

SOCIOLOGY 468: THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
Section 1
Classes Meet Mondays and Wednesdays 10 am to 11:20 am
Spring 2008

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Office Hours: 11:30 am – 1 pm Mondays and Wednesdays; or by appointment

Required Textbook:

Johnstone, Ronald L. *Religion in Society*. (Eighth Edition). Pearson/Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. 2007.

Reserve readings available at the Library and on Blackboard as well.

Why Take this Class?

This class is an upper-level sociology course. The prerequisite for this course is Sociology 131 (*Introduction to Sociology*).

The class is meant to introduce students to the sociological study of religion. The class will investigate current issues having to do with religion, including beliefs and practices, and religion's organizational forms and ability to influence various spheres of public and private life. In short, we will view religion as symbiotic with society (i.e. existing in the social context and shaping and shaped by the social context). Ultimately, students are meant to walk away with a better feel for the centrality of religion to society and the historical importance of the study of religion to the discipline of sociology.

Course Objectives:

1. Gain factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, and trends).
2. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.
3. Learn to apply course material, to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions.
4. Be able to take critical analytical skills with you into the "real-world." In-turn, you will become a more effective contributor to society.

What is Required of You:

Course Structure:

This course is basically a lecture format, and lectures will generally follow the textbook. However, some lectures might cover the textbook materials exhaustively, and other might focus upon specific topics or outside materials that are relevant. Approximately every two lectures will cover one book chapter.

*You are responsible for all lecture materials and all assigned readings. **Anything from lectures and/or assigned readings will be considered “fair game” for tests.** Because the lectures are the backbone of this course, it is essential that you come to class and be prepared.*

Readings:

You will be assigned approximately one chapter (or most of one chapter) every two class meetings, in addition to supplemental readings from time-to-time. Readings are detailed in the Tentative Course Outline, in this syllabus. From time to time, you will also be asked to do supplemental readings, available on reserve in the library and on Blackboard. Please read the assignments *prior to* the lectures on that topic, so you can absorb more from lectures, and so we can have interesting and informed discussions.

I encourage you to take notes while you read the text and supplemental readings. I will elaborate on this more in class. The exercise may seem pointless to some, but note-taking really does help the memory. Plus, these notes are great to refer to when studying for tests. Finally, the process helps keep you engaged as you read.

At times you will also be assigned articles that correspond to lecture topics. More on this will follow.

Examinations (300 points):

You will have three examinations, including the final exam. Each exam will be worth 100 points, or approximately 22% of your final grade (including the final). Each exam will contain 40 multiple-choice questions (worth 2 points each), and two short answer questions. The final exam will be half new material, half comprehensive. Exams will consist of questions from the readings (supplemental too) and from the lectures. Tests are designed to assess not only what you know, but also your critical thinking skills.

In order to do well on examinations, you must study all the relevant lecture notes and readings or notes from the readings. There will be a short time in the class prior to the tests devoted to test reviews.

You must also furnish your own scantron (Form 882), available at the campus bookstore, and you must furnish your own pencil. Examination dates are noted on the Tentative Course Outline.

There will be no make-up exams unless there is an emergency and you can verify in writing the nature of the emergency. Arrangements will be made at the instructor’s discretion. All make-up exams will have an essay component.

Class Attendance & Participation (50 points):

Regular class attendance is expected. Therefore, attendance will be taken 10 times throughout the semester (by doing in-class assignments). A class attendance/participation grade will be given to you, based upon the number of times you were present when attendance was taken or in-class assignments were required. You will receive 5 points for each of these times, making up

50 points (or 11% of your final grade). Absences due to documented emergencies or sicknesses will not count against you.

Additional Assignments:

Movie Review (50 points):

Movies are sociological, and fun to analyze. There are also a number of movies that are devoted to religion. For 50 points on your final grade, you will be asked to write a movie review. The movie review will include (but not be limited to) your use of concepts from the semester, and a reaction to the assignment. More about the movie review will be discussed a few weeks into the semester.

Group Projects:

Field Trip (25 points):

You are to visit an unfamiliar religious group, organization or site (this can include visiting a religious service) and write a 2 page (double-spaced) report of your experience. Details of the report will follow at the end of January.

Annotated Bibliography (25 points):

By mid-semester, you will likely have found at least one topic that is of interest to you. You will choose a topic, and find two scholarly articles relevant to the topic. You will then write an annotated bibliography from examining the scholarly articles. Examples of good annotated bibliographies, along with instructions will be placed on Blackboard to give you further guidance on this assignment.

