

SOC 6332: THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Baylor University, Spring 2013

Thursday, 2:00-4:50 pm, Burleson 311

Description

Congregations, denominations, religious schools, religious hospitals, and a wide assortment of other organizations with religious ties operate in contemporary society. The organizational forms of religion hold particular interest to sociologists. What makes an organization religious? How do religious organizations form? Why do religious organizations succeed or fail? What is success or failure for a religious organization? Soc 6332 is a graduate seminar devoted to such questions. The seminar explores organizational aspects of religion, including organizational forms, prominent theories, and common methodologies.

Professor

Kevin D. Dougherty, Ph.D.

Burleson 318B, 710-6232

Kevin_Dougherty@baylor.edu

Objectives

At the completion of the seminar, students should be able to:

1. Describe common forms of religious organizations.
2. Assess methodological strategies for studying religious organizations.
3. Connect prominent organizational theories to religious organizations.

Readings

Chaves, Mark. 1999. *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Eiesland, Nancy L. 2000. *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring and Religious Ecology in a Southern Exurb*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Scheitle, Christopher P. 2010. *Beyond the Congregation: The World of Christian Nonprofits*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional journal articles and book chapters will be provided electronically by the professor.

Requirements

Seminar requirements are designed to push students intellectually and professionally. Assigned readings, synthesis papers, and discussions provide a framework for class sessions. A book review, research proposal, presentation, and peer review promote deeper learning and foreshadow professional responsibilities.

Synthesis Papers (45 points). Students will write a 2-3 page synthesis paper weekly in response to assigned readings. These papers are a place to react to and think through each set of readings. What overarching themes emerged? What theoretical or methodological insights were encountered? What new questions/ideas were sparked? There will be nine synthesis papers worth 5 points each. To receive full credit, students need to demonstrate a familiarity with all assigned readings for the week and show a thoughtful attempt at integration. Weekly synthesis papers should be emailed to the class by Wednesday at 2:00 pm. Late papers will be penalized 2 points per day.

Discussion Leader (10 points). One student per week will serve as discussion leader. The discussion leader should come prepared to guide class conversation. Assigned readings, outside readings, and classmates' synthesis papers should be used to develop discussion questions. Questions should help participants assess key assumptions, contributions, and limitations of the theory under consideration. Students will receive 10 points for the quality of their questions and their management of the discussion. A student unprepared to serve as discussion leader on the selected date risks losing all points for the assignment.



Book Review (15 points). Students will have an opportunity to write a book review for possible publication. A list of titles will be provided, although students are not restricted to this list. Professor approval is necessary for any selected book. The book review is to be 800-1000 words in length and adhere to guidelines established by the journal for which it is written. The book review is due April 11, with a late penalty of 3 points per day applied thereafter. Further instructions about content and evaluation will be provided by the professor.

Research Proposal (50 points). A 15-20 page research proposal will culminate the semester. Whether earning a graduate degree or seeking grant funding, research proposals are another customary element of academic life. For Soc 6332, the proposal should outline a feasible study on some type of religious organization; it should demonstrate familiarity with relevant organizational literature, theories and methodology; and it should contribute something new to this literature. A rough draft of the research proposal is due to the professor and the classmate assigned as “peer reviewer” at least 72 hours before the in-class presentation. A final (revised) draft is due by May 10 at 5:00 pm. Evaluation will focus on merit of the idea (10 points), quality of the literature review (10 points), strength of the theoretical argument (10 points), appropriateness of the methodology (10 points), and clarity of writing (10 points). Late papers face a deduction of 10 points per day.

Proposal Presentation (15 points). Presenting research to colleagues is an essential skill. To foster this skill, students in Soc 6332 will make a 15 minute presentation of their research proposal. Presentations should include a clear statement of purpose (2 points), a brief summary of relevant literature (3 points), a logical theory (worth 4 points), and a description of methodology appropriate to the project (3 points). Effective visual and oral delivery is worth an additional 3 points. A student that misses the assigned presentation date will forfeit all points for the assignment. The presentation is a chance to gain feedback on the proposed research. Feedback from classmates, a peer reviewer, and the professor should be used to improve the final draft of the proposal.

Peer Review (15 points). The credibility of academic research depends on a rigorous review process. Scholarship is a collaborative enterprise. It will be a collaborative enterprise in Soc 6332 as well. Each student will be assigned to serve as a reviewer for a classmate’s research proposal. The reviewer is responsible for evaluating five criteria: merit of the idea, quality of the literature review, strength of the theoretical argument, appropriateness of the methodology, and clarity of writing. The review will be delivered orally in class following the proposal presentation. A written review is due to the presenter and professor at this time. The peer review is worth 15 points. Full credit requires a student to thoroughly address each of the five evaluation criteria in a way that is courteous and helpful to the author. A late peer review will be penalized 2 points per day.

Grading

Letter grades will be based on total points earned, as outlined below.

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Points Necessary</u>
A	139-150
A-	135-138
B+	130-134
B	124-129
B-	120-123
C+	115-119
C	109-114
C-	105-108
D	90-104
F	Less than 90

Attendance at all seminar sessions is required. Students must notify the professor in advance of any absence. Without advanced notification, an absence will result in a 15 point deduction. More than three absences for any reason will result in a failing grade. Students should inform the professor promptly of any extenuating circumstances.

