

SOCIOLOGY AND HISTORY: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

SOC 190

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Class hours: Tuesdays 2-4pm

Office hours: Wednesdays 12-2pm.

INTRODUCTION

The course that I propose is a comparative and historical study of Mediterranean societies where people defined by difference have found negotiated solutions to living together. Taking the Mediterranean as a fulcrum of civilizational unity as well as upheaval, we will read about religious pluralism at different analytic levels and at different times.

Three analytic and comparative levels invite study across societies and histories. Empires are macro-historical political formations that left an important imprint on the Mediterranean and have shown both intolerance and tolerance with deep pockets of religious pluralism. Historically, urban centers as hubs of trade and exchange have been more open to positive coexistence and institutional openness. Even today, in the context of nation-states, cities have been far more diverse than the nation-state as a whole. And in the interstices of urban and rural space, shared sacred sites continue to foster joint prayer and worship despite differences in religious belief. We will explore examples of each of these analytic sites through cases such as “Convivencia” in Medieval Spain, to the urban dynamics of the city of Marseille and the local entanglements of shrines and sacred spaces such as the Synagogue of the Ghriba in Tunisia or the Bektashi Shrine.

We watch the response of western governments to the Syrian crisis; the images of the Cross at the Hungarian border to signify “this is a Christian country,” ; the new citizenship and inclusion laws that the government of Modi is passing in India and the revolts of citizens reacting to the exclusion of Muslims in the reconstruction of a Hindu nationhood; or yet again, the Trumpian discourse against Muslims, Mexicans and his building of a wall to keep people defined by difference out. Everywhere around the world, there are governments working against pluralism, fighting minorities, and fighting diversity and often countries are divided between those forces of pluralism and those who believe in homogeneity.

I would like this course to reflect on these questions from a theoretical as well as empirical view. We will read a couple of general works on pluralism—but then we will dive into cases and try to assess what makes them plural and whether their pluralism can be defined as successful.

CLASS PROCEDURE:

This course will be conducted online. Here is your Zoom invitation for every week:

<https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/92097145491?pwd=RDJ6MGdQaU9PZ0RFZVlvc3pKN0RwZz09>

Meeting ID: 920 9714 5491

Passcode: 399922

Preparation, participation and discussion:

In this class I welcome contributions from everyone and I hope that the class will promote discussion, exchange of ideas, and collaboration. You are expected to:

- be familiar with class readings and materials uploaded on bCourses and as defined in our class schedule on a weekly basis and come to class prepared to engage in critical and meaningful discussions as a presenter or participant.
- keep an open mind for different views, be patient and attentive to all contributions in discussions and contribute with your own views and ideas. Be ready to exchange ideas and contribute your own arguments and perspectives in collaborative, team work.

Preparing and submitting writing assignments

- Do not wait until the last moment to work on class readings and materials. Class material is grouped by topic in a way that encourages discussion across different media and sources (e.g. academic papers, documentaries, blog posts, online resources). You will need time to familiarize yourselves with this material in order to be able to draw links and connections and contribute with you own arguments and reactions to class discussions.
- Submit all assigned work on time. All papers must be submitted as email attachments (please use the pdf file format) on the due date by 11 pm. **A deduction of a grade will be applied to late papers.**
- All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. Save your paper as a pdf file.
- Submit your own original work. Plagiarism = failing grade.
- Use quotation marks and proper bibliographic references when citing the work of others. Go to https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html for a quick guide to Chicago-style citations.