Extra Credit:

At times throughout the semester, you will be given the opportunity to earn extra points on your point total for the semester. In order to earn these points, you must go “above and beyond” the requirements of the course. Oftentimes, earning extra credit will involve bringing and discussing supplemental materials that are relevant to the topic(s) at hand. We will discuss extra credit more as the semester progresses. Doing things to earn extra credit is recommended if you think your grade might be “border-line” at the end of the semester.

Course Grade:

Your final course grade will be based upon the following:

Exam One	100 points
Exam Two	100 points
Exam Three (Final)	100 points
Class Attendance/Participation	50 points
Movie Review	50 points
Field Trip	25 points
Annotated Bibliography	25 points
Extra Credit (generally a possible of 5-7 extra points throughout the semester)	
Total Points Possible (excluding extra credit)	450

Final Course Grades are as follows:

A = 405-450 points

B = 360-404 points

C = 315-359 points

D = 270-314 points

F = below 270 points

University/Class Policies

Please refer to <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus> to comprehensively understand university policies regarding academic dishonesty, students' absences on religious holy days, students with disabilities, and visitors in the classroom. These policies, as well as important class policies, are also briefly described below:

Academic Dishonesty: All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Specifically, cheating on a test will result in the grade of zero (0) on the test. Students who cheat more than once will receive an automatic "F" for the class.

For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf

Students With Disabilities Policy: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

University/Class Policies (cont.)

If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center .

For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf

Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor.

Class Atmosphere: The classroom is intended to be a place of learning. Therefore, disruptions of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes but is not limited to noise and/or disruptive talking. I will only ask you to limit your noise once. If you are disruptive again, I will ask you to leave the classroom.

All beepers and/or cellular phones must be turned off and stowed away, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. If a cell phone rings in class, or I see that you are text messaging during class, we will have an automatic pop quiz.

Effective Class Participation: Again, the classroom is intended to be a place of learning. As a result, *effective* class participation is encouraged. While I encourage class participation, I ask that you ask yourselves a few questions BEFORE contributing:

1. Is what I'm about to say relevant to the topic at hand?
2. Is it sensitive to other classmates' beliefs and ideals?
3. Is it relevant to critical thought?
4. If this is antidotal, is there a point to me bring up my personal experiences?

Instructor Meetings: While it is not required, I do encourage instructor meetings. This is especially recommended for students who feel they need help in particular areas. You are welcome to visit me in my office hours, or make a special appointment with me.

Tentative Course Outline

Date	Lectures	Exams/Assignment Due Dates	Reading Assignment (does not include supplemental readings)
January 16th	Course Introduction		none
<i>Introduction to the Sociology of Religion</i>			
January 23rd – 28th	The Sociological Perspective		Preface and Chapter One
January 30 th – February 4th	The Sources of Religion	Syllabus Agreement Forms due January 30th	Chapter Two
<i>The Social Organization of Religion</i>			
February 6th	Religion as a Group Phenomenon		Chapter Three
February 11 th	The Church-Sect Continuum of Religious Organizations	Test One review as well	Chapter Four
February 13 th		TEST ONE	
February 18 th - 20th	Becoming Religious		Chapter Five
February 25th - 27th	Religious Conflict	Field Trip Report due the 27th	Chapter Six
<i>Religion in Society</i>			
March 3 rd – 5th	Religion and Politics		Chapter Seven
March 17 th - 19th	Religious Fundamentalism		Chapter Eight
March 24th - 26th	Religion and the Economy	March 26th will be a Test Two review as well.	Chapter Nine
March 31st		TEST TWO	
April 2 nd – 7th	Religion and the Class System		Chapter 10
April 9 th – 14th	Women and Religion	Movie Review due the 14th	Chapter 11
<i>Religion in America</i>			
April 16 th – 21st	Major Historical Developments		Chapter 12
April 23 rd - 28th	Black and Native American Religion in America	Annotated bibliography due the 28th	Chapter 13
April 30 th – May 5th	Denominational Society	May 5th will also be a final review.	Chapter 14
Final time will be scheduled by the University.		FINAL – Half comprehensive/half new materials	

Student/Professor Agreement (Due January 30th)
SOCIOLOGY 468: THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

Section 1

**Classes Meet Mondays and Wednesdays 10 am to 11:20 am,
Kirk – Spring 2008**

I _____ have read the preceding syllabus in its entirety and agree to
(print name)

abide by the conditions set forth in the said document. Failure to do so will result in the
aforementioned consequences.

X _____
(signature) (date)