

**University of North Texas  
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences  
Department of Sociology**

**SOCI 3700.001 Sociology of Religion**

**Fall 2018**

**Instructor:** Nikolitsa Grigoropoulou

**Class time:** Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 am – 12:20 pm

**Classroom:** GAB 104

**Office:** Sycamore Hall 288V

**Office hours:** Tuesday and Wednesday 12:30 – 2:00 pm or by appointment

**Email:** [Nikolitsa.Grigoropoulou@unt.edu](mailto:Nikolitsa.Grigoropoulou@unt.edu)

**Course Description:**

This course introduces basic concepts and theories in the sociological study of religion mainly in the United States, but also in other countries around the world. By the end of this course, you should be able to

- ✓ understand how scholars define religion and what methods they use to study it.
- ✓ familiarize yourself with basic sociological theories about the way religion operates in the society and the lives of individuals.
- ✓ acquire knowledge on how religious organizations are formed and maintained.
- ✓ discover how religion is related with the patterns of social inequality and how it interacts with social class, race, gender, and sexuality.
- ✓ discuss the process of secularization and globalization and what they mean for the present and the future of traditional conceptualizations of religion.
- ✓ apply sociological concepts and theories in order to make your own meaning of religion and religious organizations.

**Course Material:**

**Required Textbook:** Roberts, K. & Yamane, D. (2016). Religion in Sociological Perspective. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage Publications. ISBN-13: 9781452275826.

**Reading Assignments & Participation:**

Students are responsible for reading the assigned materials from the textbook before each class session. It is very important to keep up with the readings. The lecture presentations will be available online, but not the lecture notes, so it is to your best interest to attend every class. Moreover, most of your assignments and exam questions are heavily based on understanding and applying the concepts; attending and participating to the class will be integral to building this understanding.

**Class attendance counts toward your final grade and will be taken in every class meeting.** You can miss up to 3 class meetings without harming your grade.

### **Online Blog Posts**

One of the greatest objectives of this class is for you to be able to use the concepts and theories you learn in order to construct your own meanings about religion and make sense of the everyday events related to it. You will have the chance to create **four (4) blog-like entries** throughout the semester. Think of them as online discussion posts where you can include images, videos, links to websites or articles. A different topic/question will be provided each time for you to organize your blog entry. The blog post submission portal will only be open between **Thursday at 8:00 am until Sunday at 11:59 pm** on the designated weeks. Because you will need some time to collect material and write your blog, there will be no class meeting on Thursdays these weeks. Make sure to follow closely your class schedule in the end of the syllabus to avoid missing assignments or class meetings!!!

**Exams:** There will be 3 exams throughout the semester.

**Location:** Exams will be taken online from Thursday at 8:00 am until Sunday at 11:59 pm during the designated weeks.

**Format:** Exams will cover material from the assigned readings, lectures, videos, etc. They will typically consist of minimum 30 multiple choice and True/False questions, two short answer questions, and/or one essay. A (small) pool of possible short answer and essay questions will be given beforehand for you to prepare.

The final exam will consist of a minimum of 30 multiple choice and True/False questions and one essay. Approximately half of the multiple choice questions in the final exam will be coming directly from the previous two exams.

Because life happens, make-up exams can be given with documentation for a serious illness, death in the family, required university-sponsored event, or after prior arrangement with the instructor.

### **Research Project**

For the purposes of this class, you will have to undertake a research project and prepare a report for it. Your job is to choose a religious or religious-like organization, prepare **one (1)** review of the group's religious perspective and historical background and observe at **least two (2)** of their services/meetings within a period of approximately 8 weeks following the "Doing Research on Religion" feature by Nancy Ammerman (Chapter 2, pp. 39-42 in your textbook) and my instructions. Ideally, you should pick a religious-like group different than the one you belong.

The goal of the project is to observe the services/meetings of this organization under the light of the concepts and theories you learn in the class and compare/contrast it with your religious (or nonreligious) group services/meetings in some key aspects such as doctrines, beliefs, rituals, member composition in terms of class, race, gender, and more. A second goal of the project is to examine your expectations vs. reality for

the group and reflect on your biases (as a good sociologist would do). For this aspect of the project, you will rely on the notes of other students who observed the same group. You will be called to exchange your notes before you submit the final paper (see class schedule for due dates).

Each of you will need to submit a **7-8 pages long final report**, 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 1-inch margin. A detailed list of the elements you will be expected to include in the report and a grading rubric will be provided in the course menu on Canvas. The final paper will be due on **December 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm** on Canvas.

#### Research Project Grading:

Observation notes	2 @ 15 points each	30 points
Theoretical review	20 points	20 points
Additional material (pictures, videos, etc)	10 points	10 points
Final Report	90 points	90 points
Total		150 points

#### **Weekly Journal:**

A journal section will be available on Canvas every weekend where students can jot down their thoughts on the next week's readings. This is a free, **optional** activity that can help students express their views on the forthcoming readings and indicate possible challenges they face with the concepts. The instructor will subsequently attempt to clarify these concepts and resolve possible misunderstandings.

As already mentioned, this is not a required activity and participating students – apart from the opportunity to communicate their thoughts and correct misconceptions – can also earn up to **two (2) extra points** for each week they participate.

