

University of North Texas at Dallas

Spring 2012

SYLLABUS

Course Abbreviation/Number/Title/Semester Hrs			
SOCI 3700D: Sociology of Religion 3Hrs			
Department of	Sociology	Division of	Arts & Sciences
Instructor Name:	Baranda Sawyers		
Office Location:	Dallas 2, 325		
Office Phone:	972-338-1379		
Email Address:	baranda.sawyers@unt.edu		
Office Hours:	Tuesdays & Thursdays: 1 PM – 2 PM Mondays & Wednesdays: 10 AM – 11 AM		
Classroom Location:	Dallas 1, 102		
Class Meeting Days & Times:	Monday & Wednesday 5:30 PM – 6:50 PM		
Course Catalog Description:	Sociology of Religion. 3 hours. A review of the common sociological dimensions of all religions such as moral definitions, group membership and dynamics, prescribed ritual practices and definitions of the sacred. An examination of sociologists contributing to the field such as Durkheim and Weber. Includes a sociological analysis of major world religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.		
Prerequisites:	SOC1 1510		
Co-requisites:			
Required Text:	Text: <i>Religion in Society: A Sociology of Religion</i> . 8th Edition. Author: Ronald L. Johnstone		
Recommended Text and References:	Smith, Huston. 1995. <i>The Illustrated World's Religions</i> . San Francisco: Harper. [This book will not be used until the second half of the course and is readily and inexpensively available.]		
Access to Learning Resources:	UNT Dallas Library: phone: (972) 780-3625; web: http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/library.htm UNT Dallas Bookstore: phone: (972) 780-3652; e-mail: 1012mgr@fheg.follett.com		
Course Goals or Overview:	<p>The goal of this course is to understand religion as a significant social phenomenon in the present age of globalization, especially in contemporary American society. In this course we will focus on the theoretical and social development of the sociology of religion as a field of study and analyze the history and culture of the major world religions. The content and activities of the course seek to apply sociological perspectives to conceptual and empirical knowledge of religion around the world, rather than compare.</p> <p>There are three primary goals in this course: 1) Introduce and enhance your ability to think critically from the sociological perspective; 2) Reduce the mystery and fear associated with writing and presenting/discussing sociological topics at the postsecondary level; 3) Exercise your ability to evaluate and synthesize the connection between biography and history as a means of understanding the sociological significance of religion globally.</p>		

Learning Objectives/Outcomes: At the end of this course, the student will	
1	Describe the sociological contributions to understanding religion in an individual's social life.
2	Explain and synthesize sociological theory about religion, from classic to contemporary.
3	Recognize and describe sociological methodology in the research of religion.
4	Understand and apply basic concepts in sociology of religion.
5	Explain and synthesize social and cultural variations after analyzing all main world religions.
6	Interpret and apply basic sociological principles to the social phenomenon of religion.
7	Evaluate existing research & current advances in the field of sociology of religion.

Course Outline

This schedule is subject to change by the instructor. Any changes to this schedule will be communicated in class.

CLASS	TOPICS	DATE
1	Course Overview & Introductions	8/29
2	Course Assignments & College Resources	9/5
3	Understanding Religion Sociologically: H.S. Preface & Chapter 1 Introduction to the Sociology of Religion: R.L.J. Chapter 1	9/10
4	The Sources of Religion: R.L.J. Chapter 2	9/12
5	Religion as a Group Phenomenon: R.L.J. Chapter 3	9/17
6	The Church-Sect Continuum of Religious Organization: R.L.J. Chapter 4	9/19
7	Becoming Religious: R.L.J. Chapter 5	9/24
8	Religious Conflict: R.L.J. Chapter 6	9/26
9	Religion & Politics: R.L.J. Chapter 7	10/1
10	Religious Fundamentalism: R.L.J. Chapter 8	10/3
12	Religion & the Economy: R.L.J. Chapter 9	10/8
13	Religion & the Class System: R.L.J. Chapter 10	10/10
14	Women & Religion: R.L.J. Chapter 11	10/15
15	Black & Native American Religion in American: R.L.J. Chapter 13	10/17
16	History & Biography: C. Wright Mills "The Promise"	10/22
17	Hinduism: H.S. Chapter 2	10/24
18	Buddhism: H.S. Chapter 3	10/29
19	Confucianism: H.S. Chapter 4	10/31
20	Taoism: H.S. Chapter 5	11/5
21	Islam: H.S. Chapter 6	11/7
22	Judaism: H.S. Chapter 7	11/12
23	Christianity: H.S. Chapter 8	11/14
24	The Primal Religions: H.S. Chapter 9	11/19
25	Denominational Society: R.L.J. Chapter 14	11/21
THANKSGIVING BREAK: NOVEMBER 22-25		
26	Major Historical Developments: R.L.J. Chapter 12	11/26
27	Student Presentations of Rituals	11/28
28	Student Presentations of Rituals	12/3
29	Student Presentations of Rituals	12/5
30	The Future of Religion: R.L.J. Chapter 15/ Final Examination: H.S. Chapter 10	12/10
31	*** FINAL EXAM *** (please see schedule available online)	12/12

Course Evaluation Methods

This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes for the course. Rubrics will be given for all course instruments except **class participation and quizzes**.

