

This is a sample syllabus only. The instructor may make changes to the syllabus in future courses.

Sociology of Religion

Sociology 235

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Office Hours: _____

Course Text:

Roberts, Keith A. and David Yamane. 2012. *Religion in Sociological Perspective. 5th edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (ISBN: 978-1-4129-8298-6)

Kurtz, Lester R. 2012. *Gods in the Global Village: The World's Religions in Sociological Perspective. 3rd Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (ISBN: 978-1-4129-9125-4)

Course Description:

“Social aspects of individual religious experience; organization of churches and sects; relationships among religion, science, and other institutions; Major faith groups: religion and global conflict” (UAB Undergraduate Catalog 2013-2014).

Course Objective:

For the majority of people and societies, religion plays an important role in their individual and collective lives. For most people from around the world, religion provides direction in a world filled with ambiguity and unknowns. Religious principles and practices can maintain long-standing social traditions or serve as sources for social change. Religion can play an important role in the development and maintenance of social, racial, ethnic, and national identities. Religion has been a cause for conflict, as well as, a beacon for hope and peace.

This course will introduce students to the sociological scholarship on religion across our global society. This course will provide students with an opportunity to develop a broad sociological understanding and perspective with which to evaluate, interpret, and understand religion and religious institutions. This class will offer students an objective perspective on the dynamics of religion. This class is not concerned with the accuracy of religion in general or specific religions in particular. This class will be confined to the scientific study of religion and not attempt to pass judgments about which religions are better or worse, true or false.

In this course we will examine a range of topics including: sociological definitions of religion, classical sociologists' understanding of religion, religion's role in making sense of life (the sacred canopy), the origins of religion, religion as social organization (church-sect continuum), how people become religious, religious liturgy, the link between economics and religion, religious politics, religion and class, religion and gender, beliefs and practices of the world's major religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity), denominationalism, the role of religion in conflict and social change, the rise of fundamentalism, and religion in global society.

Course Requirements:

This online course has been set up into FOUR sections: 1) Sociological Perspective on Religion, 2) Individuals and Organization, 3) Survey of Religions, and 4) Religion and Stratification.

Discovery Writings: There will be several “discovery writing” opportunities over the course of the semester. You will be asked to write for 3-5 minutes without interruption on a topic specific to the day’s lecture/discussion. Upon completion, you will be asked to share your ideas and turn in your writing. All writings will be turned in so that I can read and ‘grade’ them. Assuming you try your best to answer the question provided honestly and academically, you will be given full credit; you have to be in class to receive the points. (50pts total)

Assignments: There will several assignments over the course of the semester. The assignments will vary in task, from writing a critical commentary, a personal reflection paper, to group projects involving conducting social experiments/interviews. The assignments will be announced at least 7 days in advance and posted on Black Board. (50pts total)

Section Exams: There will be FOUR section exams during the semester. Each exam will cover 4-6 chapters. Each exam consists of multiple choice and essay questions (6-8 sentences). The purpose of the section exam is to test your conceptual and factual knowledge about the section material covered, including **films** we watch in class. (400pts total)

Sociological Autobiography: Sociologist Robert K. Merton wrote "the sociological autobiography uses sociological perspectives, ideas, concepts, findings, and analytical procedures to construct and to interpret one's own life history." This assignment would involve researching and writing a sociological autobiography that analyzes your religious life and development in three sections (Section 1: 15pt, Section 2: 30pts, Section 3: 55pts), each round developing and incorporating one aspect of C. Wright Mills’s tripartite understanding of the sociological imagination. Complete instructions will be handed out later.

Points:

Discovery Writings	=	50pts
Assignments	=	50pts
Exams	4 x 100 each	= 400pts
<u>Sociological Autobiography</u>	=	<u>100pts</u>
Total		600pts

LETTER GRADES:

537-600 = A
477-536 = B
417-476 = C
357-416 = D
0-356 = F

Communications:

All official correspondence will be sent ONLY to the @uab.edu address. All students are responsible for ensuring that the correct e-mail address is listed in Blackboard (**Bb**) by the beginning of Week 1. UAB E-mail is the only method I will use to electronically communicate with students. It is your responsibility to make sure a valid email UAB address is provided. Failure on your part to do so can result in you missing important information that could affect your grade.

Drop/Add:

According to UAB policy _____ is the last day to drop this course. The last day to withdraw from this course with a grade of "W" is _____. Students registering late will be able to make up all class material.

Accommodation of Religious Beliefs:

Religious beliefs shall be reasonably accommodated with respect to all examinations and other academic requirements. Please notify the professor in advance if there is a conflict.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Any students who need reasonable accommodations are invited to share these concerns or requests with the professor. All accommodations must be approved by Disability Support Services (DSS). If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please call 934-4205 or visit DSS at 516 Hill University Center.

Academic Honest Policy:

UAB Faculty expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Academic dishonesty and misconduct includes, but is not limited to, acts of abetting, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation. Candidates are expected to honor the UAB Academic Code of Conduct as detailed *UAB Student Catalog 2012-2013*. Please consult this resource for additional information regarding the specific procedures to be undertaken when a student violates the UAB Academic Code of Conduct.

<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/undergraduate-programs/general-studies/academic-success/67537/>

Let me make it clear: if you cheat or plagiarize you will *fail* the course and your name will be forwarded to the University Compliance Office.

Make-up Policy:

If you must miss a commentary, discussion, quiz or exam, you will need to schedule a time to make-up the assignment *before* your absence. Only in extreme cases will this policy be modified. REMEMBER, not all quizzes, discussions, and papers are used to calculate final grades, you may not need of a make-up.

Etiquette:

Respect fellow students and myself. Topics in this class can become sensitive and someone (including myself) may say something with which you disagree. Critical discussion is encouraged, but respect differences of theoretical perspective. All class discussions must be sociological in nature.

Reservation:

I reserve the right to make changes in this syllabus to better serve the class's needs. Any changes will be announced in class in advance.