SOC 430 SEMINAR: RACE AND RELIGIOUS FAITH
Davidson College
Spring Semester, 2011

Course: Sociology 430 -- Seminar: Race and Faith (3 units)
Time and Place: 9:40am - 10:55am, Tuesdays & Thursdays, Chambers 2209
Prerequisite: First-year students admitted by permission of professor
Instructor: Gerardo Marti, Ph.D.
Phone Number: (704) 894-2481 (24 hour voicemail if unanswered)
My Office: Papers turned in outside of class go in my box in Sociology Dept in Chambers
Pre-Scheduled appointments meet in my office, Preyer 107
Email: gemarti@davidson.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00am – 11:30am and by appointment.

Course Description

This seminar pursues sociological analysis at the intersection of race-ethnicity and religion. Our focus in this class centers on American congregational communities (whether it be church, temple, or mosque)—especially in relation to processes of immigration and transnationalism. Our class begins with a broad discussion of Will Herberg’s classic discussion on the American assimilation of religious groups and the formation of the historic Black Church in America. The class continues with an analysis of religion and migration at the turn of the 20th Century. The transformations of both black churches and non-native, ethnic churches throughout the mid-century will quickly culminate into an examination of the relations between race-ethnicity, religion, and broader civic society today. The course ends with a look at the rare achievement of multi-ethnic/multi-racial religious communities.

Throughout the class, we also consider the broader and complex effects of politics and globalization, economics and financial pressures, citizenship and public life, prejudice and discrimination, media and technology, as well as innovations and social change. Your questions and interests are welcome as they emerge.

The course encourages and stimulates critical thinking beyond "common sense" interpretations of race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. In dialogue with cross-disciplinary perspectives in race-ethnic studies and religion, the tone of this course will be analytical with a conscientious use of sociological concepts. For example, race-ethnicity is not a biological, physiological, or genetic characteristic; it is a social characteristic, one that always involves particular religious beliefs and practices and an international network of people who continually reproduce religious frameworks and religious structures. And religion is not merely a set of dogmatic beliefs but also a set of “lived practices” that occur in unanticipated ways. Overall, the development of our knowledge of the relations between race-ethnicity and religious faith and practice will be historically informed and empirically grounded. Cross-disciplinary readings will help address key issues in the formation and practice of religious communities.

Finally, this course is writing and speaking intensive. Critical reading of texts, cogent writings, articulate oral presentations, and full participation in dialogue are all mandatory. Class assignments will measure your ability to grasp and apply a sociological perspective from readings and from information emerging from class discussions. A thematic research paper provides an opportunity to pursue interests in greater depth. Finally, full attendance is not only encouraged but expected.
Course goals for this course include:

- Apply the aims and objectives of sociological analysis,
- Know outstanding contemporary demographic characteristics of ethnic, minority, transnational, and multiethnic/multiracial religious congregations,
- Analytically construct reciprocal connections between broad social changes among racial-ethnic groups in the twentieth century with changes in religious congregations,
- Demonstrate understanding of the changing and pluralization of religious identities of religious congregations,
- Demonstrate understanding of migration and significant globalization issues in the formation of congregations throughout American history,
- Describe the theological, moral and/or social philosophy of ethnic, minority, and diverse congregations regarding economic, civic, political, and artistic ideals affecting the development of these congregations,
- Analyze and provide examples of the significance of race and ethnicity for religious life both historical and contemporary,
- Analyze and provide examples of the significance of religion in American society both historical and contemporary,
- Analyze the significance of religious imperatives for racial and ethnic diversity in contemporary culture,
- Clearly discuss current theoretical perspectives applied by scholars understanding the intersection of race-ethnicity and religion,
- Demonstrate understanding of the affinities and discontinuities between race-ethnicity and religion amidst fundamental changes in contemporary society, and
- Develop analytical and critical thinking abilities in both written and oral forms in exploring ideas, cultural artifacts, and current events as they relate to the motion picture industry.

