

# SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

SOC 3200

Spring 2023

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<b>Instructor:</b>	Kenneth R. Hanson, PhD	<b>Time:</b>	MWF 10:00 – 10:50am
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:khanso17@uwyo.edu">khanso17@uwyo.edu</a>	<b>Place:</b>	212 Aven Nelson Bldg.
<b>GA:</b>	Allyson Lehr	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:aricha16@uwyo.edu">aricha16@uwyo.edu</a>

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**Office:** 304 A&S Bldg.

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 3:00 – 5:00 pm, Thursday 10:00 – 11:00 am, or by appointment

**Course Materials:** PDFs available on WyoCourses

- All readings will be uploaded to WyoCourses / Canvas.
- Reading and lecture material will be included on tests.
- Students who consult materials outside of course content must cite appropriately.

**Objectives:** This course introduces undergraduate students to sociological studies of religion. Religion played a key role in the development of classical sociological theory and continues to structure and influence society at the macro and micro levels today. In this course, students will explore the historical impact of religion in sociological thought and examine a mixture of classic and contemporary studies in the sociology of religion specifically. Particular emphasis will be placed on religion in the United States and other Western nations, but we will also examine other contexts. By examining religion's role in society, students will be able to articulate a deep understanding of how religious beliefs and practices are embedded into the organization of society and shape people's identities, motivations, and social practices.

**Prerequisites:** SOC 1000

**Course Assignments:**

- 5 Essays (10% each)
- 3 Exams (10% each)
- Final Exam (20%)

**Late Assignment Policy:** Given there are ample essay opportunities, they will not be accepted after their deadline. Exams can only be made up in the case of excusable absences (traveling for UW sports, medical and family emergencies, etc.).

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\*You may earn 3 extra credit points if you visit me during office hours sometime before the end of week 5 and ask a professional or course related question.

**Important Dates:**

Last day to drop .....	January 26
Exam #1 .....	February 10
Exam #2 .....	March 10
Midterm Grades Posted .....	March 21
Last day to withdraw .....	April 7
Exam #3 .....	April 14
Final Exam .....	TBD
Final Grades Posted .....	May 18

**Assignment Overview:**

- Detailed assignment instructions will be posted to Canvas and discussed in class.
- **Essays** — Eleven weeks of the course have an essay prompt students can respond to. Responses must be between 500–750 words with a 25 word grace. Essays outside that range will lose points. They are due on Canvas at 11:59 p.m. of the day listed. Each essay is worth 10% of a student's overall grade for a combined total of 50% of the student's grade. Because there are 11 essay opportunities, students must choose which five essays they will complete. Students wishing to complete extra essays will not earn extra credit; however, only the five highest scoring essays will be included in a student's grade. This means that starting with the 6th essay, the student's lowest scoring essay will be dropped.
  - Essay #1 Jan 27 — What is the role of religion in classical sociological theory?
  - Essay #2 Feb 3 — Respond to the secularization hypothesis: Is religion in decline?
  - Essay #3 Feb 17 — How are religious fundamentalism and terrorism connected?
  - Essay #4 Feb 24 — How does Christian nationalism articulate American values?
  - Essay #5 Mar 3 — How are contradictions with religious doctrine instrumental to change?
  - Essay #6 Mar 24 — How do beliefs in supernatural phenomena shape society?
  - Essay #7 Mar 31 — How are cultural appropriation and religious practices connected?
  - Essay #8 Apr 7 — Respond to the tension between feminism and Islam: Are they incompatible?
  - Essay #9 Apr 21 — How has colonization shaped Western civilization's relationship with nature?
  - Essay #10 Apr 28 — Connect Diefendorf's argument to themes present in any of the previous weeks.
  - Essay #11 May 5 — Connect Zeller's argument to themes present in any of the previous weeks.
- **Exam #1** — This exam will cover content from the start of the course through February 6. It will include a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions.
- **Exam #2** — This exam will cover content from February 13 through March 6. It will include a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions.
- **Exam #3** — This exam will cover content from March 20 through April 10. It will include a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer questions.
- **Final Exam** — This is a cumulative exam — from the start of the course through to the end. It will include a combination of true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**Course Policy: Grading Distribution**

- 90–100% = A
- 80–89% = B
- 70–79% = C
- 60–69% = D
- 0–59% = F

**Course Policy: Writing Guidelines**

- Correct grammar and spelling are expected.
- Upload all assignments on WyoCourses (Canvas).
- Use 12. pt. Times New Roman or a similarly standard font (Arial, Courier, Garamond, Helvetica).
- Double-space papers.
- Use a standard citation style (APA, ASA, Chicago, MLA).
- Failure to adhere to course policies will result in a loss of points.

