

SOC 6332 THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Baylor University, Spring 2010

Wednesday, 2:00-4:50 pm, Burleson 311

Description

A sociological approach to religion places primary attention on the collective, social nature of religion. Consequently, religious organizations are an important area of investigation for sociologists. The quantity and quality of research in this area have improved dramatically in the past two decades. Soc 6332 is an introduction to this burgeoning area of research. The seminar explores organizational aspects of religion, including organizational forms, prominent theories, and common methodologies.

Instructor

Kevin D. Dougherty, Ph.D.

Burleson 318B, 710-6232

Kevin_Dougherty@baylor.edu

Objectives

At the completion of the seminar, students should be able to:

1. Describe common forms of religious organizations.
2. Identify methodological strategies for studying religious organizations.
3. Explain the relevance of prominent organizational theories to religious organizations.

Readings

Chaves, Mark. 1999. *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Eiesland, Nancy L. 1999. *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring and Religious Ecology in a Southern Exurb*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 2005. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Additional journal articles and book chapters will be provided electronically by the instructor.

Requirements

Seminar requirements are designed to push students intellectually and professionally. Assigned readings, synthesis papers, and a discussant provide a framework for class sessions. A book review, research proposal, and peer review promote analysis and foreshadow professional responsibilities.

Synthesis Papers. Students will be responsible for writing a 2-3 page synthesis paper in response to assigned readings each week. These papers are a place to react to and think through each set of readings. A few questions to get started are: What overarching themes emerged? What theoretical or methodological insights were encountered? What new questions/ideas were sparked? Weekly synthesis papers should be emailed to the class by Monday evening.

Discussion Leader. One student per week will serve as discussion leader. The discussion leader should come prepared to guide class conversation. Assigned readings, outside readings, and classmates' synthesis papers should be used to develop questions for class consideration.

Book Review. Book reviews are a standard feature in scholarly journals. Students will have an opportunity to write a book review for possible publication. A list of titles will be provided, although students are not restricted to this list. Instructor approval is necessary for any selected book. The book review is to be 800-1000 words in length and adhere to guidelines established by the journal for which it is written. The book review is due April 7.



Research Proposal. A 15-20 page research proposal will culminate the semester. Whether earning a graduate degree or seeking grant funding, research proposals are another ubiquitous element of academic life. For Soc 6332, the proposal should outline a feasible study on some type of religious organization; it should demonstrate familiarity with relevant organizational literature, theories and methodology; and it should contribute something new to this literature. A rough draft of the research proposal is due to the instructor and the classmate assigned as “peer reviewer” at least 72 hours before the in-class presentation. A final (revised) draft is due by May 5.

Proposal Presentation. Akin to an academic conference, students will make a 15 minute presentation of their research proposal. The presentation is a chance to gain wider feedback on the project. The feedback from classmates, including one designed reviewer (see below), should be used to improve the final draft of the proposal.

Peer Review. The credibility of academic research depends on a rigorous review process. Scholarship is a collaborative enterprise. It will be a collaborative enterprise in the seminar as well. Each student will be assigned to serve as a reviewer for a classmate’s research proposal. The reviewer is responsible for evaluating the merit of the idea, quality of the literature review, strength of the theoretical argument, appropriateness of the methodology, and potential scholarly contribution. The review will be delivered orally in class following the proposal presentation. A written review is due to the presenter and instructor at this time.

Evaluation

It is expected that students will fulfill all requirements described above. As a general guide, the following criteria will determine final course grades.

- A All work submitted on time and of high quality; consistent attendance.
- B Timeliness and/or quality of some work fails to meet graduate level expectations.
- C Work is consistently late, incomplete, or of low quality; more than three absences.

Any extenuating circumstances affecting student performance should be discussed with the instructor directly.

Schedule

Every effort will be made to follow the schedule as outlined. The instructor does reserve the right to make adjustments. Students are responsible for any schedule changes announced in class or electronically. Readings from journal articles and book chapters will be provided on Blackboard, with the exception of the three required books (Finke and Stark 2005, Chaves 1999, and Eiesland 1999) and chapters from *Acts of Faith* (Stark and Finke 2000).

