



Texas A&M San Antonio

**Sociology
3364
The Sociology of Religion**

Spring 2026 Syllabus

Instructor: Tracy Schluter, M.A.	Start Date: Jan 20, 2026
Cell: 210-415-1155	End Date: May 12, 2026
E-mail: Tschluter@tamsusa.edu	Office hours: Contact me anytime

Course Objectives:

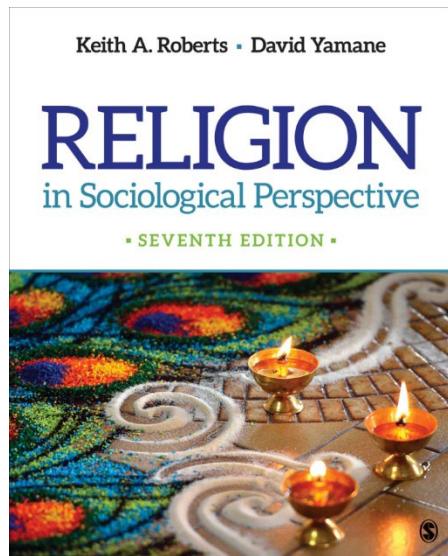
By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Understand the importance of sociology to understanding religion.
- Be able to use sociological theory to explain the interaction of religion and society.
- Students will be able to apply key concepts to contemporary debates about the role of religion in the contemporary world.
- Analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena in the context of social structures, including race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.
- Develop research and analytical skills in writing academic essays and social analysis.

Required Text and Course Materials or Equipment

Religion in Sociological Perspective, 7th Edition

Keith A. Roberts and David Yamane



Weekly Procedures

We will be covering approximately 1 chapter in the text per week. Videos also may be included in some weeks to augment the text and Class Notes.

Each week you will participate in one discussion forum. On the 2 weeks that you will have papers due, there will be no forum discussions. Unless otherwise noted, you will be required to post responses to at least two postings of other students. Both the original post and responses should be intelligently written using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Responses must also utilize course material (unless otherwise specified in the question/prompt). These criteria will factor into discussion post grades.

The last week is designated for your final project.

Technology

Basic Skill Requirements:

To succeed in online courses, you will need basic computer skills that include how to use email, attach a document to an email message, navigate web pages, and download and upload files. You must participate in discussion forums and use the Internet to research information. Additionally, you will need a computer with regular access to a reliable Internet connection, a current web browser (such as Chrome or Firefox), and a technology “backup” plan in case your primary computer is unavailable during a test-taking timeframe.

Technical Help:

If you need help logging in to Blackboard or finding information, just call the IT Help Desk at (830)784-4357. Office hours are 8-5 M-F. Additionally, you can email them with your questions at helpdesk@tamusa.edu

Netiquette:

Written communication in the online environment is crucial to success. To avoid misunderstandings the following guidelines are provided:

- **Follow the Golden Rule.** Treat others, as you would like to be treated. Be encouraging, helpful, aware, and respectful of others.
- **Avoid using all caps.** Text written in all capital letters is difficult to read and often interpreted as shouting, which is inappropriate for an academic environment. Additionally, the use of all caps nullifies the use of proper capitalization.
- **Respect copyright.** Ask permission or cite sources for the work of others.
- **Choose your words carefully.** Careful word choice ensures that you have expressed yourself clearly. Review your writing before you post. Using one word over another can have a dramatic effect on the meaning and your tone.
- **Use proper grammar and spelling.** Using e-speak as you would in text messaging is not appropriate in an academic environment, such as discussion forums. Additionally, it can confuse some unfamiliar with the abbreviated spellings.

Student Participation

To be successful in this course you should log in at least five days a week even if you don't post each day.

Instructor Presence and Response Time

The instructor will respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. The instructor will provide feedback and grades within a week for written assignments and three days after the week ends for the discussion forums.

I often use email to notify you of any changes or notices. Please check your email. Email is also the best way to get a hold of me and I will respond generally within 24 hours. If you're having an emergency, text or call me.

Assessments and Grading

Grading Scale

Late Assignments or Incompletes

Late papers and assignments will be docked one letter grade for each day they are late (with the lowest grade received for late work being a "C"), unless we have agreed on prior arrangements. Make-ups of major exams may only be completed when the instructor grants an excuse for a specific absence.

