

## Religion and Modernity

Sociology 476

Spring 2007

Thursday 5-7

### Course Instructor

Professor Carolyn Chen

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Office hours:

### Course Description

Despite classical sociological theory's prediction of religion's demise in modernity, religion appears not only to persist but thrive in contemporary society. In this course we will examine sociological theories of religion and society, and then use specific case studies to investigate how religion functions in contemporary society. We will engage in issues such as why and when religion thrives, how modern individuals practice religion, the roles religion play in the modern public, and new religious forms in modernity.

### Course Requirements

#### *Facilitating discussion*

Each week someone will be responsible for presenting an overview of the week's readings and for facilitating discussion. In addition to providing an overview of the readings, the presenter should critically evaluate the works, raise questions about the readings, and draw connections among different readings.

#### *Documenting discussion*

Each week someone (other than the presenter) will be responsible for documenting class discussion. This person will e-mail these notes to other members of the class.

#### *Final paper*

For the final paper, you may write on any aspect of religion and contemporary society. The paper may be part of another work in progress, such as a fellowship proposal, a master's paper proposal, or a paper for another class. You will give me a brief proposal for the paper on the seventh week of class. The final paper is due Friday, June 4.

### Required Texts

Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Any edition.

Max Weber. 1993. *The Sociology of Religion*. Boston: Beacon Press. **OR**

Max Weber. 1978. *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Emile Durkheim. 1995. *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen Fields. New York: Free Press.

Peter L. Berger. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Any edition.

Christian Smith. 1998. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lynn Davidman. 1993. *Tradition in a Rootless World: Women Turn to Orthodox Judaism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jose Casanova. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wade Clark Roof. 2001. *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

### Recommended Texts

From *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Edited by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills.

All texts, except for *The Sacred Canopy*, are available at Norris Bookstore.

### **March 29: Introduction**

### **April 5: No Class**

### **April 12: Weber on Religion and Rationality**

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," Pgs. 267-301 in *From Max Weber*.

### **April 19: Weber on Religion and Rationality (continued)**

Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*. Pgs. 1-60, 138-222, 246-274.

Or in *Economy and Society* Pgs. 399-451, 518-589, 611-634.

Ann Swidler, "Foreward," in *The Sociology of Religion*.

"Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," Pgs. 323-359 in *From Max Weber*.

### **April 26: Religion and Moral Community**

Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

Robert Bellah. 1964. "Religious Evolution" *American Sociological Review* 29 (3):358-374.

### **May 3: Secularization and New Paradigms of Religion**

Peter L. Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*.

Roger Finke and Rodney Stark. 1988. "Religious Economies and Sacred Canopies: Religious Mobilization in American Cities, 1906." *American Sociological Review* 53:41-49.

R. Stephen Warner. 1993. "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1044-93.

### **May 10: Evangelical Christianity in the United States**

Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism*.

### **May 17: Women Converting to Orthodox Judaism**

Lynn Davidman, *Tradition in a Rootless World*.

### **May 24: Resurgence of Religion in the Public**

Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*.

### **May 31: New Religious Forms – Spirituality in the United States**

Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace*.

**Week Ten: Open to suggestion**