**Course Policy: Attendance and Participation**

- Attendance and participation are encouraged but not required.
- Makeups for missed midterms will be determined case-by-case after students provide proof of an excused absence (doctor's note or from the Office of Student Life).

**Course Policy: Classroom and Professional Interaction Expectations**

- Mobile phones and other handheld electronic devices are distracting and should not be used. Laptops and tablets are permitted for note-taking purposes. Other electronic aides will be accommodated for students working with Disability Support Services.
- No unauthorized video or audio recording during class is allowed. For students working with Disability Support Services who require recording, please contact me before recording class sessions.
- Students are expected to engage one another, the instructor, and the GA in a professional manner. Emails addressed to the instructor or GA should be formal. They should list the course in the subject line, have a greeting, acknowledge the recipient professionally, and contain a signature. Students who email the instructor as described in here before the end of week 5 and mention this course policy may earn 3 extra credit points.
- Disagreements are at the center of the educational process, but hate speech, put-downs, belittling, mocking, and other unprofessional behavior will not be tolerated. This is especially true of racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise discriminatory language and practices.
- As the instructor I reserve the right to dismiss students from the classroom and related digital spaces who are being disruptive or who otherwise fail to behave professionally and respectfully.

**Course Policy: Grade Appeals**

- Grade appeals will *only* be considered in writing. Students who wish to appeal a grade must submit an appeal describing why they believe the grade to be incorrect within one week from when the assignment was returned. The appeal must address what grade they believe to be correct and why.

**Course Policy: Academic Dishonesty**

- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. I report all cases of academic dishonesty to the University of Wyoming.
- If I suspect you of academic dishonesty, I will first ask you to meet with me during office hours or another agreed upon time to discuss the process. Failure to respond is not exculpatory, I will still proceed with filing a formal notice.
- Per University of Wyoming guidelines, academic dishonesty penalties are determined by the instructor of record for first time offenses. Generally, you will fail the assignment or the course depending on the severity. Second time offenders are suspended from the University of Wyoming for one year. Third time offenders are expelled.
- Academic dishonesty encompasses a range of issues including: plagiarism, cheating, submitting the same assignment from another class as though it were unique for this class, the fabrication of scientific results, breaching ethical research practices, and more. It also includes knowingly facilitating another student's academic dishonesty.

**University Policy: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

- The University of Wyoming values an educational environment that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The diversity that students and faculty bring to class, including age, country of origin, cultural background, disability, economic class, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, linguistic variations, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, worldview, and other social and cultural diversity is valued, respected, and considered a resource for learning.

**University Policy: Disability Support**

- The University of Wyoming is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you have a disability, including but not limited to physical, learning, sensory or psychological disabilities, and would like to request accommodations in this course due to your disability, please register with and provide documentation of your disability as soon as possible to Disability Support Services (DSS), Room 128 Knight Hall. You may also contact DSS at (307) 766-3073 or [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu). It is in the student's best interest to request accommodations within the first week of classes, understanding that accommodations are not retroactive. Visit the DSS website for more information at: [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)

**University Policy: Mandatory Reporter**

- UW faculty are committed to supporting students and upholding the University's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX, discrimination based upon sex and gender is prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex- or gender-based discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty member, understand that as a "Responsible Employee" of the University, the faculty member MUST report information you share about the incident to the university's Title IX Coordinator (you may choose whether you or anyone involved is identified by name). If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you privacy or confidentiality, there are people who can meet with you. Faculty can help direct you or you may find info about UW policy and resources at <http://www.uwyo.edu/reportit>
- You do not have to go through the experience alone. Assistance and resources are available, and you are not required to make a formal complaint or participate in an investigation to access them.

## Campus Resources

- Disability Support: [udss@uwyo.edu](mailto:udss@uwyo.edu), 766-3073, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/udss](http://www.uwyo.edu/udss)
- Counseling: [uccstaff@uwyo.edu](mailto:uccstaff@uwyo.edu), 766-2187, 766-8989 (After hours), 341 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/ucc](http://www.uwyo.edu/ucc)
- Academic Affairs: 766-4286, 312 Old Main, [www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs](http://www.uwyo.edu/acadaffairs)
- Dean of Students: [dos@uwyo.edu](mailto:dos@uwyo.edu), 766-3296, 128 Knight Hall, [www.uwyo.edu/dos](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos)
- UW Police: [uwpd@uwyo.edu](mailto:uwpd@uwyo.edu), 766-5179, 1426 E Flint St, [www.uwyo.edu/uwpd](http://www.uwyo.edu/uwpd)
- Student Code of Conduct: [www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct](http://www.uwyo.edu/dos/conduct)

## Schedule note

- The schedule provided in this syllabus is subject to change as necessary. Changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.

