

SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION/TOPICS IN RELIGION AND POLITICS

SOCIOLOGY 112

SPRING 2017, T & TH. 2:-3:30PM.

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 spend more 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, discussing their different perspectives as well as how to study religion. We will then discuss secularization, modernization, pluralism and “twin tolerations” in the context of the relationship between religion and politics. The last part of the course will take a more in depth look at the United States, religion and fundamentalism in America. We will explore what religion both unites and divides Americans, but also look at fundamentalism in the US context.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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

You will have a midterm and a final and a research note of 10 pages. The research note should be about a topic that fascinates you and 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 midterm and final 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 (25%), Final (30%), Research Note (30%), Classroom participation (15%).

BOOKS:

- Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Houghton, Mifflin and Harcourt, 2007)
- Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors* (University of Chicago Press, 2006).

INTRODUCTION

Week 1 (Jan 17 & 19)

- Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

CLASSICAL STATEMENTS ON RELIGION

Week 2 (Jan 24 & 26) 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 (Jan 31 & Feb 2) The Weberian Approach

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

Week 4 (Feb 7 & 9) The Weberian Approach Continued

- Geertz, Clifford. "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 87-125.
- Philpott, Daniel. "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations." *World Politics* 2000, 52: 206-45.

KEY DEBATES IN SECULARIZATION

Week 5 (Feb 14 & 16)

- Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 11-39.
- Peter Berger, "Secularization Falsified" *First Things*, April 2008.
- Peter Berger, *The Many Altars of Modernity*, (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014) Preface and Chapter 1.

Week 6 (Feb 21 & 23)

- Denis Lacorne, *Religion in America: A Political History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, July 2011), Chapter 8.
- “Constitutional Myth #4: The Constitution Doesn’t Separate Church and State, *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/06/constitutional-myth-4-the-constitution-doesnt-separate-church-and-state/240481/>
- Alfred Stepan, “Multiple Secularisms,” *Rethinking Secularism*.
- Alfred Stepan, “The World’s Religious Systems and Democracy: Crafting the ‘Twin-Tolerations’” Chapter 11 in *Arguing Comparative Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

KEY DEBATES IN AMERICAN RELIGION

Week 7 (Feb 28 & March 2) Religion in America

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

Week 8 (March 7 & 9)

REVIEW AND MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Week 9 (March 14 & 16) Contemporary American Religion

- Robert Putnam, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, Chapter 1. “Religious Polarization and Pluralism in America.”
- Read the introduction to What Do Americans Know about Religion Report: <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/28/u-s-religious-knowledge-survey/>
- America’s Changing Religious Landscape: Pew research Center: <http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/05/RLS-08-26-full-report.pdf>
- Arlie Hochschild, “Donald Trump, “The Apprentice” and Secular Rapture,” *Boston Globe*, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2016/09/05/trump-the-apprentice-and-secular-rapture/7Z0wiDi3efnG41oqasEzGN/story.html> and Religion Dispatches, <http://religiondispatches.org/rising-to-heaven-in-a-secular-rapture-trumps-golden-promises/>

Week 10 (March 21 &22) Fundamentalism in America

- Denis Lacorne, *Religion in America: A Political History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, July 2011), Chapter 7.
- Michael Omerson and David Hartman, "The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2006, 32.
- Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*, 2014. Skim chapters 1-3.

Week 11 (April 4 &6) Studying Fundamentalism, United States and Israel

- Susan F. Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell, Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2000)
- MOVIE VIEWING: *GOD'S NEXT ARMY*
- Nurit Stadler, "Infiltrating Fundamentalist Institutions,"
- Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*, (Yale University Press, 2007): Introduction, and Chapters 9, 10 & 11.

Week 12 (April 11 & 13) Studying Fundamentalism, Unites States and Islam

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

Week 13 (April 18 & 20)

PAPERS PRESENTATIONS

Week 14 (April 25 & 27)

REVIEW AND IN-CLASS FINAL EXAMINATION