

REL 3931(6859) JUNIOR SEMINAR
Tuesday Period 7 and Thursday Periods 7-8
Griffin-Floyd 0100
Spring 2021

Instructor: Dr. David G. Hackett

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DESCRIPTION

This course is an intensive introduction to approaches to the study of religion. It is open to all majors. However, it is required of all religion majors and ideally should be taken during your junior year. We will begin with a discussion of the contested nature of the term "religion" before turning to classical approaches to religion in the social sciences, particularly sociology, anthropology, and psychology. We will conclude by exploring contemporary efforts to understand what is happening in religious life today.

OBJECTIVES

1. Become conversant with classic and contemporary approaches to the study of religion.
2. Develop a capacity to critically evaluate the underlying assumptions of theories of religion.
3. Employ the seminar format to sharpen writing skills as well as to articulate and defend your own perspectives.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance and Participation 10% of grade.. Students are expected to attend class regularly and punctually, to have read and thought about the day's assigned readings, and to participate actively in class discussions. **An excess of three unexcused absences will result in a one-third lowering of your final grade (e.g. from a B+ to a B), each additional unexcused absence will result in a further one-third lowering of your final grade.**
2. An ethnographic study of a religious ritual. To be explained in class. 20% of grade.
3. Three Examinations. Each of these exams will ask students to answer essay questions addressing issues raised in the readings, class discussions, and lectures. The exams are cumulative and will be worth 25%, 25%, and 20%, respectively, of your final grade.

REQUIRED BOOKS TO BE PURCHASED

Freud, Sigmund The Future of An Illusion (any edition)

Weber, Max The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (any edition)

REQUIRED READINGS available at Course Reserves on course Canvas web site

CLASS SCHEDULE

* Lecture outline available on course web site under Files

** Reading available on course web site under Course Reserves

INTRODUCTION

1/12 Drop-Add Syllabus Review and Course Expectations

1/14 Drop-Add Syllabus Review and Course Expectations

I THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION

1/19 What is Religion and How Can We Study it?
*Questions to keep in mind while reading Durkheim"

1/21 *Durkheim: Society as Sacred
Required Reading:
**Durkheim, Elementary Forms ,113-161

1/26 *Durkheim's Followers: Bellah
Required Reading:
**Bellah, "Civil Religion in America"

1/28 *Durkheim's Followers: Turner
**Turner, "Liminality and Communitas"

2/2 *Analyzing Belief and Ritual through Durkheim and his Followers
**Bellah, "The Dynamics of Worship"
Film: TBD
Ethnography Assigned (Due 2/25)

2/4 *Durkheim's Followers: Geertz
Required Reading:
**Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System"

2/9 *Marx: Religion and Social Class
Required Reading:
**Marx, "From Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy"
** Pope, "Millhands and Preachers"

2/11 *Neo-Marxism: Religion and Social Change
Required Reading:
**McGovern "Theology of Liberation"
**Sawchuck, "The Catholic Church in the Nicaraguan Revolution"

2/16 First Section Review

2/18 **First Examination**

2/23 Ethnographies Discussion
Ethnography Due

II RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

2/25 *Weber: Prophecy and Social Change
Required Reading:
**Weber, "The Prophet"
**Campbell and Pettigrew, the "Little Rock" case

3/2 *Weber: Prophecy and Social Change
Required Reading:
Weber, The Protestant Ethic 47-128, 139-143

3/4 *Weber: Prophecy and Social Change
Required Reading:
Weber, The Protestant Ethic, 153-183

3/9 *Bellah: Religious Evolution
Required Reading:
**Bellah, "Religious Evolution"

3/11 *Bellah: Meaning and Modernization
Required Reading:
**Bellah, "Meaning and Modernization"
Film: Born Again

III RELIGION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

3/16 *Freud: The Future of An Illusion
Required Reading:
Freud, The Future of An Illusion

3/18 *Fowler: Stages of Faith
Required Reading:
**Fowler, "Stages of Selfhood and Faith"

3/23 Second and Third Sections Review

3/25 **Second Examination**

IV INDIVIDUALISM AND COMMUNITY

3/30 Bellah: Individualism and Community

Required Reading:

**Bellah et al, "The Pursuit of Happiness"

4/1 Bellah: Individualism and Community

Required Reading:

**Bellah et al, "Culture and Character: The Historical Conversation"

V RELIGION AND OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD

4/6 No Class

4/8 Spiritual but Not Religious

Required Reading:

New York Times, Examining the Growth of the "Spiritual but Not Religious"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/19/us/examining-the-growth-of-the-spiritual-but-not-religious.html?smid=em-share>

**Schmidt, Restless Souls, Preface and Epilogue

4/13 Disenchantment and Reenchantment

Required Reading:

** Orsi, "Have You Ever Prayed to St. Jude"

Film: The Blinking Madonna

4/15 Sacred Stories, Sacred Tribes

Required Reading:

**Ammerman, Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes, excerpts

4/20 Course Review

Third Examination Assigned (Take-Home)

4/27 **Third Examination Due on Tuesday, April 28th.**

Policies, Rules, and Resources

1. *Late or Make-Up Assignments:* You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances. If possible, please request prior approval from the instructor. If that is not possible, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for the makeup. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Completion of All Assignments:* You must complete all assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing any assignment or requirement.

4. *Attendance and Participation:* Class attendance is required. See Course Requirements above.

5. *Common Courtesy:* Cell phones should be turned off during class, except in emergencies, when you may set your phone to vibrate so you can receive notifications. Please notify the instructor at the start of class in this situation. You may take notes on a laptop computer, although the instructor may ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

6. *Honor Code:* The honor code applies to this and all courses taken at UF: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied:

On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment" (<https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617//advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>).

The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines may result in judicial action and sanctions, as specified in the Student Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>).

7. *Accommodation for Disabilities:* Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

8. *Counseling Resources:* Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

9. *Software Use:* All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.