1. EVALUATION AND GRADING

Evaluation:

- **Attendance and participation:** you are expected to participate in class discussions and activities on a regular basis in any way you feel most comfortable with (real-time in-class discussions, group work, written questions and feedback).
- **One Class Discussion Facilitation:** each student (either individually or with a classmate) is expected to facilitate one class discussion during the semester. The facilitators should share an overview or facilitation plan (300-500 words; 1-2 pages) at least one day prior to the day they are expected to facilitate. The overview/facilitation plan needs to include key arguments of the readings, two to three discussion questions, as well as the facilitator's critical reflections on the questions raised in the text. Facilitators are strongly encouraged to incorporate outside materials, including visual resources and prepare discussion questions that will motivate the engagement and active participation of their classmates. The discussion facilitation session is expected to last approximately half an hour.
- **Blog posts on bCourses:** we will be using the bCourses "Discussion section" for weekly discussions. You are expected to post a short (2-3 paragraphs or 250-300 words) response (by directly responding to a question, or replying to other student posts) on a weekly basis. Your post will be in response to a prompt related to a class reading or material according to the topics defined in the class schedule. The blog posts can include references and short quotations from class readings and materials. You are expected to critically reflect on class readings, discussions and materials and make connections to key concepts, other readings, and resources. Posts will be evaluated on a "posted/not-posted" basis. The grade will be calculated based on overall activity. For example, if you have a post for every single prompt/question, your score will be 100. All weekly blog posts need to be on bCourses by 11 pm the evening before class. So for you this will be every Monday evening by 11pm. Blog posts over a week late will not be accepted.
- **PAPER**
The requirement for the course is a 15-page paper on a topic you and I have agreed upon, ideally after a discussion, by September 22nd. By this date, I will have met with each one of you to discuss a paper topic that you are comfortable with. So that you get a good start on your paper a *five page discussion* of your proposed paper is *due on Tuesday October 20th*-- This preliminary paper should include a clear and concise presentation of the question, puzzle or topic you will explore, some discussion of what you think you might find, based on your preliminary readings, the sources you have looked at and found most useful, and a statement of why you personally chose this topic.

The final version of your paper must be handed in the December 8th

Books and Articles

I did not order the books we are using, though they are all easily available and relatively inexpensive. Instead, I have put everything online. You can, if you want order books and own them.

WEEKLY READINGS

Introduction 1: September 1

Meeting you online. Discussion of course, requirements and division of labor.

Introduction 2: September 8

This week we will start by reading a few articles on what is going on in the world today that threatens religious pluralism. Then I will have you watch a few short documentaries about religious pluralism that works.

Read the following articles from newspapers:

Modi's project to make a Hindu India, by Ramesh Thakur

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/01/13/commentary/world-commentary/modis-project-make-hindu-india/#.Xh6vyC3MxBw>

Rescued at Sea: how did refugees' lives turn out in Europe, by Harriet Grant

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/oct/27/refugees-rescued-at-sea-how-lives-turned-out-nicolo-lanfranchi>

Hungary's Migrant Abuse is a Matter of Urgency, European Agency finds, by Marc Santora and Benjamin Novak

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/21/world/europe/hungary-migrant-abuse-report.html>

Watch # 1, 7, 10 and 11 of the short documentaries (4-5 minutes each)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9KWujKVteboKZme6r5bYchvEBdRb5XoV>

Religious Pluralism: September 15

Watch lecture by Diana Eck "Religious Pluralism" We will discuss in class.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FseEtkQTPQ>

Peter Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, Chapters, 1,2, 5& 6. (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014).

Contemporary Religious Pluralism and Democracy: September 22

Thomas Banchoff, *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism* (Oxford UP, 2007).

T. Banchoff, "Introduction," in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*.

Jose Casanova, "Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A European Union/United States Comparison, in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*.

Diana Eck, "American Religious Pluralism: Civic and Theological Discourse," in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*.

Resources:

The Pluralism Project: Harvard University

<https://pluralism.org/home>

Out of Many: Religious Pluralism in America

<https://publications.newberry.org/outofmany/exhibits>

Empires and Religious Pluralism: September 29

Sudipta Kaviraj, "Modernity, State and Toleration in Indian History: Exploring Accommodations and Partitions" in *Boundaries of Tolerance*, pp.233-266.

Aron Rodrigue, "Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire," *Stanford Humanities Review* 1995.

Karen Barkey, "Empire and Toleration: A Comparative Sociology of Toleration Within Empire", in *Boundaries of Tolerance*, pp.203-232.