Required Books & Readings for All Students:


• Reserved readings available through the Davidson College library online, indicated by (R).

Specific Requirements:

Weekly Assignments

- Participation in Class Discussion: 10%
- Analytic Pre-Discussion Papers: 20%

Major Papers

- Observation/Interview Paper: 20%
- Thematic Research Paper Draft: 20%
- Thematic Research Paper Final: 30%

Total Grade = 100%

Note on Attendance

I expect you to come to class, that is to say, show up on time, stay the entire class period, and participate fully in each class the whole time you are there. I presume students can and will attend all or almost all classes, but may occasionally have a legitimate reason to miss one class in the semester (extremely sick, family funeral, etc.). However, I am not interested in adjudicating doctors' notes and other excuses. Come to class, and don't miss more than one, if any. An unreasonable number of absences from class will definitely hurt one's final grade. Please note: While student athletes may miss one class meeting in this semester for pre-scheduled events, every student must please find another student in class to obtain any material covered on days missed. Please present event schedules at the beginning of the semester.

One more thing, three unexcused absences are sufficient grounds for failing this course.

Note on Participation

Attending class is an important part of your job, but it isn’t the whole story. Participation in every class session is very important. Get actively involved in the learning process. Don’t be a passive listener! If class is boring, lifeless, irrelevant, if the dialogue falls flat, the students are not responsive, the professor talks too much, or the back row is disrespectful, ask yourself this question: what can I do to be an instrument of energy, life, light, creativity, encouragement, focus, and intellectual energy in this class? Then do it.

Good participation begins with good preparation. That includes careful attention to reading and writing assignments, and frequent review of class notes. Set aside time to regularly reread your class notes and textbook and review the key class material. This regular review will help to identify themes to use when it is time for writing your thematic paper.

During class, you should ask at least one question and make at least one comment every time we get together. That is your charge. Ask questions. Make comments. Express your opinion. That way, our class will become an interesting and energetic conversation among interesting and energetic writers.

The amount of substantial input you receive depends a great deal on your thoughtful questions! During group work and class discussion, your input is especially important. We will work in groups to review concepts, share ideas, make new connections, follow-up on insights and arguments as well as encourage and support each other in learning sometimes difficult and sometimes very subtle ideas. This interaction is one of the most important things we do.
Note on Due Dates

Hard copies of written assignments are due on the designated date at the beginning of class. Papers are considered late if turned in after the beginning of class. Late assignments will be docked a full grade for each 24-hour period they are late beginning after the start of class. Please avoid last-minute frustrations by finishing and printing your documents EARLY. “Printer malfunctions” is not an excuse.

Weekly Analytic Pre-Discussion Papers

It is essential for you to keep up with the reading and to read actively. Active reading means taking notes as you read, making a list of questions you have as you read, and reading far enough ahead that you have a chance not only to read but to think about what you have read. I expect that you will have read each week’s readings for our class meeting of the week (Monday) unless otherwise indicated in the syllabus.

Weekly analytic pre-discussion papers are assignments that integrate the week’s reading material. A good approach: 1) Essentialize--What are the essential concepts, ideas, insights and how are they connected? 2) Then Improvise--What are the implications I see which the author does not or did not bring out? You may view the assignment as writing a critical, introductory preface to each section’s papers that reflects our growing understanding of “race” and “religion” from a sociological perspective. As such, your paper should be analytical, assume a personal point-of-view, and integrate mention of each reading in the context of that essay. These weekly pre-discussion notes provide launch points for our class discussion. Each paper should be between 2.5 and 4 pages in length, double spaced, have one inch margins, and typed in 12 point type. Papers are due at the beginning of class, weekly, except for the first week of the semester, and will be the basis for in-class discussion.