A	94 - 100%
A-	90 - 93%
B+	87 - 89%
B	84 - 86%
B-	80 - 83%
C+	77 - 79%
C	74 - 76%
C-	70 - 73%
D+	67 - 69%
D	64-66%
D-	60-63%
F	59% and lower

Assignments

Assignments	Point Total	% of Grade
Forum Discussions	30	30%
Two Written Essays	20	20%
Midterm Exam	25	25%
Final Exam	25	25%
Total Points Possible	100	100%

Rules for Forum Posting

The forum postings will all be due on Thursday at 11:59 pm of each week unless otherwise noted. You will then reply to 2 of your classmate's postings by Sunday of that week. Each of your replies should include relevant comments or ideas for further exploration.

Essays

There are 2 essays this semester. The essay topics and due dates can be found on the Blackboard and the syllabus. The papers should be between 1-3 pages in length. Please use ASA style. You can refer to the ASAguide or the link above for guidance.

Sociology 3364 Syllabus

Title of Assessment/Instructions	Category Name	Point Value	Assessment Due Date/Time
Week 1			
Read: Ch 1 What do We Mean by the term Religion?	Reading		
Discussion: Is belief in the supernatural essential to defining religion, or is it the strength of one's convictions and depth of commitment that truly matter? Explain your reasoning. My definition of religion is: ____ Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	1/22 11:59 p.m.
Week 2			
Read: Ch 2 Historical Development of the Sociology of Religion	Reading		
Watch the video on Blackboard	Video		
Essay 1 Using a religious tradition with which you are familiar, begin by providing a functional analysis of the role it plays in the community and in the lives of individuals. Discuss how this tradition contributes to social cohesion, meaning-making, moral guidance, or support during major life events. Next, drawing on the sociologists and theories discussed in this chapter, evaluate the statement: "Secularization is occurring in North America." Take a clear position by either supporting or refuting this claim. In your analysis, consider whether the functions of religion you described earlier are contributing to secularization, resisting it, or transforming religion in new ways. Support your argument with sociological concepts and course readings.	Essay	10	1/30 11:59 p.m.
Week 3			
Read: Ch 3 A Social Scientific Approach to Studying Religion	Reading		
Watch the video on Blackboard	Video		
Discussion: Explain the sociological approach to studying religion. What do you see as potential strengths and limitations to this approach? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	2/5 11:59 p.m.

Week 4			
Read: Ch 4 Becoming and Being Religious	Reading		
Watch the video on Blackboard	Video		
Discussion: How has religion in North America shifted over the past 50 years from an ascribed to an achieved element of one's identity? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	2/12 11:59 p.m.
Week 5			
Read: Ch 5 Conversion, Switching, and Apostasy	Reading		
Watch the video on Blackboard	Video		
Discussion: Summarize the patterns of religious switching. What seem to be the primary factors in switching, and what are the overall trends? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	2/19 11:59 p.m.
Week 6			
Read: Ch 6 Churches, Sects, Denominations, and Cults	Reading		
<i>Watch the video on Blackboard</i>	Video		
Discussion. Discuss the concept of cult or new religious movement (NRM) by explaining how it differs from a sect or a denomination. What social factors contribute to the formation of an NRM? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	2/26 11:59 p.m.
Week 7			
The Midterm Exam will be available for download			2/25 8:00 am
Midterm Exam Due	Exam	25	3/2 11:59 pm
Week 8 – SPRING BREAK			
Week 9			
Read: Ch 7 Congregationalism and Congregations	Reading		.
<i>Watch the video on Blackboard</i>	Video		
Discussion: Does the “marketing” of religion inherently distort its message and purpose, or can competition in the marketplace of ideas bring renewed vitality and deeper commitment to religious practice? Explain your perspective. Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	3/19 11:59 p.m.
Week 10			

