Course Syllabus

Course Information

SOC 3333 Religion in Society                   Section 001

Spring 2018

Professor Contact Information

Bobby C. Alexander, Ph.D.

Office Phone:  972-883-6898
E-mail:  bcalex@utdallas.edu

PLEASE use regular UTD e-mail instead of eLearning to reach me. Thank you.

Office:  GR 2.532 Office Hours:  Mondays and Wednesdays 1:45 – 2:30 p.m., and by appointment if these times do not fit your schedule

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

None

Course Description

The course examines how religions in U.S. society help shape the views and behaviors of members of the public as they participate in U.S. social institutions, including the economy/workforce, education, government/law, and healthcare. Specifically, this course uses sociology to examine how religious views and values help shape Americans’ attitudes toward and participation in these and other social institutions. The course also uses sociology to examine how diversity of religions presents social challenges in U.S. society and what Americans’ responses to diversity of religions tell us about U.S. society.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The first course objective is to gain a sociological understanding of how religious views and values/morality influence Americans’ orientation to and participation in U.S. social institutions. The second is to develop a sociological understanding of how diversity of religions presents social challenges in U.S. society and what Americans’ responses to this diversity tell us about American society.
Required Textbooks and Other Readings

Two books are required: 1) *America’s Four Gods: What We Say about God – And What That Says about Us*, by Paul Froese and Christopher Bader (Oxford University Press, 2010), and 2) *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*, by Robert Wuthnow (Princeton University Press, 2011). Both books are available at the UTD Bookstore and Off Campus Books.


NOTE: Read all course reading assignments before class. This will help you get more out of class lectures and discussion, and stay on top of Class Exercises and our Exams.

Assignments and Academic Calendar

- **Class Exercises.** Students will complete a series of Class Exercises that are designed to help you learn our course materials by applying them to your own experience or knowledge of religion. Class Exercises are the basis of the two exams. Students will work together on most Class Exercises. For some exercises, students will work individually.

  The Class Exercises are designed to help you prepare for and do well on the Mid-Term and Final Exams. They will cover material that will appear on the exams.

  NOTE: Students will turn in Class Exercises on the day they are handed out and the class works on them, unless the syllabus calendar indicates an exercise is due at a later date. The dates we will work on the various Class Exercises are indicated in the syllabus calendar below.

  Students who do not attend class on days we work on Class Exercises will not get credit for exercises that are missed, unless you have an excused absence per the attendance policy below.

  For all excused absences, Class Exercises must be turned in at the beginning of the next class.

- **Exams.** Students will write two 2-3-page, take-home exams, one a Mid-Term Exam, and the other a Final Exam. The first exam will cover the first half of the course, and the second the second half. Both exams will be short answer and essay. The exams will review course materials.

- **Written Reports.** Students will write two 1½-2-page reports reviewing published scholarly research on a topic related to religion in U.S. society that you will choose and I will approve.
NOTE: I will provide and go over all instructions. All instructions will be posted on eLearning.

Course Calendar

January 9

Orientation to the Course: What Can Sociology Teach Us about Religion in Society?

Class Exercise #1 (January 9th)

January 11

Americans’ Religious Views and Their Influence on Attitudes toward and Participation in U.S. Social Institutions

Read: Froese and Bader, America’s Four Gods: Introduction: “Why God?”

Americans’ Four Views of God

Read: Froese and Bader, America’s Four Gods: Chapter 1 “America’s Four Gods”

Class Exercise #2 on January 11th

January 16

Americans’ Views of God and Society

Read: Froese and Bader, America’s Four Gods: Chapter 2 “God, Self, and Society”

January 18 and 23

Americans’ Views of God and Public Morality

Read: Froese and Bader, America’s Four Gods: Chapter 3 “God and Morals”

Class Exercise #3 on January 23rd

Due January 18th: Topic for Written Report
January 25 and 30

Americans’ Views of God and Education/Science

Read: Froese and Bader, *America’s Four Gods*: Chapter 4 “God and Science”

Class Exercise #4 on January 25th

February 1 and 6

Americans’ Views of God and the Economy

Read: Froese and Bader, *America’s Four Gods*: Chapter 5 “God and Mammon”

