

**Department of Sociology
University of Pennsylvania
Soci559-301: Theories of Religious Behavior
Fall 2006**

Professor Melissa Wilde

Seminar: Thursdays, 9:00 a.m. -12:00p.m., MNBD 582

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 -11:30 a.m., Thursdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Overview: What role does religion play in society? Is religion and religiosity decreasing, increasing, or just changing? How does religion relate to other important institutions in society, such as politics, race, gender and sexuality? How can we understand variation in religious participation and belief? When, why and how does religious change happen? These are some of the questions we will be addressing this semester. The course begins with classical theories in the sociology of religion, and then turns to an overview of the current theories and empirical realities of religion in the US and world today. I have three goals for the course. My first goal is to give students a comprehensive overview of theories and research in the sociology of religion. My second goal is to help students gain an understanding of how to engage theory with empirical work. My final goal for the course is to understand the ways in which the methodological decisions and research designs of the studies we examine help or hinder the research findings and implications.

Required Books:

Davidman, Lynn. 1991. *Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*. University of California Press.

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America*. Rutgers University Press.

McRoberts, Omar. 2003. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. University of Chicago Press.

Moon, Dawne. 2004. *God, Sex and Politics*. University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Christian S. et al. 1998. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. University of Chicago Press.

Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. 2002 [1930]. Routledge

Reader (including suggested and required readings in alphabetical order, those in bold can be either photocopied or the entire book purchased):

1. Durkheim, Emile. 1995 [1912]. *The **Elementary Forms of Religious Life***. The Free Press. Selections

1. "Religion is Social Thing," Introduction, pages 8-9.

2. "Definition of Religion and Religion versus Magic," Book One, pages 33-44
 3. "Collective Effervescence" Book Two, Chapter Seven, Section IV, pages 216-221.
 4. "The Notion of the Soul," Book Two, Chapter Eight, Sections IV and V, pages 265-272.
2. Bellah, Robert. "Religious Evolution."
 3. **Berger, Peter.** Chapter 6: "Secularization and the Problem of Plausibility," From *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Anchor Books, pages 127-153.
 4. Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," *Comparative Social Research*, 13:1-44, Edited by Craig Calhoun.
 5. Brooks, Clem and Jeff Manza. 1997. "Social Cleavages and Political Allignments: US Presidential Elections, 1960-1992." *American Sociological Review*.
 6. Chaves, Mark. "Secularization as Decreasing Religious Authority." *Social Forces*. 72(3):749-774.
 7. Chaves, Mark. 1996. "Ordaining Women: The Diffusion of an Organizational Innovation." *American Journal of Sociology*.
 8. Chen, Carolyn. 2002. "The Religious Varieties of Ethnic Presence: A Comparison Between a Taiwanese Immigrant Buddhist Temple and an Evangelical Christian Church." *Sociology of Religion*. 63:2 (215-238).
 9. Davis, Nancy and Robert Robinson. 1996. "Are the Rumors of War Exaggerated? Religious Orthodoxy and Moral Progressivism in America." *American Journal of Sociology*.
 10. Emerson, Michael O. and Christian Smith and David Sikkink. 1999. "Equal in Christ, but Not in the World: Which Conservative Protestants and Explanations of Black-White Inequality." *Social Problems* 46:398-417.
 11. "Exchange on Church Attendance" 1998. *American Sociological Review*.
 12. Gorski, Phil. 2000. "Historicizing the Secularization Debate." *American Sociological Review*. 65(1):139-167.
 13. Hadaway, Kirk C. and Penny Long Marler. 2005. "How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week? An Alternative Approach to Measurement." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 44(3):307-322.
 14. **Herberg, Will.** "**Protestant Catholic Jew**," Chapters 1 and 2
 15. Hout, Michael and Claude S. Fischer. 2002. "Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Politics and Generations." *American Sociological Review*.

16. Hout, Michael, Andrew M. Greeley and Melissa J. Wilde. 2001. "The Demographic Imperative In Religious Change." *American Journal of Sociology*. 107(2): 468-500.
17. Greeley, Andrew and Michael Hout. 1999. "Americans' Increasing Belief in Life After Death: Religious Competition and Acculturation." *American Sociological Review*.
18. Hout, Michael and Melissa J. Wilde. 2004. "The Denominational Society of the USA: A Reappraisal" in *Patterns and Processes of Religious Change in Modern Industrial Societies: Europe and the United States*. Edited by Alasdair Crockett and Richard O'Leary. Edwin Mellon Press.
19. Kniss, Fred. 1996. "Ideas and Symbols as Resources in Intrareligious Conflict: The Case of the American Mennonites." *Sociology of Religion*. 57 (7-23).
20. Kurien, Prema. 2004. "Multiculturalism, Immigrant Religion and Diasporic Nationalism: The Development of an American Hinduism." *Social Problems*.
21. Iannaccone, Laurence. 1994. "Why Strict Churches are Strong." *American Journal of Sociology*. 99(5):1180-1211.
22. Martin, John. 2002. "Power, Authority and the Constraint of Belief Systems." *American Journal of Sociology*. 107(4):861-904.
23. Patillo, Mary. 1998. "Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community." *American Sociological Review*. 63 (767-784).
24. Weber, Max. Selections:
 1. "Religious Groups," from ***Economy and Society*** pg. 399-468.
 2. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," from *From Max Weber*, by Gerth and Mills.
25. Wilde, Melissa J. 2004. "How Culture Mattered at Vatican II: Collegiality Trumps Authority in the Council's Social Movement Organizations." *American Sociological Review*. 69(4):576-602
26. **Wilde, Melissa J. *Catholicism Contested***, Chapters 1 and 3
27. **Wuthnow, Robert. 1988. *The Restructuring of American Religion*. Princeton University Press.** Chapters 5-7.
28. Yang, Fenggang and Helen Rose Ebaugh. 2001. "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications." *American Sociological Review* 66:269-288.
29. Young, Michael. 2003. "Confessional Protest: The Religious Birth of US National Social Movements." *American Sociological Review*. 67(5): 660-688.