Exams – *written assessment designed to measure knowledge of presented course material*

Activities – *written assignments designed to supplement and reinforce course material*

Presentation – *assignment designed to measure ability to apply and explain course material*

Class Participation – *daily attendance and engagement in class discussions*

Assignments – *written and oral activities designed to create critical engagement with course material*

Quizzes – *written assessments given without notice to measure student preparedness for exams*

Grading Matrix:

Instrument	Value (points or percentages)	Total
Religious Biographical History	1 paper at 40 points each	40
Reading Leader Assignments	4 assignments at 15 points each	60
Quizzes	6 assessments at 15 points each	90
Conventional Wisdom Debates	1 debate at 45 points each	45
Ritual Presentations	1 presentation at 40 points each	40
Class Participation/ Engagement	25 points total	25
Final Exam	100 points total	100
Total:		400

Grade Determination:

A = 400 – 360 pts; i.e. 90% or better

B = 320 – 359 pts; i.e. 80 – 89 %

C = 280 – 319 pts; i.e. 70 – 79 %

D = 240 – 279 pts; i.e. 60 – 69 %

F = 239 pts or below; i.e. less than 60%

Instructor Policies and Procedures

Email:

In **ALL** emails please put the course number and section number as the **subject heading (SOCI 3700.090)** or else your message may not be read. **I expect you to write your emails properly.** In other words, please address me properly, use complete sentences, proper spelling and grammar, and make sure your name is at the end of the email or I will NOT respond. Please use your name and my name in all emails. For example, I will not respond to emails that address me as “Hey,” or “Yo,” and/or that are signed off without a name or as “Peace,” or “get back.” If you email me and have not heard a response within a 36 hour time frame, I would suggest you re-read your message to see if you are missing any of these requirements.

If I have not responded to your specific email message within 36 hours, before you send me multiple messages please first check the Blackboard Learn site for an announcement or email message addressed to the entire class. Sometimes several students had similar concerns and it was more effective to send everyone a note to ensure clarity for ALL. Remember that you are not my only student and your class is not the only one I teach so it may take me an entire day before I can get to your email. Leaving numerous messages will not speed up the process. Messages sent via email can often “sound” very differently than they would if you were talking to someone in person. **Therefore, it is important to write emails properly and in a professional manner to avoid confusing, frustrating or inappropriate situations.**

Using email accounts outside of Blackboard Learn or your UNT account increases risks that you may not receive all communications as a result of spam blockers and policy regulations. **I also cannot communicate information about your grades and other information covered under FERPA policies outside of your Blackboard Learn account.**

Assignment Policy:

As a consequence of the format of each class session and the exams for this course section, there are no make-up exams or assignments. **YOU** are responsible for all announcements made in class, all information relayed during lecture, all discussions in class, all notes, and all videos viewed in class. **I DO NOT** provide notes for students; it is in your best interest to share notes or ask other students to help you if you are absent.

Exam Policy:

Exams should be taken as scheduled. No makeup examinations will be allowed.

University Policies and Procedures

Students with Disabilities (ADA Compliance):

The University of North Texas Dallas faculty is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students' with documented disabilities are responsible for informing faculty of their needs for reasonable accommodations and providing written authorized documentation. Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed as accommodations are not retroactive. For more information, you may visit the Student Life Office, Suite 200, Building 2 or call Laura Smith at 972-780-3632.

Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Policy:

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is a hallmark of higher education. You are expected to abide by the University's code of Academic Integrity policy. Any person suspected of academic dishonesty (i.e., cheating or plagiarism) will be handled in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. Refer to the Student Code of Academic Integrity at http://www.unt.edu/unt-dallas/policies/Chapter%2007%20Student%20Affairs,%20Education,%20and%20Funding/7.002%20Code%20of%20Academic_Integrity.pdf for complete provisions of this code.

In addition, all academic work submitted for this class, including exams, papers, and written assignments should include the following statement: "On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance that violates the UNTD Academic Integrity Policy."

Bad Weather Policy:

On those days that present severe weather and driving conditions, a decision may be made to close the campus. In case of inclement weather, call UNT Dallas Campuses main voicemail number (972) 780-3600 or search postings on the campus website www.unt.edu/dallas. Students are encouraged to update their Eagle Alert contact information, so they will receive this information automatically.

Attendance and Participation Policy:

The University attendance policy is in effect for this course. Class attendance and participation is expected because the class is designed as a shared learning experience and because essential information not in the textbook will be discussed in class. The dynamic and intensive nature of this course makes it impossible for students to make-up or to receive credit for missed classes. Attendance and participation in all class meetings is essential to the integration of course material and your ability to demonstrate proficiency. Students are responsible to notify the instructor if they are missing class and for what reason. Students are also responsible for coordinating arrangements with a class colleague to obtain a copy of the class session information, including notes & activities, if they are absent.

Diversity/Tolerance Policy:

Students are encouraged to contribute their perspectives and insights to class discussions. However, offensive & inappropriate language (swearing) and remarks offensive to others of particular nationalities, ethnic groups, sexual preferences, religious groups, genders, or other ascribed statuses will not be tolerated. Disruptions which violate the Code of Student Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Life as the instructor deems appropriate.