#### **Late papers or assignments:**

Students are responsible to submit their blogs and assignments/papers on time. Late work will not be accepted without documentation for a serious illness, death in the family, or required university-sponsored event. If accepted (e.g. late submission of observation notes), it will be penalized.

### **Grading:**

Exams	3 @ 100 points each	300 points
Blogs	4 @ 25 points each	100 points
Research Paper	1 @ 150 points	150 points
Attendance	20 @ 2.5 points each	50 points
Total		600 points

Range of Points	Range of Percentages	Grade
539 - 600	90% - 100%	A
479 - 538	80% - 89%	B
419 - 478	70% - 79%	C
359 - 418	60% - 69%	D
0 - 358	0% - 59%	F

### **Classroom Etiquette:**

#### **Cell phones must be turned on SILENT and put away!**

Arriving late in class and leaving early are very disruptive to the instructor and other students. Please let the instructor know prior to the beginning of class if you absolutely must leave early and make sure your exit distracts others as little as possible. Please make every effort to respect others.

Disagreements are allowed and expected, but the focus should be on ideas rather than on the individual who expresses them. Signs of disrespect that will not be tolerated include but are not limited to, having background conversations when others are talking, packing up early when others are still talking or asking questions, and working on material for other classes.

### **Acceptable Student Behavior:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's

conduct violated UNT's Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. UNT's Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

### **Academic Integrity Policy:**

Academic dishonesty is defined as follows by the Office of Academic Integrity on the website: <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/development/dishonesty.html>

- **Cheating:** Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
- **Plagiarism:** The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgement.
- **Fabrication:** Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty:** Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

Violations of the policy of academic integrity are taken seriously at UNT and may include (1) failing grades on assignments and/or the course and (2) reports to the VPAA that become a part of the official student record. You should read the procedures and sanctions for academic dishonesty on the website of the Vice President for academic Affairs at <http://vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>. If you are in doubt about any of the issues related to academic integrity, it is your responsibility to consult with the course instructor regarding these requirements before your assignments are submitted.

### **Disability Statement:**

Students requesting accommodations and services due to a disability are required to provide the authorization letter issued by the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) before their requests can be processed. Attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements. For more information, contact the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) at 940-565-4323.

### **Syllabus as a Contract:**

The University attorney advises faculty members to notify students that the syllabus is not a contract and is therefore subject to change. I will try to adhere to the schedule provided, but I reserve the right to alter the syllabus to better suit the needs of the class.

## WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading / Assignment
Week 1		
T 08/28	Introduction / Review Course Outline	
TH 08/30	What Do We Mean by the Term Religion?	Chapter 1: pp. 1-23
Week 2		
T 09/04	A Social Scientific Approach to Studying Religion	Chapter 2: pp. 25-48
TH 09/06	Online Meeting	Blog Entry #1
Week 3		
T 09/11	Religion in the Larger Society: Macro Perspectives	Chapter 3: pp. 49-76
TH 09/13		
Week 4		
T 09/18	The Cultural Construction of Religion: Experience, Myth, Ritual, Symbols, and Worldview	Chapter 4: pp. 78-99
TH 09/20		
Week 5		
T 09/25	Becoming and Being Religious	Chapter 5: pp. 101-131
TH 09/27	Exam #1 Online	
Week 6		
T 10/02	Conversion and Switching	Chapter 6: pp. 132-155
TH 10/04		
	Review Paper due by Sunday, October 7 at 11:59 pm	
Week 7		
T 10/09	Organized Religion: Churches, Sects, Denominations, and “Cults”	Chapter 7: pp. 157-185
TH 10/11	Online Meeting	Blog Entry #2
Week 8		
T 10/16	Organized Religion: Denominationalism and Congregationalism	Chapter 8: pp. 187-220
TH 10/18		

Week 9		
T 10/23	Religion, Economics, and Social Class	Chapter 9: pp. 223-246
TH 10/25		
	Observation Notes #1 due by Sunday, October 28 at 11:59 pm	
Week 10		
T 10/30	Religion and Race	Chapter 10: pp. 248-274
TH 11/01	Exam #2 Online	
Week 11		
T 11/06	Religion, Gender, and Sexuality	Chapter 11: pp. 276-307
TH 11/08	Online Meeting	Blog Entry #3
Week 12		
T 11/13	Religion, Inequality, and Social Activism	Chapter 12: pp. 309-336
TH 11/15		
Week 13		
T 11/20	Secularization: Religion in Decline or in Transformation?	Chapter 13: pp. 339-361
TH 11/22	Thanksgiving Break	No class
	Observation Notes #2 due by Sunday, November 25 at 11:59 pm	
Week 15		
T 11/27	Religion and Globalization	Chapter 15: pp. 391-418
TH 11/29	Online Meeting	Blog Entry #4
	Final Paper due by Tuesday, December 4 at 11:59 pm	
Week 16		
T 12/04	Class Wrap-up	No readings
TH 12/06	Final Exam Review	

<b>Finals Week</b>	
	<b>Final Exam Online</b> Monday, December 10 at 8:00 am – Wednesday, December 12 at 11:59 pm

**Have a Great Semester!!!**