, the conventions of citation. All students should read and be familiar with the college policy on Academic Honesty included in the student handbook. All written work must include full and proper citations. There are no exceptions, including ignorance. Cheating and plagiarism will result in failing this course.

Students who wish to submit their writing assignments through electronic mail may send it to my email address only as an attached Word document. Assignments submitted in this way must be received by 10:00pm the evening **before** the due date. No late reading logs will be accepted, other late assignments will be penalized 10 % per day.

Required Text:

Kurtz, Lester. *Gods in the Global Village*. 2E. Pine Forge.

All other required texts are either available online, in the library, or will be distributed. Texts marked with an asterisk (*) are available through one of the online databases accessible through the library. Texts marked with an 'e' are available as ebooks from ebrary, available through Reeves Library. Unmarked texts in the schedule will be made available—details will be provided in class. Please bring a copy of all texts with you to class.

Course Outline

Please note, the outline below is merely a guide. Changes are possible as the semester progresses.

Week 1 (August 29 & 31) Course Introduction

Kurtz: Preface, pp. 1-11

Week 2 (September 5 & 7) Defining and Studying Religion

Kurtz: Ch. 1

* Asad, Talal. "Anthropological conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz" in *Man* (NS) 18:237-59. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0025-1496%28198306%292%3A18%3A2%3C237%3AACORRO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>

Week 3 (September 12 & 14) Religious Nuts and Bolts: Asia

Kurtz: Ch. 2

* Novetzke, Christian. "Diving an Author" *History of Religions* 42:3.
Tukaram. *Says Tuka*. Selections.

Week 4 (September 19 & 21) Religious Nuts and Bolts: The Abrahamic Religions

Kurtz: Ch. 3

Ginzburg, Carlo. *The Cheese and the Worms* pp. 1-17

Week 5 (September 26 & 28) Religion and the Social Structure

Kurtz: Ch. 4

Week 6 (October 3 & 5) New Economic Ethics of Religion

* Sanneh, Kelefa "Play and Grow Rich" *The New Yorker* 11 Oct. 2004.

* Shorto, Russell. "Faith at Work" *New York Times Magazine*. 31 Oct. 2004.
Review Essay due on October 3

Week 7 (Tuesday October 10) No Class – Fall Break

(October 12): Debating Evolution

* Talbot, Margaret, "Darwin in the Dock" *The New Yorker*. 5 December 2005.

* Orr, H. Allen, "Devolution" *The New Yorker* 30 May 2005.

Week 8 (October 17 & 19) Religious Pluralism

Kurtz, Ch. 5

Week 9 (October 24 & 26) Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism

Eck, Diana "American Religious Pluralism: Civic and Theological Discourse"
Presented at "The New Religious Pluralism and Democracy" conference. Georgetown
University, April 21-22, 2005. <http://irpp.georgetown.edu/eck.pdf>

Jose Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism" Presented at
"The New Religious Pluralism and Democracy" conference. Georgetown University,
April 21-22, 2005. <http://irpp.georgetown.edu/casanova.pdf>

Week 10 (October 31 & November 2) Dynamics of Religious Pluralism

* Kramer, Jane. "Taking the Veil" *The New Yorker* 22 November 2004

* Bahrapour, Tara. "Persia on the Pacific" *The New Yorker* 10 Nov. 2003

Week 11 (November 7 & 9) New Religious Developments

Kurtz, Ch. 6

* Mahler, Jonathan. "The Soul of the New Exurb" *New York Times Magazine*
March 27, 2005.

Week 12 (November 14 & 16) Gender

Hawkins, Billy "A Critical Reading of a Promise Keepers event: The
interworkings of race, religion, and sport" *Sociology of Sport Online* Vol. 3, issue 1,
2000. <http://physed.otago.ac.nz/sosol/v3i1/v3i1a2.htm>

* Gallagher, Sally K. and Sabrina Wood, "Godly Manhood Going Wild?"
Sociology of Religion 66:2.

Analytic Essay Due on November 16

Week 13 (November 21) Religious Conflict

Kurtz, Ch. 7

(Thursday November 23) No Class for Thanksgiving

Week 14 (November 28 & 30) Religious Conflict cont'd

* Baruma, Ian. "Final Cut" *The New Yorker*. January 3, 2005.

* Junod, Tom. "Innocent" *Esquire*. July 2006.

Other Readings TBA

Week 15 (December 5 & 7) Course Conclusion

Final Exam During Scheduled Exam Period