Evaluation and Requirements:

1. **Class Participation (50%):** Class participation is 50% of your final grade, half of which will be a result of the two presentations you make during the course of the semester on the readings. The presentations should be no more than 20 minutes in length, should provide a brief (no more than 5 minute) summary of the argument and evidence, and focus on posing questions and relating the readings to earlier work (where applicable) in order to spark discussion. Each presentation should attempt to answer the following two questions, whenever applicable:
 - In what ways did the research design/methods hinder the researcher's claims or findings?
 - What other theories could the research engage that he or she did not, and what would his or her findings say to those theories?

2. **Final Paper (50%):** Each student will be required to complete a final paper for the course. It must be on religion – broadly defined – and it must incorporate some of the readings from class if they are in any way relevant. You are **STRONGLY** encouraged to make this a research paper, though I will accept literature reviews in exceptional circumstances (and for a small fee). The paper can be a first draft of your MA proposal, MA, an article that you are considering writing, dissertation proposal, dissertation chapter, etc. Sociologists do their best work when they have data to chew on, and thus, I want you to have some when you're writing for my class. A paper proposal, due the fourth week of classes, will be 10% of your final grade.

Class Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic and Assignments
1	Thursday, September 7	Introduction to the Course
2	Thursday, September 14	Part I: The Founders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Durkheim: Selections from <i>Elementary Forms</i> Presentations:
3	Thursday, September 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weber: Selections from <i>Economy and Society</i>• Weber, <i>The Protestant Ethic</i>:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Chapter 1, p. 1-8.▪ Chapter 2, p. 13-17, 23-24, 29-30, and 38.▪ Chapter 3, p. 39-42, bottom of 44-top of 45, 47-48.▪ Chapter 5, p. 104-105, 106, 108-top of 109, 114-116, bottom of 117-119, 120, 122-125. Suggested Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bourdieu Presentations:
4	Thursday, September 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bellah• Herberg• Berger• Paper proposal due Presentations:
Part II: Current Theories and Empirical Realities of Religion in the US		
5	Thursday, October 5	Supply-Side Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finke and Stark• Iannaccone• Wilde, Chapters 1 and 3 of <i>Catholicism Contested</i> Presentations:

6 Thursday,
October 12

Neo-Secularization Theories

- Chaves, "Secularization as Declining Religious Authority"
- Gorski, "Historicizing the Secularization Debate."

Suggested Readings:

- "Exchange on Church Attendance."
- Hadaway and Marler, "How Many Americans Attend Worship Each Week?"
- Greeley and Hout, "Americans' Increasing Belief in Life After Death."
- Martin, John. 2002. "Power, Authority and the Constraint of Belief Systems." *American Journal of Sociology*. 107(4):861-904.

Presentations:

7 Thursday,
October 19

Denominations

- Hout, Greeley and Wilde
- Wuthnow: Restructuring – Chaps. 5-7.
- Hout and Wilde, "The Denominational Society of the USA: A Reappraisal."
- Smith (Selections TBA).

Presentation:

8 Thursday,
October 26

Religion and Politics

- Brooks and Manza
- Davis and Robinson
- Hout and Fischer

Suggested Reading:

- Hunter, J. D. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.

Presentations:

9 Thursday,
November 2

Religion and Culture and Social Movements

- Wilde, "How Culture Mattered at Vatican II"
- Young, "Confessional Protest"

Suggested Readings:

- Wood, Rich. 1999. "Religious Culture and Political Action." *Sociological Theory*.
- Kniss, "Ideas and Symbols as Resources in Intrareligious Conflict"

Presentations:

10 Thursday,
November 16

Religion and Race and Ethnicity

- McRoberts
- Patillo
- Chen
- Kurien

Suggested Readings:

- Emerson, Michael O. and Christian Smith and David Sikkink. 1999. "Equal in Christ, but Not in the World"
- Yang, Fenggang and Helen Rose Ebaugh. 2001. "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions."

Presentations:

11 Thursday,
November 23

Thanksgiving – NO CLASS

12 Thursday,
November 30

Religion and Gender

- Davidman, *Tradition in a Rootless World*

Suggested Reading:

- Dillon, Michele. 1999. *Catholic Identity: Balancing Reason, Faith and Power*. Cambridge University Press.

Presentations:

13 Thursday,
December 7

Religion and Sexuality

- Moon, Dawne. 2004. *God, Sex and Politics*.

Presentations:

14 Thursday,
December 14

Final Papers Due

- In my mailbox by the end of our normal class time.