January 13: Introductions

January 20: Defining Religious Organizations

- Hall, Peter Dobkin. 1998. “Religion and the Organizational Revolution in the United States.” Pp. 99-115 in *Sacred Companies: Organizational Aspects of Religion and Religious Aspects of Organizations*, edited by N.J. Demerath III, Peter Dobkin Hall, Terry Schmitt, and Rhys H. Williams. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chaves, Mark. 1993. “Denominations as Dual Structures: An Organizational Analysis.” *Sociology of Religion* 54:147-169.
- Harris, Margaret. 1998. “A Special Case of Voluntary Associations? Towards a Theory of Congregational Organization.” *British Journal of Sociology* 49:602-618.
- Chaves, Mark. 2002. “Religious Organizations: Data Resources and Research Opportunities.” *American Behavioral Scientist* 45:1523-1549.
- Scheitle, Christopher P. and Kevin D. Dougherty. 2008. “The Sociology of Religious Organizations.” *Sociology Compass* 2:981-999.

January 27: Church-Sect and Market Theories

- Johnson, Benton. 1963. "On Church and Sect." *American Sociological Review* 28:539-549.
- Iannaccone, Laurence R. 1988. "Why Strict Churches are Strong." *American Journal of Sociology* 99:1180-1211.
- Warner, R. Stephen. 1993. "Work in Progress toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 98:1044-1093.
- Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. "Religious Group Dynamics" (chapter 6) in *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. "A Theoretical Model of Religious Economies" (chapter 8) in *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press

February 3: Church-Sect and Market Theories, continued

- Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 2005. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

February 10: No Class

February 17: Neo-Institutional Theory

- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. 1977. "Institutional Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83:340-363.
- DiMaggio, Paul and Walter W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and the Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48:147-160.
- Scott, W. Richard. 1987. "The Adolescence of Institutional Theory." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32:493-511.
- Greenwood, Royston and C. R. Hinings. 1996. "Understanding Radical Organizational Change: Bringing Together the Old and the New Institutionalism." *Academy of Management Review* 21:1022-1054.
- Becker, Penny E. 1998. "Congregational Models and Conflict: A Study of How Institutions Shape Organizational Processes." Pp. 231-255 in *Sacred Companies: Organizational Aspects of Religion and Religious Aspects of Organizations*, edited by N.J. Demerath III, Peter Dobkin Hall, Terry Schmitt, and Rhys H. Williams. New York: Oxford University Press.

February 24: Neo-Institutional Theory, continued

- Chaves, Mark. 1999. *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

March 3: Organizational Ecology Theory

- Hannan Michael T. and John Freeman 1977. "The Population Ecology of Organizations." *American Journal of Sociology* 83:929-984.
- Carroll, Glenn R. 1984. "Organizational Ecology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 10:71-93.
- McPherson, J. Miller. 1983. "An Ecology of Affiliation." *American Sociological Review* 48:519-532.
- Popielarz, Pamela A. and Zachary P. Neal. 2007. "The Niche as a Theoretical Tool." *Annual Review of Sociology* 33:65-84.
- Scheitle, Christopher P. 2007. "Organizational Niches and Religious Markets: Uniting Two Literatures." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 3: Article 2.

March 10: No Class, Spring Break

March 17: Organizational Ecology Theory, continued

- Eiesland, Nancy L. 1999. *A Particular Place: Urban Restructuring and Religious Ecology in a Southern Exurb*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

March 24: Resource Dependence Theory

- Emerson, Richard. 1962. "Power-Dependence Relations." *American Sociological Review* 27:31-41.
- Aldrich, Howard E. and Jeffrey Pfeffer. 1976. "Environments of Organizations." *Annual Review of Sociology* 2:79-105.
- Dunford, Richard. 1987. "The Suppression of Technology as a Strategy for Controlling Resource Dependence." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32:512-525.
- Kotter, John P. 1979. "Managing External Dependence." *The Academy of Management Review* 4:87-92.
- Finke, Roger and Christopher P. Scheitle. 2009. "Understanding Schisms: Theoretical Explanations for their Origins" in Pp. 11-33 in *Sacred Schisms: How Religions Divide*, edited by James R. Lewis and Sarah M. Lewis. New York: Cambridge University Press.

March 31: Strategic Management Theories

- Wernerfelt, Birger. 1984. "A Resource Based View of the Firm." *Strategic Management Journal* 5:171-180.
- Barney, Jay. 1991. "Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage." *Journal of Management* 17:99-120.
- Teece, David J., Gary Pisano, and Amy Shuen. 1997. "Dynamic Capabilities and Strategic Management." *Strategic Management Journal* 18:509-533.
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. and Jeffrey A Martin. 2000. "Dynamic Capabilities: What Are They?" *Strategic Management Journal* 21:1105-1121.
- Miller, Kent D. 2002. "Competitive Strategies of Religious Organizations." *Strategic Management Journal* 23:435-456.

April 7: No Class

Book review due

April 14: Presentations

Peer review due

April 21: Presentations

Peer review due

April 28: Conclusion