Read: Ch 8 Religion, Economics, and Social Class	Reading		
Discussion: In your own words, explain the prosperity gospel. How might this perspective benefit certain groups in society, and in what ways could it also be harmful? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	3/26 11:59 pm
Week 11			
Read: Ch 9 Religion and Race	Reading		
<i>Watch the video on Blackboard</i>	Video		
Discussion: What is racialization, and how have some religious groups been racialized historically and in contemporary society? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	4/2 11:59 p.m.
Week 12			
Read: Ch 10 Religion and Gender	Reading		
Essay 2 - For this essay, I'd like you to make a list of characteristics of an outstanding minister. Now, analyze your list. Do you believe your list reflects the qualities that are traditionally "masculine" or "feminine"? Have a relative or friend do the same. Often, clergy leadership skills are substantially "feminine," but churches usually want a male pastor. Why is that? Does it create a problem? Why or why not?	Essay	10	4/10 11:59 p.m.
<i>Watch the video on Blackboard</i>	Video		
Week 13			
Read: Ch 11 Religion and Sexualities			
<i>Watch videos on Blackboard</i>	Video		
Discussion: Summarize religious divisions around same-sex marriages. Be sure to consider how marriage equality around the world is also shaped by religion. Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	4/16 11:59 p.m.
Week 14			
Read: Ch 12 Religion Outside the (God) Box			
<i>Watch the video on Blackboard</i>	Video		
Discussion: What is muscular Christianity? How did evangelical Protestants use multiple organizations to reinforce this idea? Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	4/23 11:59 p.m.
Week 15			
Read: Ch 13 Religion, Social Stability, and Social Conflict	Reading		

Watch the video on Blackboard	Video		
Discussion: How has religion historically been a source of social conflict in the United States? Do you see similar types of conflicts occurring in society today? Explain your view. Respond to 2 classmates. All responses are due by 11:59 on Sundays	Discussion	2.5	4/30 11:59 p.m.
Week 16			
Read: Ch 14 Globalization and Religion	Reading		
Discussion: How has globalization changed the way religions are practiced and experienced around the world? Using examples from the chapter, discuss how global communication, migration, and cultural exchange have influenced religious beliefs, identities, or institutions. Do you think globalization strengthens religion, weakens it, or simply changes it? Respond to 2 classmates		2.5	5/7 11:59 pm
Last day for all late work to be turned in, for a diminished grade (but better than a 0)			5/8 11:59 pm
The Final Project is available to work on			5/4
Final Project	Final	25	5/11 11:59 pm
Total Points for Course		100	

Discomfort Statement

As a professor, it is my job to challenge you to think critically about your assumptions regarding yourself and others, as well as to learn and analyze many materials we will come across. Sometimes the materials and the discussions will make you uncomfortable, and that's okay. When you feel uncomfortable, you develop critical thinking skills because you look at things in a way you might never have before. This is a great opportunity to contact me and have a deeper conversation if needed. We will discuss some of the negative sides of life in this class, which means you will have to sit with ideas such as inequality, mortality, illness, and access to power. Recognizing that there may not be a single right answer for everyone and being able to problem-solve for groups of people is a valuable skill in all aspects of life. I'm asking you to get comfortable being uncomfortable. (Many thanks to Dr. Theresa MacPhail)

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations for their disability. If you have a disability that may require accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and the email is dss@tamusa.edu.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment-based center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamus.edu or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday – Friday. After-hours crisis support is available by calling 210-784-1331. Please contact UPD at 911 if harm to self or harm to others is imminent.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (to the extent permitted by law), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit www.tamus.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty who are registered in JagE Alert, will have the option to receive a text message, email, and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamus.bbcportal.com/>. More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamus.edu/upd/index.html>.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing Center: The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the student services tab. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at www.tamus.edu/Writing-Center. The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing writingcenter@tamus.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamus.edu) for support. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, about special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots' Casa in person, Room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military@tamus.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their traditions. Under A&M System policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a

religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

Respect for Diversity: We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the classroom, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality, diversity, pluralism, and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no university rule or procedure that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the university, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and staff, and the administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official University notifications.
6. We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

What about AI

In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and work that is presented as original must be, in fact, original. Using an AI-content generator (such as ChatGPT) to complete coursework without proper attribution or authorization is a form of academic dishonesty. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please contact your instructor to discuss the issue. Faculty, students, and administrative staff all share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment.

Smart is something you *learn*.
not something you are!