

Religion & Society

Course: REL 3140

Term: Fall 2023

Times: T/R (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM/3:50 PM)

Location: AND 134

Instructor: Dr. Jeyoul Choi

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Office: 107F Anderson Hall

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description:

This course offers students various theoretical and thematic lenses to understand the relationship between religion and society. In particular, the purpose of the course is to make sense of how religion and society are shaping and shaped by each other. The first part of the course introduces students to the classic theories of religion in the sociology of religion while the second part focuses on diverse thematic examples such as capitalism, race & ethnicity, gender & sexuality, and science to critically reflect upon the relationship between religion and society.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To understand the implications and limitations of the classic theories of religion and society
- 2) To understand various contemporary issues led by the close relationship between religion and society

Required Reading Materials

For Purchase:

Roberts, Keith and Yamane, David. 2021. *Religion in Sociological Perspective*. 7th Edition. Los Angeles and London: Sage Publications.

Additional Readings (book chapters and articles) marked with (*) will be available in Canvas

Assignments:

1. Reading Responses (30%)

Starting in the second week of the class, students will complete a 12-set of reading responses throughout the semester. This assignment will be administrated through Canvas to prepare students for in-class discussion each week. The assignment will ask students to provide a 2-4 paragraph-long (300-400 words) response to the question the instructor posted about the reading materials.

2. Fieldwork Research Paper (20%)

Students will write a fieldwork research paper (double-spaced ten to twelve pages in length, Times New Roman, font 12) on the relationship between religion and society. Throughout the semester, the course discusses various themes and issues regarding the relationship between religion and society. This assignment aims to help students better understand the questions students want to comprehend in-depth by drawing on the everyday practices of religion. It is a fieldwork-based assignment. In consult with the instructor, students will choose a religious community for fieldwork and set out a research question they wish to explore. A handout with more specific guidelines will become available at the beginning of the semester. This assignment is due December 8.

3. Midterm Essay (20 points)

Students will write a midterm essay synthesizing the readings (the length of the essay should be four to five double-spaced pages). Students must cite sources and provide salient short quotes from the readings. A handout with more specific information will be made available as the due date approaches.

4. Final Essay (20 points)

Students will write a final essay synthesizing the readings (the length of the essay should be four to five double-spaced pages). Students must cite sources and provide salient short quotes from the readings. A handout with more specific information will be made available as the due date approaches.

6. Attendance & Class Participation (10%)

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes throughout the semester. Absence will be exempted only with documentation of a hardship affecting performance in the classroom such as sickness, family issues, or deployment.

Class Participation

Although it is the instructor's responsibility to lead each class with lectures or by facilitating class discussion, all students are expected to engage in each class by asking and answering questions concerning the relevant topics.

Reading:

Students are expected to do all the reading for this class. Success in the course depends on the student's close reading of the material. Each week requires 40 to 80 pages of reading.

Grading

- Reading Responses (30%)
- Fieldwork Research Paper (20%)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Final Exam (20%)

Class Participation & Attendance (10%)

Grade Scale

93 and up	A
90-92.9	A-
87-89.9	B+
83-86.9	B
80-82.9	B-
77-79.9	C+
73-76.9	C
70-72.9	C-
60-69.9	D
<60	F

Writing Requirement:

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. This course carries 2000 words that count towards the University Writing Requirement. You must turn in all written work counting towards the 2000 words in order to receive credit for those words. The writing course grade assigned by the instructor has two components: the writing component and a course grade. To receive writing credit a student must satisfactorily complete all the assigned written work and receive a minimum grade of C (2.0) for the course. It is possible to fail to meet the writing requirement and still earn a minimum grade of C in a class, so students should review their degree audit after receiving their grade to verify receipt of credit for the writing component.

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.
2. Completion of All Assignments: You must complete all written and oral 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.
3. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academicregulations/attendance-policies/
4. Common Courtesy: 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.

5. Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email, they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

6. Honor Code: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/) specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Please note that acts of plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or assignment that was written by someone else.
- Copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without proper citation and quotation marks.
- Using and copying verbatim a sentence or paragraph of text from Chatgpt or any other AI software for any kind of course assignments.
- Paraphrasing or restating in your own words, text or ideas written by someone else without proper citation.

For more info, see <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>

Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

7. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1: Course Introduction

Thursday: (08/24): Course Introduction

Week 2: Understanding Religion and the Field of Religious Studies

Tuesday (08/29): (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 1—Introduction: Understanding World Religions in Global Perspective

Thursday (08/31): (*) Esposito, et al. Chapter 1—Introduction: Understanding World Religions in Global Perspective

Part I: Classic Theories of Religion and Society

Week 3: E.B. Tylor

Tuesday (09/05): (*) Pals, Chapter 1—Animism and the Origin of Religion

Thursday (09/07): Pals, Chapter 1—Animism and the Origin of Religion

Week 4: Emile Durkheim

Tuesday (09/12): (*) Pals, Chapter 4—the Social as Sacred

Thursday (09/14): Pals, Chapter 4—the Social as Sacred

Week 5: Karl Marx

Tuesday (09/19): (*) Pals, Chapter 5—Religion as Agent of Economic Oppression

Thursday (09/21): Pals, Chapter 5—Religion as Agent of Economic Oppression

Week 6: Max Weber

Tuesday (09/26): (*) Pals, Chapter 8—Religion and Culture Interwoven

Supplementary Reading: Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 8—Religion, Economics, and Social Class

Thursday (09/28): Pals, Chapter 8—Religion and Culture Interwoven

Week 7: Clifford Geertz

Tuesday (10/03): (*) Pals, Religion as World-View and Ethic

Thursday (10/05): Pals, Religion as World-View and Ethic

Week 8: Midterm

Tuesday (10/10): Review and Midterm Exam Prompt

Thursday (10/12): No Class

Midterm Essay Submission via Canvas on October 13

Part II: Religion and Society

Week 9: “Churches, Sects, Denominations, and Cults”

Tuesday (10/17): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 6—Churches, Sects, Denominations, and “Cults”

Supplementary Reading: (*) Chidester, Chapters 1—Beginnings, 2—Jesus, and 3—Christ

Thursday (10/19): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 6—Churches, Sects, Denominations, and “Cults”

Week 10: Religion and Race

Tuesday (10/24): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 9—Religion and Race

Supplementary Reading: (*) Harari, Chapter 8—“There Is No Justice in History”* (p. 133-144) and (*) Butler, Chapters 5—Slavery and the African Spiritual Holocaust

Thursday (10/26): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 9—Religion and Race

Week 11: Religion and Gender

Tuesday (10/31): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 10—Religion and Gender

Supplementary Reading: (*) Harari, Chapter 8—“There Is No Justice in History” (p. 144-159)

Thursday (11/02): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 10—Religion and Gender

Week 12: Religion and Sexualities

Tuesday (11/07): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 11—Religion and Sexualities

Supplementary Reading: (*) Rogers, “Biblical Interpretation regarding Homosexuality in the Recent History of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)”

Thursday (11/09): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 11—Religion and Sexualities

Week 13: Religion and Science

Tuesday (11/14): (*) Harari, 14—The Discovery of Ignorance in *Sapiens* and 1—The New Human Agenda in *Homo Deus*

Supplementary Reading: (*) Evans and Evans, “Religion and Science: Beyond the Epistemological Conflict Narrative”

Thursday (11/16): Harari, 14—The Discovery of Ignorance in *Sapiens* and 1—The New Human Agenda in *Homo Deus*

Week 14: Thanksgiving Week

Tuesday (11/21): No Class

Thursday (11/23): No Class

Week 15: Social Change and Religion

Tuesday (11/28): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 13—Religion, Social Stability, and Social Conflict

Thursday (11/30): Roberts and Yamane, Chapter 13—Religion, Social Stability, and Social Conflict

Week 16: Final Exam Week

Tuesday (12/05): Review and Final Exam Prompt

Thursday (12/07): No Class

Final Essay and Fieldwork Research Project Submission via Canvas on December 8