Schedule

Every effort will be made to follow the schedule as outlined. The professor reserves the right to make adjustments, if necessary.

January 17: Introductions

January 24: Defining Religious Organizations

- Jeavons, Thomas H. 1998. "Identifying Characteristics of 'Religious' Organizations: An Exploratory Proposal." Pp. 79-95 in *Sacred Companies: Organizational Aspects of Religion and Religious Aspects of Organizations*, edited by N.J. Demerath III, Peter Dobkin Hall, Terry Schmitt, and Rhys H. Williams. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chaves, Mark. 1993. "Denominations as Dual Structures: An Organizational Analysis." *Sociology of Religion* 54:147-169.
- Harris, Margaret. 1998. "A Special Case of Voluntary Associations? Towards a Theory of Congregational Organization." *British Journal of Sociology* 49:602-618.
- Chaves, Mark. 2002. "Religious Organizations: Data Resources and Research Opportunities." *American Behavioral Scientist* 45:1523-1549.
- Scheitle, Christopher P. and Kevin D. Dougherty. 2008. "The Sociology of Religious Organizations." *Sociology Compass* 2:981-999.

January 31: Systems Theory

- Scott, William G. 1961. "Organization Theory: An Overview and Appraisal." *Academy of Management Journal* 4:7-26.
- Stern, Robert N. and Stephen R. Barley. 1996. "Organizations and Social Systems: Organization Theory's Neglected Mandate." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41:146-162.
- Negandhi, Anant R. and Bernard C. Reimann. 1973. "Correlates of Decentralization: Closed and Open System Perspectives." *Academy of Management Journal* 16:570-582.
- Davidson, James D., Alan K. Mock, and C. Lincoln Johnson. 1997. "Through the Eye of a Needle: Social Ministry in Affluent Churches." *Review of Religious Research* 38:247-262.
- Koch, Jerome R. and Evans W. Curry. 2000. "Social Context and the Presbyterian Gay/Lesbian Ordination Debate: Testing Open-Systems Theory." *Review of Religious Research* 42:206-214.

February 7: No Class

February 14: Organizational Ecology Theory

- Hannan Michael T. and John Freeman 1977. "The Population Ecology of Organizations." *American Journal of Sociology* 83:929-984.
- Carroll, Glenn R. 1984. "Organizational Ecology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 10:71-93.
- McPherson, J. Miller. 1983. "An Ecology of Affiliation." *American Sociological Review* 48:519-532.
- Popielarz, Pamela A. and Zachary P. Neal. 2007. "The Niche as a Theoretical Tool." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33:65-84.
- Dougherty, Kevin D. and Mark T. Mulder. 2009. "Congregational Responses to Growing Urban Diversity in a White Ethnic Denomination." *Social Problems* 56:335-356.

February 21: Organizational Ecology Theory, continued

- Eiesland, Nancy L. 2000. *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring and Religious Ecology in a Southern Exurb*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

February 28: New Institutionalism Theory

- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutional Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83:340-363.
- DiMaggio, Paul and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and the Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48:147-160.

- Scott, W. Richard. 1987. "The Adolescence of Institutional Theory." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32:493-511.
- Greenwood, Royston and C. R. Hinings. 1996. "Understanding Radical Organizational Change: Bringing Together the Old and the New Institutionalism." *Academy of Management Review* 21:1022-1054.
- White, Kenneth R. 2013. "When Institutions Collide: The Competing Forces of Hospitals Sponsored by the Roman Catholic Church." *Religions* 4:14-29.

March 7: New Institutionalism Theory, continued

- Chaves, Mark. 1999. *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

March 14: No Class, Spring Break

March 21: Religious Economies Theory

- Iannaccone, Laurence R. 1988. "Why Strict Churches are Strong." *American Journal of Sociology* 99:1180-1211.
- Warner, R. Stephen. 1993. "Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1044-1093.
- Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. "Religious Group Dynamics" (chapter 6) in *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. "A Theoretical Model of Religious Economies" (chapter 8) in *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Scheitle, Christopher P. 2007. "Organizational Niches and Religious Markets: Uniting Two Literatures." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 3: Article 2.

March 28: Religious Economies Theory, continued

- Scheitle, Christopher P. 2010. *Beyond the Congregation: The World of Christian Nonprofits*. New York: Oxford University Press.

April 4: Strategic Management Theories

- Wernerfelt, Birger. 1984. "A Resource Based View of the Firm." *Strategic Management Journal* 5:171-180.
- Barney, Jay. 1991. "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage." *Journal of Management* 17:99-120.
- Teece, David J., Gary Pisano, and Amy Shuen. 1997. "Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management." *Strategic Management Journal* 18:509-533.
- Miller, Kent D. 2002. "Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations." *Strategic Management Journal* 23:435-456.
- Finke, Roger. 2004. "Innovative Returns to Tradition: Using Core Teachings as the Foundation for Innovative Accommodation." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43:19-34.

April 11: No Class

Book review due

April 18: Presentations

Peer review due

April 25: Presentations

Peer review due

May 2: Conclusion