

SOC 461: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
Pennsylvania State University, Spring, 2012
Professor Roger Finke

Office Hours: TTh 11:10 a.m.-noon
or by appointment
Office: Oswald Tower 402

Phone: 814-867-1427
E-mail: rfinke@psu.edu

Required Texts

Michael O. Emerson, William A. Mirola, and Susanne C. Monahan. 2011. *Religion Matters: What Sociology Teaches Us About Religion in Our World*. Allyn & Bacon.

Roger Finke and Rodney Stark. 2005. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy*. Rutgers University Press.

Christopher P. Scheitle and Roger Finke. 2012. *Places of Faith: A Road Trip Across America's Religious Landscape*. Oxford University Press.

Course Description

Throughout recorded history, and across the globe, religion has served as an agent of peace and protest, reconciliation and war. Within the United States, religion has played a prominent role in the development of the American culture and remains closely tied to some of the most hotly contested social issues: abortion, sexuality, First Amendment freedoms, and family values. This course will review the social foundations of religion, explore the diverse religious movements, and examine the relationship between religion and the larger culture.

Evaluation

Your final grade is based on three exams, one field research project, and class participation. Exam questions will be taken from the assigned readings, assigned learning modules, and the lectures. The research project will require you to visit worship services at three different congregations and observe four YouTube videos. You will write a short summary for each visit and YouTube observation. Using these summaries, you will write a three-to five-page research paper. Additional instructions will be given on the research project. Finally, because the success of this course depends upon lively class discussions and student participation in classroom activities, class participation will count for 10 percent of the total grade.

Late Penalties, Make-up Exams, and Extra Credit

Penalties: There is an automatic three point penalty if the research project is submitted late, and an additional one point penalty per day for each day the project is late. For example, if you submit your project seven days late, 10 points will be deducted from your score.

Make-up Exams: Make-up exams will be given only when absolutely necessary. You must receive the instructor's permission prior to missing an exam.

Extra Credit: You will be required to complete some learning modules from the Association of Religion Data Archives (www.theARDA.com) for course exams. But you can receive up to 20 points of extra credit for completing two additional modules.



Point System and Grades

The points assigned for each course assignment are:

50 points per exam (x two exams)	100
60 points for final exam (cumulative)	60
65 points for the research project	65
25 points for participation	<u>25</u>
Total Points	250 points

The final grading scale is:

235-250	A
226-234	A-
217-225	B+
209-216	B
201-208	B-
192-200	C+
176-191	C
151-175	D
0-150	F

Important Dates

First Exam	Tuesday, February 14
Research project due	Thursday, March 15
Second Exam	Thursday, March 29
Final Exam	TBA

SOC 461: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

Dates	Assignments	Topic
January 10, 12	EMM: 1,2	What is religion?
17, 19	EMM: 3; FS: 1	The social scientific study of religion
24, 26	EMM 4; FS: 2 <i>Module</i>	Understanding the religious mosaic <i>Module: Exploring Denominations in the U.S.</i>
Jan 31, Feb 2	FS: 3 <i>Module</i>	Religion in America: An overview <i>Module: Exploring Religious Beliefs and Behaviors</i>
February 7, 9	FS: 4-5	Why do some new religions succeed?
14, 16	First Exam	First Exam: Tuesday, February 14th
21, 23	SF: Intro-2; EMM: 9	Religion, race, gender and ethnicity
Feb 28, Mar 1	EMM: 10,11	Religion, race, gender and ethnicity, pt. 2
March 6, 8	Spring Break!!	
13, 15	SF: 3-6 <i>Module</i> Project Due	Organizing the faithful <i>Module: Exploring Congregations in America</i> Research Project Due: Thursday, March 15th
20, 22	FS: 6-7	Organizing the faithful, pt. 2
27, 29	Second Exam	Second Exam: Thursday, March 29th
April 3, 5	EMM: 7,8	The consequences of religion
10, 12	<i>Module</i> <i>Article</i>	Religion and state in the global arena <i>Module: Exploring International Religion</i> <i>Article: "The Clash of Civilizations"</i>
17, 19	<i>Article</i>	Religious freedoms and social conflict <i>Article: Religious Freedom and Conflict</i>
24, 26	EMM: 5,6; SF: 7-Concl	The future of religion
TBA		Final Exam

EMM: Emerson, Mirola, & Monahan **FS:** Stark and Finke **SF:** Scheitle and Finke