## Week 1: Welcome to the Sociology of Religion

- Wednesday January 18  
Introductions
- Friday January 20  
The Enlightenment and Sociology (Appelrouth and Edles)

## Week 2: Religion and Classic Sociological Theory

- Monday January 23  
Elementary Forms of Religious Life (Durkheim)
- Wednesday January 25  
Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the Right: Introduction (Marx)
- Friday January 27  
Introduction to Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Giddens)  
**Essay #1 Due**

## Week 3: Modernization: Is Religion in Decline?

- Monday January 30  
Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Politics and Generations (Hout and Fischer)
- Wednesday February 1  
We Are the Women Our Parents Warned Us Against: Identity Reconstruction and the Re-Imagining of Gender After High-Cost Religious Disaffiliation (Gull)
- Friday February 3  
The Secularization Hypothesis: Facts and Fictions (PEW)  
**Essay #2 Due**

**Week 4: Decline, continued, and Exam 1**

- Monday February 6  
Why Strict Churches Are Strong (Iannaccone)
- Wednesday February 8  
Review Session
- Friday February 10  
**EXAM #1**

**Week 5: Fundamentalism and Terrorism**

- Monday February 13  
The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism (Emerson and Hartman)
- Wednesday February 15  
Terror Mandated by God (Juergensmeyer)
- Friday February 17  
NO CLASS  
**Essay #3 Due**

**Week 6: Christian Nationalism**

- Monday February 20  
Make America Christian Again (Whitehead, Perry and Baker)
- Wednesday February 22  
Culture Wars and COVID-19 Conduct (Perry, Whitehead and Grubbs)
- Friday February 24  
Most Republicans Support Declaring the United States a Christian Nation (Politico)  
**Essay #4 Due**

**Week 7: Queering Christianity**

- Monday February 27  
Wrestling the Angel of Contradiction (O'Brien)
- Wednesday March 1  
Christians Under Covers (Burke)
- Friday March 3  
Gay Conversion Therapist Comes Out: Exclusive Interview (YouTube)  
**Essay #5 Due**

**Week 8: Exam #2**

- Monday March 6  
Review Session
- Wednesday March 8  
**EXAM #2**
- Friday March 10  
No class

**SPRING BREAK****Week 9: The Occult and Other Paranormal Beliefs**

- Monday March 20  
Popular Occultism and Critical Social Theory: Exploring Some Themes in Adorno's Critique of Astrology and the Occult (Nederman and Goulding)
- Wednesday March 22  
Supernatural Sociology (Silva and Woody)
- Friday March 24  
Satanic Panic and The Dangers of Cultural Hysteria (YouTube)  
**Essay #6 Due**

**Week 10: Eastern Religion, Cultural Appropriation, and New Age Religions**

- Monday March 27  
"It's not religious, but it's spiritual: Appropriation and the universal spirituality of yoga" (Antony)
- Wednesday March 29  
New Age Commodification and Appropriation of Spirituality (York)
- Friday March 31  
The Dark World of New Age Gurus (YouTube)  
**Essay #7 Due**

**Week 11: Islam and Feminism**

- Monday April 3  
Gender in the Middle East (Charrad)
- Wednesday April 5  
Muslim Female Athletes and the Hijab (Harkness and Islam)
- Friday April 7  
Iran unrest: Women burn headscarves at anti-hijab protests (BBC News)  
Muslim women in India protest state's ban on hijab in schools (NBC News)  
**Essay #8 Due**

**Week 12: Islam and Feminism, continued, and Exam #3**

- Monday April 10  
NO CLASS
- Wednesday April 12  
Review Session
- Friday April 14  
**EXAM #3**

**Week 13: Indigenous and Native Beliefs**

- Monday April 17  
What can Native cosmologies teach sociology about emotions and environmental justice? (Norgaard and Reed)
- Wednesday April 19  
Postcolonial Sexualities (Patil and Puri)
- Friday April 21  
Decolonization is for everyone (Sanchez, YouTube)  
**Essay #9 Due**

**Week 14: The Holy Vote by Sarah Diefendorf**

- Monday April 24  
Chapter 2: The Fear of Religious and Cultural Decline
- Wednesday April 26  
Chapter 6: We Aren't the Extremists
- Friday April 28  
Sarah Diefendorf Ph.D., Author of *The Holy Vote*, Zooms in for class Q&A  
**Essay #10 Due**

**Week 15: Heaven's Gate by Benjamin E. Zeller**

- Monday May 1  
Chapter 1: The Cultural and Religious Origins of Heaven's Gate  
Chapter 2: The Spiritual Quest and Self-Transformation: Why People Joined Heaven's Gate
- Wednesday May 3  
Chapter 4: Understanding Heaven's Gate Theology
- Friday May 5  
Final Exam Review Session  
**Essay #11 Due**

**FINALS WEEK****Final Exam**

Wednesday May 10th 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.