

Spring, 2019 SOCIOLOGY 4331 -- RELIGION AND SOCIETY

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Dr. Koch's Office Hours: T-Th 8:00-9:15 a.m. and by appt. Holden Hall 269. (806) 834-3920.

Religion is a complex social phenomenon. Individual circumstances and events, as well as complex social issues, inform and shape how individuals come to believe in a Divine Being, act out their beliefs in ritual, experience other-worldly events and emotions, then organize, institutionalize and systematize these processes. Moreover, religion stands with myriads of political, educational, economic, familial, and medical partners in culture.

***** The primary goal of this class is to stimulate critical thinking and reflection. *****

This seminar is designed to provide students an opportunity to learn and engage the process of independent inquiry. To the extent possible, it involves a process identical to the development, presentation, and evaluation of independent scholarship. In this class, students learn to frame a research question with a topic of their own interest and investigate relevant published research. Students use the results of that investigation to assemble an annotated bibliography, which becomes the point of departure for any research process.

COURSE FORMAT

The course begins with foundational material to help students refine their sociological worldview. We then explore several specific topics related to the social antecedents and consequences of religious behavior, organizational religion, and the array of ways religion informs, and is shaped by our culture. Each topic will first be addressed with a didactic presentation of varying types. This comprises the Tuesday class period each week. Each Thursday, the class divides into discussion groups to engage a series of follow-up questions and/or information students have gathered by journaling ("Show and Tell.") We conclude our investigation of each topic with plenary discussion summarizing our most interesting and controversial insights. Everyone's ideas will be invited and we will teach each other what we have learned.

Learning Outcomes:

1. It is expected that the students will learn how to access, understand, and extend their thinking about religion and society in America through reading and discussing current research.
2. It is expected that students will apply what they have learned by independently investigating a topic of interest acquired through reading current research and by framing a research question of their own which extends the logic of current literature.
3. It is expected that students will share what they have learned with their colleagues. This involves both informal and formal interaction in a professional, scholarly context.
4. It is expected that students will read and critically review all readings, actively participate in discussion, and systematically investigate research literature. This draws students into the process by which behavioral scientists discover, describe, and explain the behaviors and interactions concerning religion in American society. Formulating an annotated bibliography synthesizes their investigation.

Methods of Assessing Learning Outcomes:

The primary goal of this course is to encourage creative thinking by sharing ideas and experiences. Even so, the class structure also involves expectations and consequences. Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on each of the following:

1. **80 points -- Take-home exams:** There will be four of these, two questions each. The exam questions will be adapted from the discussion sessions. Each question should be answered in about *one* double-spaced, typewritten page.
2. **40 points: Annotated Bibliography** – Students begin by writing a 2-3 page description of their research question and why it is important to address it. “Why is it important – emotionally and academically – to you.” “Why is it important to society?” Students then consult the research literature and compile an annotated bibliography of at least 15 sources from scholarly (peer-reviewed) journal articles which relate to their research question. Examples and handouts are provided online.
3. **20 points – Journaling.** Blank pages for your journal are available for download and printing. A description and discussion of each assigned reading, and each “Show and Tell” piece comprises one page of students’ journals. These will be collected and examined for content four times during the semester. An up-to-date and complete journal earns 5 points each time they are collected. Don’t leave home without it!
4. **10 points: Class attendance and participation:** As is evident from the course format, the value of the learning process depends on the interaction of class participants. Attendance will be taken every day. At the end of the term, two points will be added for everyone who was in attendance on each of the five least well-attended sessions.

**** There are no excused absences. ****

(Exception for University sponsored activity, documented in advance)

In effect, only five days actually count; the rest are "excused." One can accumulate ten points this way. This often means the difference in one grade level. In practical terms: Each day you miss actually raises the probability of that day being one of the five that "count."

Grades will be calculated as follows: 200 possible points (90 exams; 60 quizzes; 40 writing assignment; 10 attendance) **135-150 = A; 120-134 = B; 105-119 = C; 90-104 = D; > 90 = F**

READING ASSIGNMENTS: The readings for each topic covered in the course are available at no cost on the Professor’s web page. These are examples of current theory and research relating to the relationships between Religion and Society. **It is expected that the reading assigned for each topic will be completed before each class period, thus enabling you to use the reading material to inform your discussion.**

University Policies:

Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note: instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification

from SDS has been provided. For additional information, please contact SDS in West Hall or call 806-742-2405.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Plagiarism, or academic theft, is passing off someone else's work as your own. Please note: plagiarism simply means *using someone else's ideas without acknowledging it* (no matter if you use that person's actual words or not).

Regardless of your background, while you attend this class, you are responsible for following the university rules regarding academic integrity.

Religious Holy Days (O.P. 34.19): "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known **in writing** to the instructor **prior to the absence**. I prefer email notification. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the *Office for Student Rights & Resolution*, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: **TTU Student Counseling Center**, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/> (Provides confidential support on campus.) **TTU Student Counseling Center 24-hour Helpline**, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) **Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center**, 806-763-7273, voiceofhopelubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) **The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office**, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) **Texas Tech Police Department**, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/ttpd/> (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

Religion and Society Schedule:

January 17	Orientation, Introductions, Logistics.
Week of January 22	Theory.
Week of January 29	Methods.
Week of Feb 5	Religion and Solidarity.
Week of Feb 12	Religion and Oppression. Take home 1 distributed Tue.; due Thurs. Feb 14.
Week of Feb 19	Religion as Symbolic Interaction.
Week of Feb 26	Prayer and Healing. Dr. Ron Cook, Chair, UMC Dept. of Family Practice.
Week of Mar 5	Religion and Health Take home 2 distributed Tue.; due Thurs. Mar. 7.
Week of Mar 12	Spring Break
Week of Mar 19	Religion & Diversity Rev. Dr. Tom Bohache, Metropolitan Community Church
Week of Mar 26	Religion and Family.
Week of Apr 2	Religion and Education
Week of Apr 9	Why Study Religion? Dr. Kevin Dougherty, Baylor University
Week of Apr 16	Religion, Politics, Economics. Take home 3 distributed Tue.; due Th. Apr 18
Week of Apr 23	Religion and Deviance
Week of Apr 30	Bioethics Take home 4 distributed Tue.; due Thurs. May 2.
May 7	Wrap up. Annotated Bib due.