

**OREL 4141/RLG 5195:
RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE
Spring 2025**

Instructor: Anna Peterson

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Class schedule: T7/R7-8 in Matherly 113

Office Hours: Tues. 8th period, Thurs. 4th period in person, and by appointment on Zoom

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores religion's role in social change, including social movements and other forms of cultural, economic, and political transformation. In the first part of the class, we explore classic theorists of religion and social change, especially Weber (Module I) and Marx (Module II). After that, we will examine a variety of more specific topics. We will begin with work on religion and gender (Module III) and then move to topics chosen with consideration of student interests (Modules IV-VI).

POLICIES AND RULES

1. *Attendance and Participation*: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies, found in the [online catalog](#). Please let me know about any planned absences (for religious holidays, athletic events, or other reasons) as soon as possible. For unplanned absences (due to illness or emergency), please let me know as soon as possible and provide documentation (e.g, doctor's note).

2. *Make-up policy*: I will arrange for a make-up or early in-class exam only with sufficient notice. If you do not receive an extension from the instructor, assignment will be marked down a half grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Honor Code*: The [UF 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."

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/>).

4. *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.

5. *Counseling and Emergency Resources*: Please let me know if you need support facing challenges that affect your academic performance. There are many resources available for students, and I will be glad to help you get the assistance you need in order to thrive at UF. Some resources include:

- 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.
- e. For security issues, please contact the University Police Department: 392-1111, or 911 for general emergencies.

6. *Software Use*: All faculty, staff, and students 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.

GENERAL EDUCATION DESCRIPTION AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Primary General Education Designation: Social and Behavioral Sciences (S)

Writing Requirement: 4000 words

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit. Courses intended to satisfy the general education requirement cannot be taken S-U

SOCIAL SCIENCES DESCRIPTION

Social and behavioral science courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions. Full description of General Education objectives [here](#).

SOCIAL SCIENCES SLOs

Full description of SLOs [here](#).

Content: Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used.

In this course, students will learn about the theories, and methodologies used in social scientific studies of religion. They will read and discuss major theories, thinkers, and issues in this field, learning to understand key arguments and the relations among them.

Critical Thinking: Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to

examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Communication: Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively.

Students in this class will learn to communicate what they have learned clearly and effectively, in writing and orally. The class will strengthen students' ability to write and talk about moral and philosophical claims in clear, accurate, and comprehensive ways.

WRITING REQUIREMENT

This course confers 4000 words towards the Writing Requirement (WR), which ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

Course grades have two components. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

The writing requirement for this course will be fulfilled by the two short essays and a longer research paper. Students will receive feedback from the instructor on the final papers, including comments and suggestions on both content and writing, within two weeks of submitting the final papers. This feedback will address content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and other mechanics. The rubric that I use for evaluating all written work is attached at end of syllabus document and on the course Canvas site, as is the grading scale. In addition, I will provide instructions for individual assignments closer to the time each is due.

I encourage you to seek help from the university's Writing Studio (www.writing.ufl.edu), which offers support for writing in all fields and can be very helpful both in developing your first drafts and in polishing those drafts.

I recommend the Chicago manual of style (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>) as a guide for writing format and style. However, you may use a different style guide, as long as you check with me first and use the same format consistently throughout your paper.

REQUIREMENTS AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

1. Complete all required readings by the date assigned. Be prepared to spend time on these books. Read carefully, so that you are prepared to ask questions about and discuss the assigned reading in each class.
2. Participate actively in class discussions. There will be unannounced reading quizzes during the semester to check participation and engagement. 10% of final grade.
3. First essay. 1000 words for undergraduates; 1500 words for grad students. Due by midnight on Sunday, Feb. 9. 20% of final grade.

4. Second essay. 1000 words for undergraduates; 1500 words for grad students. Due by midnight on Sunday, March 16. 20% of final grade. *CURE students will not do this assignment.*

5. Annotated bibliography of at least three scholarly articles or book chapters on a topic to be covered during Modules IV-VI. Due Feb. 28. 10% of final grade. *CURE students will submit an initial annotated bibliography for their individual research projects.*

5. Research project topic due April 6. Submit a short (3-4 sentence) summary of your research topic, explaining what you will examine, why this is a significant aspect of religion and social change, and what methods and theories you expect to use. No points; P/F. *For all students.*

6. Final research project. 2000 words for undergraduates, 4000 words for graduates. CURE students will follow the guidelines for the *Journal of Undergraduate Research*. The research paper will be on a topic of students' choosing. Due by midnight on April 27. 40% of final grade.

REQUIRED READING

The following required books are available at the UF bookstore and on reserve at Library West.

Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (W. W. Norton & Co., 1978)

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Various editions; please purchase the Talcott Parsons translation).

All other course readings will be available on the course Canvas site.

CURE STUDENTS: Please see separate document for different assignments and schedule, following the first two modules.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Grad students enrolled in RLG5143 will complete a longer research paper connected to their presentation topic. Details will be provided separately.

Grad students will also have to complete additional readings, to be determined at the start of the semester. We will have at least three graduate-only meetings to discuss these readings on dates TBD.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Please note: Schedule is subject to change. All changes will be announced in class and by email. Please check your UF email regularly for class announcements. You are responsible for knowing about any changes that have been announced regarding assignments, class meetings, etc.

