Course Syllabus

Course Information

SOC 3333 Religion in Society

Summer 2015

Professor Contact Information

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

Office: GR 2.532
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:45 – 1:30 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 world religions in U.S. society help shape the views and behaviors of the public as they participate in government, the economy, education, and other social institutions. 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 by way of public morality. 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 influence Americans’ attitudes toward and participation in government, the economy, education, and other social institutions by way of public morality. 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

Course readings include two books: 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), and 2) *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*, by Robert Wuthnow (Princeton University Press). Both are available at the UTD Bookstore and Off Campus Books. Other readings will be placed on Electronic Reserve in the McDermott Library. Students will select additional readings from scholarly sources for course assignments.

Assignments and Academic Calendar

- Exams. Students will write two 3-4-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. Exam questions will be handed out one week before the exams are due.

- Written Reports. Students also will write two 1½-page reports on a single topic related to religion in U.S. society incorporating a review of scholarly literature on the topic. Students will submit a proposed topic to the Instructor for approval.

- Class Presentations. Students will make two brief Class Presentations on their Written Reports.

- Class Exercises. Students also will work together on and complete a series of Class Exercises. **Students who do not attend the day of a Class Exercise will not get credit for the exercise, unless the student has an excused absence per the attendance policy below.**

The Instructor will provide and go over all instructions. All instructions will be posted on eLearning.

May 28

Orientation to the Course: Why Study Religion in Society Using Sociology?

Class Exercise #1

Americans’ Religious Views and Their Influence on 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
Americans’ Views of God and Society

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

June 2

Americans’ Views of God and Public Morality

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

Class Exercise #3

Americans’ Views of God and Education/Science

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

Class Exercise #4

Topic for Written Report due June 2\(^{nd}\)

June 4

Americans’ Views of God and the Economy

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

Class Exercise #5

Americans’ Views of God, Good, and Evil

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

Mid-Term Exam questions handed out June 4\(^{th}\)

June 9

Americans’ Present and Future Views of God

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

American Society and the Challenge of Religious Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, *America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity*: “Introduction: Confronting Diversity,” and
Chapter 1 “Special People in a Diverse World”

The New American Social Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Chapter 2 “The New Diversity”

First Written Report due June 9th

June 11

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

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

Mid-Term Exam due June 11th

June 16

Social Acceptance of Religious Diversity continued

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity: Chapter 5 “‘Many Mansions’: Accepting Diversity”

Class Exercise #8

Class Presentation #1

June 18

Resistance to Religious Diversity

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

Class Presentation #1 continued

Written Report #2 due June 18th

June 23
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

Responses of Religious Congregations to Religious Diversity

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

June 25

Religiously Mixed Marriages and What They Tell Us about Americans’ Responses to Religious Diversity

Read: Wuthnow, America and the Challenge of Religious Diversity
Chapter 9 “Negotiating Religiously Mixed Marriages”

Class Presentation #2

Final Exam Questions handed out June 25th

June 30

A Religiously Pluralistic American Society

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

Class Exercise #10

Class Presentation #2 continued

July 2

Final Exam due

Note: Students will turn in their exams in the Instructor’s office (GR 2.532) at 12:00 p.m. during the scheduled final exam period.

Grading Policy

The percentage distribution for each of the graded assignments and attendance (total equals 100%) for the course grade follows.

25%: the two Exams combined
25%: the two Written Reports combined
25%: Class Exercises combined
15%: the two Class Presentations combined
10%: Attendance

The grading scale follows.

A+ = 97-100
A   = 94-96
A-  = 90-93
B+  = 87-89
B   = 84-86
B-  = 80-83
C+  = 77-79
C   = 74-76
C-  = 70-73
D+  = 67-69
D   = 64-66
D-  = 60-63
F   = 59 and below

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.

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 the prior approval of the instructor, 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