

TED University
2024-2025 Academic Year Spring Semester
Religion and Modernity
SOC 314 Syllabus

Instructor: Alper Yalçinkaya

Course Hours and Location: Wednesday 16-17, Friday 11-13

Office Hours: By appointment (Please put SOC314 in the subject line of all email correspondence)

Course Description: This course is an introduction to the sociological study of religion in modern societies, with an emphasis on the relations between migration and religion. We will focus on the major theoretical perspectives on religion and religiosity, and learn the methods sociologists use to study these topics. Questions about the ways in which religion is defined and religiosity is assessed in sociological studies, theories about the functions and effects of religion, and the role of religiosity in social life will be discussed. We will also explore the approaches that analyze the place of religion in contemporary societies, secularization, and the influence of globalization on religion. As part of this discussion, we will also look at the role of religion in the lives of refugees and immigrants, and study issues like Islamophobia, syncretism, and new religious movements.

Objectives:

After finishing this course, students should be able to:

- have a sound understanding of the specifically sociological ways of discussing and studying religion.
- discuss the ways in which religion operates in society in a nuanced and unprejudiced way
- understand the diversity of religious experiences, religious identities, and the impact of the social context on these experiences
- discuss the major religious trends in the world, and the dimensions of secularization
- explain the perspectives on how migration influences religious practices and beliefs

Required Book (sections will be provided by the instructor):

Michele Dillon, ed. *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Suggested readings:

Books:

Grace Davie *The Sociology of Religion: A Critical Agenda* (SAGE, 2013).

Inger Furseth and Pal Repstad, eds. *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion* (Routledge, 2006)

Robert Wuthnow *What Happens When We Practice Religion* (Princeton University Press, 2020).

Jennifer Reid, ed. *Religion, Postcolonialism and Globalization* (Bloomsbury, 2015).

Journals:

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Sociology of Religion

Social Compass

Format of the course: This course will have a lecture/discussion format. The instructor will lecture, but we will devote a significant part of most class meetings to discussions. Students need to do the readings and be ready to discuss them in class.

You are expected to attend the class regularly and on time. In class, you're expected to pay attention to the lecture and participate in discussions, and it's strictly prohibited to check your phone during class time. When you participate in discussions, make sure you're respectful of your peers' views, and connect your arguments to the theories and readings.

Readings and other related material will be made available on LMS, but they are strictly for course purposes only. None of these materials, including anything shared during our class meetings, are open to circulation with wider public audiences, such as postings to the Internet or sharing with others.

You will be informed about the course via email. It's essential to check your email several times every day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: From the University Disciplinary Committee, "Academic dishonesty in assignments, examinations, or other academic performance is prohibited. It includes but is not limited to "cheating" (the intentional use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids); "fabrication" (the intentional falsification or invention of any information); "assisting in dishonesty or tampering" (intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of dishonesty or tampering with evaluation instruments and documents); and "plagiarism" (intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own)."

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is a very serious offense and will be penalized accordingly by the university disciplinary committee. Accordingly, all parties involved in plagiarism will be penalized.

The best way to avoid plagiarizing is to work on your own before you ask for the help of other resources.

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- Turning in someone else's work as your own
- Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- Copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not" (www.plagiarism.org)

Course Assessment:

Assessment	
Attendance and Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Final Paper: research proposal	10%
Final Paper	25%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE POLICY: TED University is a formal education provider. This means that attendance to courses is one of the requirements to successfully complete a degree program and is therefore compulsory. TED University's Undergraduate Education Regulations also states that the attendance policy is left to the discretion of the instructor.

This course requires your regular participation, attendance, and punctuality. It is expected that you attend the class on a regular basis and be on time. It is your responsibility to keep in touch with me about the emergencies prior to class.

Attendance and Participation: Because we meet only once a week, you need to make sure not to miss class. Attendance constitutes 5 percent of your final grade.

80-100% attendance: 5 points

60-80%: 3 points

Less than 60%: 0 points

This course requires your regular participation, attendance, and punctuality. It is expected that you attend the class on a regular basis and be on time. It is your responsibility to keep in touch with me about the emergencies prior to class.

In addition to attending class, you're expected to actively participate in class discussions and activities. If you attend all classes but never participate, you may not receive the full 5 points.

Research proposal and final paper

Students will be divided into groups of two by the instructor.

