

## **SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION/TOPICS IN RELIGION AND POLITICS**

### **SOCIOLOGY 112**

**FALL 2017, T & TH. 9:30-11AM.**

Professor Karen Barkey

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The resurgence of religion and the attendant issues of religious and cultural intolerance and conflict have become key to the world of the twenty-first century. Among many others, Max Weber believed that modernity would eventually lead to a general decline of religious faith and the role of religion in public life. He saw this as part of the “disenchantment of the world”. Modernization appears to have produced just the opposite, and contemporary sociologists strive to understand Weber’s perspective and the ways in which the modern global world we live in contradicts his predictions. While this is one of the dilemmas of the modern world that we will address, we will also spend time reading and discussing the ways in which religion and politics have become entangled as religion became more influential to move beyond the confines of the private realm.

The first part of the course will present the classical statements in the sociology of religion, both the Durkheimian and the Weberian traditions, looking at the different ways to study religion. The second part of the course will take a more in depth look at the United States, paying attention to religion and fundamentalism in America. We will explore the religious origins of the United States, the diverse narratives on the role of religion, the dilemma of why religion both unites and divides Americans, and the contemporary politics around religious fundamentalism.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Reading the assigned course material and classroom participation is absolutely required for the smooth functioning of this course.**

You will have 2 midterms and a research note of 10-15 pages. The research note should be about a topic that fascinates you and that you want to do some preliminary research on. It has to ask an interesting question about, or pose a puzzle about the role of religion in politics. Please come and talk to me or to Rachel Pizatella-Haswell early on in the semester. Having a clear idea on what you would like to pursue as your research note, and starting the research early will help. Your grade will depend on the research note, the midterms and classroom attendance and participation. The last week of class we will have an opportunity to discuss papers in class. The class presentation will add to your grade. Here is the allocation of points:

Midterm 1 (25%), Midterm 2 (30%), Research Note (30%), Classroom participation (15%).  
Papers are due Monday December 4th @ 4pm.

### **BOOKS:**

- Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors* (University of Chicago Press, 2006).

## INTRODUCTION

*Week 1 (Aug 24)*

## CLASSICAL STATEMENTS ON RELIGION

*Week 2 (Aug 29 & 31) The Durkheimian Approach*

- Durkheim on Religion: *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York Free Press, 1995). Introduction and Chapter 1.
- E.A. Tiryakian, "Collective Effervescence, Social Change and Charisma," *International Sociology* 1995, 10: 269-81.

*Week 3 (Sep 7) The Weberian Approach*

- Weber, Max. *Sociology of Religion*, (especially Chs. 1, 4, 5, 13, 14).
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. (skim chapter 4, except for Calvinism section)

*Week 4 (Sep 12 & 14) The Weberian Approach Continued*

- Geertz, Clifford. "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 87-125.
- Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. 1-8.
- Nira Pereg, Shabbat (documentary); 7 min.

## KEY DEBATES IN SECULARIZATION

*Week 5 (Sep 19 & 21) Week of guest lectures.*

- Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 11-39 and chapter 1. Skim Chapters 6 & 7.
- Peter Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, All chapters except responses to him. (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

*Week 6 (Sep 26 & 28)*

- Denis Lacorne, *Religion in America: A Political History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, July 2011), Chapters 1, 2 & 3.
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: Principal Causes Which Render Religion Powerful in America*, 357-365.

## KEY DEBATES IN AMERICAN RELIGION

### *Week 7 (Oct 3 & 5) Religion in America- Civil Religion*

- Robert Bellah, "Biblical Religion and Civil religion in America", *Daedalus* (Winter 1967) 96:1.
- Philip Gorski, *American Covenant: A History of Civil Religion from the Puritans to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2017). Chapters 1, 2 and Conclusion.
- Discussion on Public Square: <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2012/03/02/the-naked-public-square/>
- Robert Putnam, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, Chapter 1.

### *Week 8 (Oct 10 & 12)*

## REVIEW AND MIDTERM EXAMINATION

### *Week 9 (Oct 17 & 19)*

- Eddie Glaude, Jr. "The Black Church Is Dead," 2012 *Huffington Post*
- Barbara Dianne Savage, "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Negro Church," *The Annals American Academy of Political and Social Science* (2000)
- Curtis Evans, "W. E. B. Du Bois: Interpreting religion and the Problem of the Negro Church," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (2007)

### *Week 10 (Oct 24 & 26) The Black Church and Politics*

- Morris, A. D. (1984). *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: The Free Press. Chapters 1, 2, 4.
- Donald E. De Vore, "Water in Sacred Places- New Orleans Black Churches as Sites of Community Empowerment," *The Journal of American History*, (2007)
- Sandra L. Barnes & Oluchi Nwosu, "Black Church Electoral and Protest Politics from 2002 to 2012: A Social Media Analysis of the Resistance Versus Accommodation Dialectic," *Journal of African American Studies* (2014) 18: 209–235.

### *Week 11 (Oct 31 & Nov 2) Fundamentalism in America*

- Denis Lacorne, *Religion in America: A Political History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, July 2011), Chapter 7.
- MOVIE VIEWING: *GOD'S NEXT ARMY*
- Susan F. Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell, Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2000). Chapters 1,2, 3 & 6.

### *Week 12 (Nov 7 & 9) Studying Fundamentalism, United States and Israel*

- Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*, (Yale University Press, 2007): Introduction, and Chapters 9, 10 & 11.
- Nurit Stadler, "Infiltrating Fundamentalist Institutions,"

*Week 13 (Nov 14 & 16) Studying Fundamentalism, Unites States and Islam*

- MOVIE VIEWING: WAITING FOR ARMAGEDDON
- Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (University of Chicago Press, 2002)

*Week 14 (Nov 21)*

- Discussion on Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (University of Chicago Press, 2002)

*(Nov 23)*

THANKSGIVING BREAK

*Week 15 (Nov 28 & 30)*

REVIEW AND IN-CLASS SECOND IN CLASS- EXAMINATION