

SOCIOLOGY 351/RELIGION 285: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
Duke University, Fall 2013

Mark Chaves, Instructor
Office Hours: Tues. 2-4 p.m., or by appt.

Soc/Psych 248
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This is an introduction to the sociology of religion. We will begin by discussing questions such as: What is religion? Where does it come from? What is its fate in modern societies? We then will consider varieties of religious expression, exploring how social context shapes religious belief and practice. Finally, we will study American religion, focusing especially on what we can learn from social surveys.

TEXTS

Chaves, Mark. 2011. *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1995. *Data Analysis: An Introduction*. No. 103 in the series, *Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Pals, Daniel L. 2006. *Eight Theories of Religion, Second Edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.

_____. 2009. *Introducing Religion: Readings from the Classic Theorists*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schaefer, Richard T. and William W. Zellner. 2011. *Extraordinary Groups: An Examination of Unconventional Lifestyles, Ninth Edition*. New York: Worth Publishers.

These books all are required reading. They are available at the University bookstore.

Additional required readings and required films are available on the course Sakai site.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and read all assigned material.

Papers, 70%. Students will write three papers, all on assigned topics. The first paper (10%) is due on September 23. The other two (30% each) are due on October 28 and December 4. Each of these papers should be double-spaced with 12-point type and numbered pages. You must hand in hard copy. The word count must appear on the first page.

Final Exam, 20%. There will be a final exam, worth 20% of the course grade, during the scheduled exam time for this course (Dec. 14, 2 pm).

Attendance and Participation, 10%. Students' attendance and participation grade will drop by one third of a grade (e.g., from A to A-, A- to B+, etc.) for each unexcused absence. A-level participation means being prepared for and engaged in every class.

Graduate Student Final Paper, 20%. Graduate students will write a final paper instead of taking the final exam. A prospectus is due on November 18; paper due on December 13.



PAPER TOPICS

Paper #1, maximum 900 words, due September 23. You have been called as an expert witness in the lawsuit filed by high-school student Ariana Iacono against the Johnston County, North Carolina School Board. Ariana was suspended from school because her nose stud violated the school's dress code. Ariana claims that this suspension violates her constitutional rights because, as a member of the Church of Body Modification, she should be granted a religious exemption from the dress code. The case hinges on whether or not the Church of Body Modification is indeed a religion, and you are asked to address this central question: Is the Church of Body Modification a religion? Draw on course readings and lectures to answer this question for the court.

Paper #2, maximum 3,000 words, due October 28. Attend the worship services of two groups that are *demographically different* but are *within the same religious tradition*. That means two demographically different Christian churches, two demographically different Jewish synagogues, two demographically different Moslem mosques, and so on. Both of the services you attend should be unfamiliar to you. Use readings and concepts from the course, especially material from the church/sect unit, to compare and contrast these events, and perhaps other aspects of the two groups beyond these events. In what ways (if at all) does each group exemplify sectarian religion? In what ways (if at all) does each group exemplify churchly religion? Are there features or practices or points of comparison that do not fit easily into the church-sect analytical frame? The crux of the assignment is to connect aspects of each group's religious expression to the group's social characteristics.

Paper #3, maximum 3,000 words, due December 4. Use the *Survey Documentation & Analysis* website (sda.berkeley.edu) to analyze data about religion from the *General Social Survey*. You must investigate (a) one trend in some aspect of religiosity *and* (b) one relationship between some aspect of religiosity and another characteristic of individuals. You may not simply reproduce a trend or relationship presented in course lectures or readings, but you may go into more depth about a trend or relationship discussed in class. One strategy would be to combine (a) and (b) by examining whether or not a relationship between a religion variable and something else has changed over time. In any case, you should say why you chose your specific subject(s), describe the variables you analyzed (including any recoding you performed), construct clear and meaningful tables or graphs to present your results, report the results of relevant statistical tests, and discuss what your results imply about religion in the United States. You should present and describe at least four 95% confidence intervals around a mean or a proportion and (looking at whether or not 95% confidence intervals overlap) at least two tests of whether the difference between two means or two proportions is statistically significant.

Final Paper (graduate students only), due by 9 am, December 13. This paper must be sociological and on a subject related to the course material, but students are encouraged to choose a genre and topic appropriate for their degree program and career stage. The paper must be double-spaced, use 12-point type, and be no longer than 3,500 words. The word count must appear on the first page. Topics must be approved by the instructor. **A prospectus (500 words maximum) is due in class on Monday, November 18.**

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction and Overview (8/26)

Reading: *Eight Theories*: Introduction.
Introducing Religion: Introduction, pp. xviii - xxvi.

Part I – What is Religion?

A. Religion as Primitive Science: Tylor and Frazer (8/28-9/2)

Reading: *Introducing Religion*: Ch. 1, pp. 1-6, 10-15, 17-18, 24-28, 29-31
Ch. 2, pp. 37-41, 50-56, 57-58, 68-70
Eight Theories: Ch. 1.

B. Religion as Dysfunction: Marx (9/4)

Reading: *Introducing Religion*: Ch. 5, pp. 143-153, 167-170
Eight Theories: Ch. 4.

C. Religion as an Eminently Social Thing: Durkheim (9/9-9/11)

Reading: *Introducing Religion*: Ch. 4, pp. 99-109, 111-125, 135-142
Eight Theories: Ch. 3

D. Religion from a Durkheimian Perspective (9/16)

Reading: Covington, Dennis. 1995. Excerpt from *Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bellah, Robert. 1967. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus* 96:1-21.

Collins, Randall. 2004. "The Mutual-Focus/Emotional-Entrainment Model." Ch. 2 in *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Watch: *Holy Ghost People* and CNN snake handler story (18 July 2012)

E. Case Study: Is the Church of Body Modification a Religion? (9/18)

Reading: Collection of news stories about the Ariana Iacono case.

Review Church of Body Modification website: uscobm.com

***** PAPER NUMBER ONE DUE ON 9/23 *****

Part II – Varieties of Religious Expression

A. From Religion to Religious Variation: Evans-Pritchard and Weber (9/23-9/25)

Reading: *Eight Theories*: Ch. 7, 5
Introducing Religion: Ch. 8, pp. 237-255, 267-270

B. Exploring and Explaining Religious Variation

1. Church and Sect Concepts (9/30-10/7)

Reading: *Introducing Religion*: Ch. 8, pp. 255-266

Weber, Max. [1922] 1978. Selections from “Charisma and Its Transformation.” Ch. XIV in *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978 edition. Sections I.1-3, 5, II.1,2,8,9.

Weber, Max. 1920 [1978]. “Sect, Church and Democracy.” Ch. XV, Section 14 in *Economy & Society*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Troeltsch, Ernst. 1911. *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*. Ch. 2, Section 9, pp. 328-343.

Dawson, Lorne L. 2009. “Church-Sect-Cult: Constructing Typologies of Religious Groups.” Ch. 29 in *The Oxford Handbook of The Sociology of Religion*, ed. by Peter B. Clarke. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 525-533 and 536-541.

2. Church and Sect Case Studies (10/9-10/23)

Reading: Schaefer and Zellner: Ch. 2-10

Sack, Kevin. 2013. “Lung Transplants for Faithful Have a Catch, No Transfusions.” *New York Times*, 25 February 2013, A10-11.

Watch: *Knocking* (Jehovah’s Witnesses) and *Devil’s Playground* (Amish).

10/9: Amish, Shakers, Mormons
10/16: Oneida, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Student Cases
10/21: Father Divine, Nation of Islam, Student Cases
10/23: Scientology, Wicca, Student Cases

Questions to ask about each group: In what ways (if at all) does this group exemplify sectarian religion? In what ways (if at all) does it exemplify churchly religion? Are there features or practices or points of comparison that do not fit easily into the church-sect analytical frame? What sociological factors account for the particular mix of sectarian and/or churchly features within this religious group? Did the group's mix of sectarian and churchly characteristics change over time? Why or why not?

***** PAPER NUMBER TWO DUE ON 10/28 *****

3. Conversion (10/28-10/30)

Reading: Lofland, John and Rodney Stark. 1969. "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective." *American Sociological Review* 30:862-875.

Snow, David A. and Cynthia L. Phillips. 1980 "The Lofland-Stark Conversion Model: A Critical Reassessment." *Social Problems* 27:430-447.

Snow, David A. and Richard Machalek. 1984. "The Sociology of Conversion." *Annual Review of Sociology* 10:167-90.

Part III – Religion in the United States

1. Basic Facts and Trends (11/4-11/13)

Reading: Chaves, *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*, entire.

2. Using Survey Data to Study Religion (11/18-12/2)

Reading: Lewis-Beck, pp. 1-18, 30-35, 38-41

Bohrnstedt, George W. and David Knoke. 1988. *Statistics for Social Data Analysis*, Second Edition. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock Publishers. Pp. 144-157.

Become familiar with the *Survey Documentation & Analysis* (SDA) website (sda.berkeley.edu).

Become familiar with the General Social Survey data and the SDA analysis tools. At sda.berkeley.edu, click on "SDA Archive" and then on "General Social Survey (GSS) Cumulative Datafile 1972-2010." This is the first survey listed on the archive page.

Review GSS religion variable list.

***** PAPER NUMBER THREE DUE ON 12/4 *****

Final Exam Review (12/4)

***** FINAL EXAM ON SATURDAY,