Tuesday 1/14

Introduction to the class

MODULE I. WEBER

- Thurs 1/19 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: Author's Introduction and Chapter 1
- Tues 1/21 Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, Ch. 2-3
- Thurs. 1/23 Weber, *Protestant Ethic*, Chapter 4-5

MODULE II. MARX

- Tues. 1/28 Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" and "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction"
- Th 1/30 Marx, "The German Ideology, Part I"
- Tu 2/4 Marx, "On the Jewish Question"
- Th 2/6 Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844"
- Sun 2/9 First essay due by midnight**

INTERIM

- Tu 2/11 Choose topics for Modules IV-VI
- Th 2/13 CURE students meet with instructor; no class for other students

MODULE III. RELIGION, SOCIAL CHANGE, AND GENDER

- Tu 2/18 Brusco, Elizabeth. "The Reformation of Machismo: Asceticism and Masculinity among Colombian Evangelicals," in *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America*, ed. David Stoll and Virginia Garrard-Burnett (Temple, 1993).
- Th 2/20 Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival." *Cultural Anthropology* 16, No. 2 (May, 2001), pp. 202-236
- Tu 2/25 Daly, Mary, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990). Prelude to the First Passage, Ch. 3, and Ch. 6.
- Th 2/27 Selections from Banerjee, Sikata. *Make Me a Man! Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationism in Hinduism* (SUNY, 2005).

Annotated bibliographies due Friday, Feb. 28

MODULE IV: TBD

Tu 3/4

Th. 3/6

Tu 3/11

Th 3/13

Sun. 3/16 Second essay due by midnight

Week of March 17: Spring Break, no class

MODULE V: TBD

Tu 3/25

Th 3/27

Tu 3/30

Th 4/1

Sunday 4/6 Topics due for final paper

MODULE VI: TBD

Tu 4/8

Th 4/10

Tu 4/15

Th 4/17

Tu 4/22

Sun. 4/27 Final papers due by midnight

Rubric for essays

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable	Points (of 100)
Thesis	A clear statement of the main conclusion of the paper. 5 points	The thesis is obvious, but there is no single clear statement of it. 4 points	The thesis is present, but must be uncovered or reconstructed from the text of the paper. 1- 3 points	There is no thesis. 0 points	5 points
Exposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper contains accurate and precise summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of the issue being discussed • Key concepts and theories are accurately and completely explained • When appropriate, good, clear examples are used to illuminate concepts and issues and/or support arguments. • The paper uses appropriate textual support. 32-35 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of the issue is fairly accurate and precise. • Key concepts and theories are explained. • Examples are clear, but may not be well chosen. • The paper has textual support, but other passages may have been better choices. 29-31 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of the issue is fairly accurate, but not precise. • Key concepts and theories are not explained. • Examples are not clear, and may not be well chosen or appropriate. • The textual support is inappropriate. 26-28 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The summarization, description and/or paraphrasing of the issue is inaccurate. • Key concepts and theories may be identified but are not explained. • Examples are not clear, are inappropriate, and/or do not illuminate concepts and issues. • No textual support. 0-25 points	35 points
Evaluation	The paper presents an original argument regarding a position on an issue of ethical import. This argument is supported by:	The paper presents an original argument regarding a position on an issue of ethical import. This argument is supported by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checking for support in the argument 	The paper presents an original argument but describes and/or considers its plausibility in a weak or superficial way. It does not check for the support offered in the argument or the argument's internal consistency. It does not	The paper does not present an original argument about the issues in question, or, it fails to offer support through rational argument.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checking for support in the argument • checking for the argument's internal consistency • considering objections to one's own argument. This involves presenting 1 or more plausible and appropriate objections, and responding to them thoroughly. <p>32-35 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • checking for the argument's internal consistency • considering objections to one's own argument, though the objections may be ill chosen and/or not thoroughly responded to. <p>29-31 points</p>	<p>defend the central argument against plausible objections.</p> <p>26-28 points</p>	<p>0-25 points</p>	<p>35 points</p>
Writing: Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sentences are complete and grammatical. • Paper has been spell-checked and proofread, and has no errors, and no rhetorical questions or slang. <p>9-10 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sentences are complete and grammatical. • Paper has been spell-checked and proofread, and has very few errors, and no rhetorical questions or slang. <p>7-8 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few sentences are incomplete and/or ungrammatical. • Paper has several spelling errors, rhetorical questions and/or uses of slang. <p>5-6 point</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many sentences are incomplete and/or ungrammatical. • Paper has many spelling errors, rhetorical questions and/or uses of slang. <p>0-4 points</p>	<p>10 points</p>
Writing: Flow and Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All words are chosen for their precise meanings and are used consistently. • All of the content of the paper is relevant to the main line of argument; no extraneous material. • Ideas are developed in a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most words are chosen for their precise meanings. • Most of the content of the paper is relevant to the main line of argument; extraneous material is at a minimum. • Ideas are mostly developed in a natural order. It is not hard to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words are not chosen for their precise meanings. • May be substantial extraneous material. • Ideas are not always developed in a natural order. It is sometimes difficult to identify the line of argument or to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words are not chosen for their precise meanings. • Substantial extraneous material. • Ideas are not developed in a natural order. Premises do not fit 	

	<p>natural order. Premises fit together naturally and it is easy to identify the main line of argument and to understand what is being said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new or unusual terms are well-defined. • Information (names, facts, etc.) is accurate. <p>14-15 points</p>	<p>understand what is being said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most new or unusual terms are well-defined. • Information (names, facts, etc.) is accurate. <p>12-13 points</p>	<p>understand what is being said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or unusual terms are not well-defined. • Information (names, facts, etc.) is mostly accurate. <p>9-11 points</p>	<p>together naturally and it is difficult to identify the line of argument or to understand what is being said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or unusual terms are not defined. • Information (names, facts, etc.) is inaccurate. <p>0-8 points</p>	<p>15 points</p>
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Reminder: Grading Scale for Course

A	4.0	94-100
A-	3.67	90-93
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.0	84-86
B-	2.67	80-83
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.0	74-76
C-	1.67	70-73
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.0	64-66
D-	0.67	60-63
E	0.0	0-59