Class Exercise #5 on February 6th

February 8 and 13

Americans’ Views of God, Good, and Evil

Read: Froese and Bader, *America’s Four Gods*: Chapter 6 “God and Evil”

February 15 and 20

Americans’ Present and Future Views of God

Read: Froese and Bader, *America’s Four Gods*: Chapter 7 “God – Present and Future”

Due February 20th: First Written Report

February 20th: Mid-Term Exam questions handed out; Mid-Term Exam due February 27th

February 22

February 27
Due February 27th: Mid-Term Exam

March 1

American Society and the Challenge of Religious Diversity


March 6 and 8

The New American Social Diversity


March 13 and 15 NO CLASS: Spring Break

March 20 and 22

The New American Religious Diversity and What It Tells Us about American Society

Read: Wuthnow, *America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity*: Chapter 3 “The Significance of Religious Diversity”

Class Exercise #6 on March 20th

March 27

Social Acceptance of Religious Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, *America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity*: Chapter 4 “Embracing Diversity: Shopping in the Spiritual Marketplace”

Class Exercise #7 on March 27th

March 29

Social Acceptance of Religious Diversity continued

Read: Wuthnow, *America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity*: Chapter 5 “‘Many Mansions’: Accepting Diversity”
Class Exercise #8 on March 29th

April 3

Resistance to Religious Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Chapter 6 “‘One Way’: Resisting Diversity”

April 5 and 10

Americans’ Beliefs and Practices Regarding Religious Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Chapter 7 “The Public’s Beliefs and Practices”

Class Exercise #9 on April 5th

April 12 and 17

Responses of Religious Congregations to Religious Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Chapter 8 “How Congregations Manage Diversity”

Due April 17th: Second Written Report

April 19

A Religiously Pluralistic American Society

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Chapter 10 “How Pluralistic Should We Be?”

Class Exercise #10 on April 19th

April 24 and 26

Hand out Final Exam questions on April 26th; Final Exam due May 3rd

May 3

Due: Final Exam

NOTE: Students will turn in their exams in my office (GR 2.532) at 2:30 p.m. during the
scheduled final exam period.

Grading Policy

The points distribution for each of the graded assignments and attendance for the course grade follows. Our TA – Ms. Jewell Love – has created the distribution and is responsible to record all grades, along with attendance. You can check your grades on eLearning after she enters your grade.

Jewell welcomes you to contact her to discuss your recorded grades as well as missing grades. She also is responsible for reading one of everyone’s two Written Reports. I will read the other.

**TA Email:** jnl140330@utdallas.edu

**Office:** GR 2.512

NOTE: Jewell uses a 0 (zero) as a placeholder for grades on eLearning she has yet to record. The zero does NOT mean you made a 0 on an assignment. If you see a zero, check back later to see your recorded grade.

**Points Distribution for SOC 3333**

- 2 Written Reports = 100 points @ 50 points each
- 10 Class Exercises = 100 points @ 10 points each
- Mid-Term Exam = 80 points
- Final Exam = 80 points
- Attendance = 40 points
- Total points allocated = 400

The grading scale follows. Jewell will convert our letter grades and the numbers they represent into the point system above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-96</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C  = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 67-69
D  = 64-66
D- = 60-63
F   = 59 and below

Additional Course and Instructor Policies

Attendance is required. Students automatically will be excused from two classes; no documentation is required if students miss only two classes. Students who miss more than two classes will be excused if they have a legitimate reason (for example, being out sick) and provide documentation.

The intent of this policy is to help students perform well on assignments by keeping up with lectures and discussion, and class assignments.

Students must submit hard copies of all assignments on the due dates. Electronic submissions will not be accepted, unless the student has a legitimate reason for being absent from class to turn in assignments. Late papers will not be accepted without my prior approval, with the exception of emergencies.

This requirement is intended to help students turn in their work on time and to promote fairness among students who submit their work on time.

University Policies

To view university policies on Student Conduct, Grade Appeals, Disability Services, Religious Holy Days, and others, please go to the link that follows.

http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies