# Sociology of Religion

# SOCI 3700

## Summer 5w1 2025 / Online

Office Hours/Contact:This course takes place entirely online. If you need help with anything, please either contact the TA for the course, Khoi Tran (khoi.tran@unt.edu), or send me an email (kevin.mccaffree@unt.edu).

Course Description: This is an internet-only course; there is no required lecture or face-to-face component of this course (though I’m happy to meet with you on Zoom!).

 In this course, we will review the basic sociological dimensions of all religions including group membership dynamics, prescribed ritual practices and definitions of the sacred.

 By the end of the course, you’ll be able to: (1) understand how sociologists approach the study of religion in society, (2) apply this understanding to research articles in the Sociology of Religion, (3) articulate sociological methods, concepts, terms, and theories about the sociology of religion.

Course Textbook:

 

 *Sociology of Religion: Contemporary Developments,* 3rd Ed. By: Kevin J. Christiano, William H. Swatos, and Peter Kivisto. ISBN: 978-1-4422-1692-1

\*Order or rent this book asap, as this course only lasts five weeks, and so assignments come quickly!

This book is basic, covering the fundamentals of the field. We will try to make things more fun in the discussion posts each week, where I invite you to have reflect on what the text takes for granted.

## Assignments and Grading

This course has **three** basic components—a (1) testing component, a (2) participation/discussion component and a (3) written component. All discussions and testing will be done (and all grades will be posted) on the CANVAS site for this course. The written component will be turned in, on Canvas, at the end of the course.

*Quizzes:*

There are five quizzes in this course, posted to the CANVAS course site, which **must be completed by each Friday at midnight.**

Quizzes can be taken at **any time** throughout the week (up until Friday by midnight the day they are due).

Quizzes are **not cumulative** week over week; exams only cover the chapters assigned for that week.

Each quiz is worth 50 points for a total of 250 points possible.

*Discussion/Participation:*

 You will be expected to contribute to weekly discussions of the assigned material. Your contributions on the message board should be **interactive and engaging**; consider the topic from different points of view, ask questions of your fellow students and comment reflectively on the posts of others.

These weekly discussions are worth 100 points in total (20 points per week).

You can access these discussions each week under the “Module” or “Discussions” tab on the course CANVAS site. Your discussion posts are **due Friday of each week, by midnight.**

Your discussion posts will be graded on the basis of how well they meet the following criteria:

1. Full engagement
	1. Write one original post of at least **250 words** each week
	2. Write two responses to your classmates’posts each weekof at least **100 words** each.

2) Make sure your posts are relevant to the topic(s) of thediscussion prompt and assigned chapters each week

3) **Incorporate specific references to text material in your original post**. When drawing directly from text material, put passages in quotations and cite text page numbers.

4) Emphasize your thoughtfulness and curiosity

5) Watch spelling, grammar, and organization!

Feel free to give your thoughts and opinions, to ask questions of your classmates, and be ready to explain your point of view.

*Research Article Overviews:*

This assignment will require you to summarize and analyze **three** peer-reviewed social science articles published in the sociology of religion.

**These articles need to be empirical research articles, where some sort of data is being analyzed.** In addition to describing aspects of the study itself (study objectives, methods, findings) Iwant you to describe your reflections/criticisms/opinions about the article**.** You’ll also be required toconnect the articlesto our assignedreadings from the text.

Each **“**Research Article Overview**”** is worth 50 points, for a total of 150 points. This assignment will be due during Finals Week.

Your task is to fill out three of these templates, using **three different articles** written on topics in the sociology of religion.

Refer to the template below as your guide (just fill in the required areas).

**Research Article Overview (RAO) Template**

At the top left of the document (.doc, .docx, .pdf only) copy and paste all of the following bolded, underlined, and black typing. Do not miss any section. DELETE THIS and all other instructions for what to write.

**Your Name:**

**RAO#:** (i.e., 1 of 3, 2 of 3, or 3 of 3)

**Topic of RAO**: 1. Your Topic of Choice (what topic within the sociology of religion does this article address?)

**Author(s) Name(s):** Type out the complete name of all authors of your article.

**Title of Research Article Under Review:** Must be a scholarly, top-tiered, peer-reviewed journal article. For purposes of SOCI 3700, I will only accept articles from journals mentioned on pp. 29-30 of the course text. These are the BEST journals to look in for research on the sociology of religion:

1. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion (JSSR)*
2. *Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review (ASR)*
3. *Review of Religious Research (RRR)*
4. *American Sociological Review*

**Name of Journal Research Article Comes From:** *Italicize the article name.*

**Date Research Article Published:**  Must be 2014 or more current.

**Study Rationale:** What issue/topic with religion under investigation? What do the researchers want to know? Why do they want to know this? (In other words, what is the point of this research?)

**Study Design:** How do the researchers propose to study this issue/topic related to religion? How will they go about collecting their data? Who will they study? Where will they go? Is the study quantitative or qualitative? How can you tell?

**Describe Data Collected:** What kind of data do the researchers collect? (Interviews, Surveys, Participant Observation, Records, Archives, etc…?) Where does the study take place? When did the study take place? How much time did it take the researchers? Did the researchers receive funding for this study?

**Literature Review:** Tell me at least 2 things you learned from the literature review that these researchers conducted for their research. (Researchers must make a case for what they study. To do this, they provide a review of past research and cite prior studies. What did you learn from the other studies that the researchers discuss? Be sure to cite these other studies in your writing. This means tell me the authors’ names.)

**Main findings/results/conclusions:** What are the main findings/results/conclusions from this study? This is usually found in the last 1-3 pages of a research article. What contribution did these scholars believe they made to our knowledge about religion in society? Did they accomplish what they set out to do?

**Criticisms/Opinion:** What do you think about this research article? What is your opinion of the research? Do you have any criticisms of the study? Did the researchers miss something? What more needs to be researched regarding the topic related to religion in society? Do the researchers offer suggestions for future research?

**Connections to the Christiano, Swatos & Kivisto (CS&K) Text:** This is the hardest and the most important part of the RAO assignment. This is because being able to make connections between your research article and the text tests your knowledge of the course material. If you do not do well here, you will not earn all of the points for the RAO. So, in this part of the RAO your aim is to connect something in your research article with different things CS&K say in the text. Then explain what the connections mean in your opinion. Use quotes from CS&K to illustrate your points. When you do so, cite the source and page number like this: (CS&K, pg. 220).

Couse Grading Scale:

A = 90 to 100% of possible points (**500 possible points)**

B = 80 to 89%

C = 70 to 79%

D = 60 to 69%

F = Below 60%

All assignments should be submitted by the indicated dates and times embedded in the syllabus. Due to the shortened Summer semester, **there will be no assignment/quiz extensions,** except in cases of documented emergencies.

* In the event of a legitimate emergency, contact the Student Services Coordinator (Dean of Students office) who will verify any documentation and allow me to excuse you.

Academic Integrity:

It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with UNT’s Policy on Academic Integrity. Plagiarism, copying, cheating, or giving assistance to other students during examinations is a violation of academic integrity. Cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the office of Student Affairs.

Assisted Learning:

Students with special learning needs must inform me as soon as possible to ensure that those needs are met in a timely manner. I am strongly committed to maintaining an environment that provides full access to educational programs for all students. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at: <http://disability.unt.edu/> . Their phone number is 940.565.4323.

Technical problems with Canvas software are to be directed to the **Help Desk**:

[UNT Help Desk](https://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/) - 940-565-2324 / Sage Hall 330 / helpdesk@unt.edu
Monday - Thursday 8:00 am - midnight
Friday 8:00 am - 8:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Sunday noon – midnight

Course Schedule\*:

**Week 1:** 5/19-5/23 Topic: Introduction to the Sociological Study of Religion

* Read the syllabus and email me with any questions!
* **Read Chapters 1 and 2** in the assigned textbook.
* **Discussion 1** **due** (on Canvas) Friday by midnight.
* **Exam 1 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight.

**Week 2:** 5/26-5/30 Topic: Secularization, Denomination and Social Class

* **Read Chapters 3, 4, and 5** in the assigned textbook.
* **Discussion 2 due** (on Canvas) Friday by midnight.
* **Exam 2 due** (on Canvas) Friday by midnight.

**Week 3:** 6/2-6/6 Topic: Ethnicity, Gender and Religious Change

* **Read Chapters 6, 7, and 8** in the assigned textbook.
* **Discussion 3 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight
* **Exam 3 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight.

**Week 4:** 6/9-6/13 Topic:Globalization and Contemporary Culture

* **Read Chapters 9 and 10** in the assigned textbook.
* **Discussion 4 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight.
* **Exam 4 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight.

**Week 5:** 6/16-6/20 Topic:The Future of Religion

* **Read Chapter 11** in the assigned textbook.
* **Discussion 5 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight.
* **Exam 5 due** (on Canvas) Friday by Midnight.
* **Research Article Overviews due** (uploaded to Canvas) Friday by Midnight

\*This syllabus, with its course schedule, is based on the most recent information about the course content and schedule planned for this course. Its content is subject to revision as needed to adapt to new knowledge or unanticipated events. Updates will remain focused on achieving the course objectives and students will receive notification of such changes. Students will be notified of changes and are responsible for attending to such changes or modifications posted on the CANVAS site for this course.