Thematic Research Paper, Draft & Final

Your term paper provides the opportunity to delve into a topic addressed in the class or to research an area that is related to the course readings. Some preliminary bibliographic sources are provided in the syllabus. You must also consult sociological journals and books for scholarly writing relevant to your topic. The choice of book for your critical book review may be a resource for your thematic paper. And of course, you should come talk to me as well about your paper topics—well before the topic submission due date.

Regarding the choice of topic, there are essentially two choices in writing your final paper: (1) A paper based on your intentional and personal empirical experience (archive, interview, survey, field observation, etc.) this semester dealing on a sociological aspect of the film industry, or (2) A paper primarily on library research. In either case, papers should link to class readings and discussions as appropriate.

The written paper will be submitted twice. First, the paper will be submitted in a complete draft form. This full draft will be graded and then returned to you with suggestions for further development. It is assumed that your first submission is developed. It is also assumed that the final paper shows significant revision based on your continued research as well as continued learning from class discussion and my comments.

For your final paper, I would suggest organizing your paper as follows:

Introduction (1-2 pages). First state the topic of your paper and briefly situate this topic in terms of the topics and questions covered during this course. By the end of the second paragraph it is essential that you have told me what the purpose of your paper is and what your central argument / thesis is. If you read the first two paragraphs of your paper and the goals and purpose of the paper are not very clear, please revise. I would also suggest a “map” paragraph at the end of the introduction that tells me where we will be going in the paper. (For example, “I first explain….then argue….by presenting evidence about three themes…..”)

Body (7-9 pages). In this section please present and development your argument by providing several distinct pieces of information / evidence in support of it.
If there is any relevant background to explain about your thesis / argument present that first. (For example, key terms may need a paragraph to articulate what you mean. Perhaps a brief paragraph or two about the history relevant to your argument would be necessary). A section providing background is not essential for everyone. You need to decide whether it is necessary to help your reader(s) understand. Think of your audience as me and other people in the class.

If much of your paper is based on the analysis of primary sources (newspapers, web pages, etc.), please be sure to explain how you located them (i.e. what your method was). If you utilized any social scientific methods, please provide a methodological description. An appendix with appropriate material (e.g., survey questionnaires, interview questions, coding schemes) may be necessary.

Then develop your argument by clearly presenting the evidence you have gathered in support of it. For example, if you are comparing two or more arguments, this section will be organized around the themes around which you are doing the comparison. There are two ways to structure a compare and contrast paper. Pick the one that works best for you.

Theme 1
Argument/Theory A
Argument/Theory B

Theme 2
Argument/Theory A
Argument/Theory B

etc.

Or

Argument/Theory A
Theme 1
Theme 2

Argument/Theory B
Theme 1
Theme 2

etc.

This is certainly not the only way to structure your paper, and you have the opportunity to craft your paper as you please. Feel free to use section headings in this section and throughout the paper if it helps you organize your thoughts and presentation.

Conclusion (1-2 pages). By this point, your argument and all of your evidence should be clearly presented. Briefly summarize your argument here and think about what the implications of your argument are more broadly. If your findings raise questions about other topics covered in this class, please make those connections briefly here. If you have concluded, after writing this paper, that you want to know more about your topic, explain what the next steps might be.

**After you have finished writing your paper, go back and read the introduction, the first sentence of each of your paragraphs, and your conclusion. From this, the point of your paper should be very clear. If parts of your argument are embedded in the middle of other paragraphs (so you don’t see them when doing this little test), restructure your paragraphs. Also make sure that you don’t conclude something that contradicts or is very different from what you say in the introduction. After finishing their first draft, most people need to take the conclusion to their paper and use it to rewrite their introduction!
Finally, keep in mind the basics –

- organize thinking before you write,
- make a good argument,
- write a strong thesis statement,
- make clear claims, and support them,
- do not be afraid to be provocative,
- avoid juvenile "I think, I feel, I believe" trap, or even name calling instead of analytical insights,
- make analogies that hold up,
- do not trust research sources gained from Google or Wikipedia,
- do trust research from 1) course materials, 2) academic journal articles (e.g. JSTOR is an excellent database), and 3) scholarly books (books from university presses and other academic publishers),
- cite properly in-text or in a “bibliography” or “works cited” page,
- write a good topic sentence in a paragraph; structure your paragraph, OR sum it up before moving on,
- connect ideas in thoughtful, unforeseen, non-obvious ways,
- sequence ideas in a paragraph,
- transition ideas from paragraph to paragraph,
- write a good intro and conclusion.