Resources:

Lessons and videos on Mughal India: PBS 6-Part Series: The Story of India

<https://www.pbs.org/thestoryofindia/teachers/lessons/5/>

The Pact of Umar. Available online

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/pact-umar.asp>

Medieval Spain and Religious Pluralism: October 6

Watch the PBS Documentary, *The Ornament of the World*.

It is based on the book, Maria Rosa Menocal *The Ornament of the World: : How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in medieval Spain* (Little, Brown and Company, 2002).

Articles associated with the book:

Maria Rosa Menocal, "The Dialogue of Cultures in medieval Spain,"

Maria Rosa Menocal, "Just What is a Golden Age Anyway?" The Daniel E. Koshland Memorial Lecture, 2006.

You can explore online the cities of Al- Andalus.

Religious Pluralism and Shared Sacred Sites 1: October 13

What Makes a Site Sacred? Nature, Architecture, Theology, Anthropology

Mircea Eliade, 'Sacred Space and Making the World Sacred' (from *The Sacred and the Profane*, Brace Jovanovich, 1956, pp. 20-65)

Heribert Koeck, 'Holy Places' (from *Oxford Public International Law*, OUP 2015, pp. 1-12)

Jane Hubert, 'Sacred Beliefs and Beliefs of Sacredness' (from *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*, ed. David L. Carmichael Routledge, 1994, pp. 9-19).

J. Donald Hughes and Jim Swan, 'How Much of the Earth Is Sacred Space?' (*Environmental Review*, 10 (1986), pp. 247-259)

Elazar Barkan & Karen Barkey, 'Introduction' to *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites* (Columbia UP, 2015, pp. 1-31)

Religious Pluralism in Shared Sacred Sites 2: October 20

Elizabeth Key Fowden, "Sharing Holy Places," *Common Knowledge*, Volume 8 (Winter 2002).

Robert Hayden, "Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites in South Asia and the Balkans," *Current Anthropology*, Volume 43 (2002).

Mete Hatay, "Three Ways of Sharing the Sacred: Choreographies of Coexistence in Cyprus," in Barkan and Barkey, *Choreographies of Shared Sacred Sites: Religion, Politics and Conflict* (Columbia UP, 2015)

Watch the following YouTube videos

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k-2_niHdl

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbxFvxpkst4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNdRSdIPdH8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCz81RILfIQ>

Paper Discussions: October 27

During this class period we will have discussion and presentation of papers. This will be a relaxed and useful session for you all to think through your paper topics, arguments and have some feedback from your peers.

Religious Pluralism and Cities 1: General Statements November 3

Watch Lecture by Diana Eck, *The New Cosmopolis: Cities and the Realities of Religious Pluralism*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERYxE7rI7fc>

Explore “Hosting a Day of Religious Pluralism: Aspen Institute”

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/hosting-a-day-of-religious-pluralism-two-cities-celebrate-the-energetic-engagement-of-difference/>

Helmuth Berking, Jochen Schwenk and Silke Steets, “Introduction: Filling the Void: Religious Pluralism and the City” in *Religious Pluralism and the City: Inquiries into Post Secular Urbanism*.

<https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/religious-pluralism-and-the-city-inquiries-into-postsecular-urbanism/introduction-filling-the-void-religious-pluralism-and-the-city>

Religious Pluralism and Cities 2: European Debates November 10

Elisabeth Becker, “Good Mosque, Bad Mosque: Boundaries to Belonging in Contemporary Germany,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, (2017).

Anne-Laure Zwilling, “A Century of Mosques in France: Building Religious Pluralism,” *International Review of Sociology* 25, 2, (2015).

Richard Gale, “The Place of Islam in the Geography of Religion: Trends and Intersections,” *Geography Compass*, (2007).

Final Class November 17

John D. Inazu, *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*. Selected Chapters.

Thanksgiving Week November 24

No Class

Week of December 1st

Individual Paper Discussions