Each group will submit three research proposals of one page each by the end of week 6. Each proposal will be about a topic students would be interested in studying. In 400-500 words for each proposal, groups will describe what they are interested in, why this is a topic worth studying, and how they intend to study it. Projects may be based on field research (using methods like observation and interviews) or library research (using articles and books by academics). Each proposal will also include bibliographic information about at least three relevant books or articles.

The instructor will then notify groups of the proposal that they will work on.

More information will be provided separately by the instructor.

The final paper will be submitted on the last day of finals week, and will be at least 4000 words long.

Course Outline:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule and the readings. Based on final enrolments and the Ramadan holiday, the syllabus will be revised.

Course Outline	
Week 1	• Introductions • Discussion on defining and measuring religion
Week 2	<i>Classical Approaches in the Sociology of Religion</i> Emile Durkheim Excerpts from the <i>Elementary Forms of The Religious Life</i>
Week 3	<i>Classical Approaches in the Sociology of Religion</i> Max Weber Excerpts from <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i> "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Dimensions"
Week 4	<i>Classical Approaches in the Sociology of Religion</i> Karl Marx Excerpts from <i>German Ideology</i> John Brentlinger, "Revolutionizing Spirituality: Reflections on Marxism and Religion." <i>Science & Society</i> 64, no. 2 (2000): 171–93.
Week 5	<i>Religion and Sociology: Defining and Observing</i> P. Berger "Some Second Thoughts on Substantive vs. Functional Definitions of Religion" <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 13:2(1974), 125-133. Mark Chaves. "SSSR presidential address rain dances in the dry season: Overcoming the religious congruence fallacy." <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 49, no. 1 (2010): 1-14. Robert N. Bellah, "Civil religion in America." <i>Daedalus</i> (1967): 1-21.
Week 6	Secularization

	Casanova, José. "Rethinking secularization: A global comparative perspective." In Religion, globalization, and culture, pp. 101-120. Brill, 2007. Chaves, Mark. "Secularization as declining religious authority." <i>Social forces</i> 72, no. 3 (1994): 749-774. Bruce, Steve. "Secularization and the impotence of individualized religion." <i>The Hedgehog Review</i> (2006): 35-45.
Week 7	Exam
Week 8	Religion and Migration Dillon 207-240 Menjívar, Cecilia. "Immigrants, immigration, and sociology: Reflecting on the state of the discipline." <i>Sociological Inquiry</i> 80, no. 1 (2010): 3-27.
Week 9	Religion in Modern Society: Gender Schnabel, Landon. "More religious, less dogmatic: Toward a general framework for gender differences in religion." <i>Social science research</i> 75 (2018): 58-72. On immigrant women Sonya Sharma, ed. <i>Women and Religion in the West: Challenging Secularization</i> 195-220.
Week 10	Religion in Modern Society: New Religious Movements Dillon, 137-150 Laura J. Vollmer, "The Role of 'Spirituality' in Religion-secular Relational Discourse: The Case of Yoga in Britain." <i>Journal of Religion in Europe</i> 13, no. 3-4 (2021): 325-350.
Week 11	"Religious Markets" Perspective Dillon 96-110 Driessen, Michael D. "Regime type, religion-state arrangements, and religious markets in the Muslim world." <i>Sociology of Religion</i> 75, no. 3 (2014): 367-394. Lever, John, and Mara Miele. "The growth of halal meat markets in Europe: An exploration of the supply side theory of religion." <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i> 28, no. 4 (2012): 528-537.
Week 12	Religion and the Economy Ward, G., 2003. The Commodification of Religion or the Consummation of Capitalism. <i>Hedgehog Review</i>, 5(2). Adas, E.B., 2006. The making of entrepreneurial Islam and the Islamic spirit of capitalism. <i>Journal for Cultural Research</i>, 10(02), pp.113-137. Mukherjee, S. Romi. "Global halal: meat, money, and religion." <i>Religions</i> 5, no. 1 (2014): 22-75.
Week 13	Future directions Levitt, Peggy. "'You know, Abraham was really the first immigrant': Religion and transnational migration." <i>International migration review</i> 37, no. 3 (2003): 847-873. Penny Edgell. "A cultural sociology of religion: New directions." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 38 (2012): 247-265. Gauthier, François, and Tuomas Martikainen. "Introduction: the marketization of religion." <i>Religion</i> 48, no. 3 (2018): 361-366.