If you want me to help you make a more specific outline / list of questions to answer in your paper, please let me know. I am happy to work with you on this.

**Final Review**

There will be no final review. I reserve the right to schedule a final review, however, if you are not keeping up with class readings.

**Policy on Collaboration and Plagiarism**

Academic integrity demands that scholars do original work. This class and your education at Davidson College are intended to build in each student the capacity for critical thinking and independent work. It should go without saying that all the work you accomplish through this course should reflect your own critical, reflective, imaginative, and rigorous effort. Please RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO “GOOGLE” THROUGH YOUR RESEARCH. The internet is not the best tool for developing your scholarship – close, careful reading of scholarly sources combined with clear, systematic, disciplined observation is what will build your capacity to think, write, and contribute sociologically.

Scholarship is intended to be collaborative, especially in this class where conferencing and discussion groups are built into the course. Talking about your paper with a spouse, roommate, friend, family member, etc. is also encouraged, not only for this class, but for other classes that involve writing. You are welcome to work through ideas with other students. Collaboration is good.

On the other hand, the paper you write must be entirely your own. Passing off somebody else’s work as your own (because you copied it out of a book, paraphrased it out of a book, bought a paper from a research paper service, downloaded it form the internet, wrote down ideas that someone else was dictating to you, recycled an essay written by someone else, or had someone else rewrite your paper for you) is plagiarism. It is unethical, illegal, and, in a college course, sufficient grounds for failure of the course. Don’t do it. When in doubt, cite. If you are unsure of something, ask. Please refer to Charles Lipson, 2004, Doing Honest Work in College and Diana Hacker in A Writer’s Reference pages 82-91 for excellent advice on avoiding plagiarism.
Final Grade

Your final grade for the class will be based on participation in class discussions, weekly pre-discussion papers, a completed draft of a thematic research paper and a final thematic research paper. I will use the following guidelines to grade your assignments:

A  Outstanding Work (90-100%). Goes above and beyond the requirements of course, above and beyond merely competent work. Outstanding effort, significant achievement, and mastery of the material of the course are clearly evident. Exceptional critical skills, creativity or originality is also evident. Consistently developed sociological perspective.

B  Above Average (80-89%). A “B” paper fulfills all aspects of the course and goes beyond minimum competence to demonstrate a thorough and above average understanding of course material. Extra effort, extra achievement or extra improvement often evident. Clearly demonstrated sociological perspective.

C  Average (70-79%). A “C” paper fulfills all aspects of the course with obvious competence and grace. A thorough and satisfactory understanding of basic course material and incorporation of a sociological perspective. **If you do the assignment exactly as it is assigned, you will receive an average grade; in other words, you will receive a grade of 75.**

D  Below Average (60-69%). A “D” represents marginally satisfactory performance of basic course requirements. A “D” may indicate failure to follow directions, failure to manage course assignments, failure to implement specific recommendations, or failure to demonstrate personal effort and improvement. Surface level grasp or application of a sociological perspective. Often a “D” is given either because some aspect of the assignments have not been fulfilled, because a preponderance of errors (more than one or two per page) interferes with clear communication, or clear neglect in completing assignments.

F  Lack of demonstration of satisfactory performance of basic course material. Failure to grasp or apply a sociological perspective. Not acceptable, either because the student did not complete assignments as directed, or because the level of writing/research skill is below an acceptable level for college work.

**All papers and/or reviews must be completed to receive a passing grade in this class**

In addition to these five grades, a student may receive a grade of R. R stands for “Redo” and means the student has both the opportunity and the responsibility to do the assignment over. Usually this is given because the student has misunderstood the assignment, or because some particularly egregious error prevents the paper form achieving its purpose, or because I believe that the student has made a good faith effort to excel but has run into significant difficulties with the assignments. If you receive a grade of R, you have 48 hours to contact me for a phone or face-to-face appointment. In our appointment, we will discuss what went wrong with the assignment, and we will contract a way and a time to redo the assignment. If you fail to turn in a revision according to the individual contract, the student will receive a 0 on the assignment. My scale for final averages is as follows:

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College, Department and Instructor Policies for Davidson College:

A. Please refer the Davidson College Official Record regarding THE HONOR CODE. As members of the Davidson College community, we are expected to uphold the honor code. In regard to writing assignments, any student found to plagiarize or cheat will receive an “F” for that assignment and will be referred to the Dean and Honor Council.

B. Students who will be absent at some point during the semester owing to religious observance are requested to notify the instructor during the first week of class (or the first week after late enrollment) in order to make accommodations for assignment or review dates falling during such observances.

C. As a courtesy to the instructor and your classmates, please be sure to turn off cell phones and pagers or switch them to vibrate mode prior to the start of class.

D. Due to abuse by students in previous courses, laptops and other electronic devices are not acceptable for use during class. If you wish to take notes, please use paper and pen/pencil.

E. Please be mindful of due dates/times. Submission guidelines for assignments are as follows: All assignments will be accepted on the due date. Assignments must be submitted no later than the beginning of the class scheduled on the due date. Late work will be penalized at 10% of the total value for each day late, beginning immediately during the class on the due date. No work will be accepted after the last scheduled class of the semester. The instructor is not responsible for lost papers. If you are unable to turn in the assignment personally, please your own arrangements to have the paper submitted on your behalf. Students are strongly encouraged to keep a copy of each assignment until final grades are recorded. Any exceptions must be approved well in advance of the due date with the instructor.

F. All major written assignments must be prepared using a word processor (some exercises may be exempted) and submitted hard-copy. PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL PAPERS. The length and content for each assignment will be discussed in class. Work done for this class is to be original, done exclusively for this class, and must comply with high standards for written work. The grade for each assignment will reflect evaluation of expression as well as content. Please proofread carefully for spelling and grammatical errors. Spelling, grammatical, or typographical errors reduce the quality of your work, and grades assessed will reflect such errors. Have someone proofread your paper before you complete your final draft. Also, last-minute, hand-written corrections to final copy are not preferred but accepted – better to have you catch it than for me to see it.

G. Please note in regard to submission of papers that it is the responsibility of every student to print pages for course assignments well before (hours or days) they are due. All excuses of “printer malfunctions” are not acceptable.

H. As discrepancies with regard to grades can occur, it is recommended that students retain all graded materials until such time as final grades have been sent out.

I. Extra-credit or make-up work is not available in this course. Please make every effort to submit your assignments in a timely, complete, and professional manner.

J. Office hours and appointments: Since the management of time is critical for student and professor alike, you are requested to please observe the following guidelines regarding office appointments.

1. Priority: Students who have made appointments with me personally (either in person, by phone, or via email) will be given priority. This is the best way to ensure time together.
2. Drop-ins: I will be in my office at Preyer 107 during office hours as described at the top of the syllabus.
3. Non-office hour appointments: Please try to stick to scheduled office hours for appointments.
However, if you find it impossible to schedule an appointment during regular office hours, I will work with you to find a mutually convenient time.

4. Canceling appointments: If you will be unable to keep an appointment it would be appreciated greatly if you would contact me via one of the means identified above to cancel your scheduled appointment. Thank you for your professional courtesy in this regard.

Occasionally office hours may be canceled due to meetings, travel, or emergencies. I will make an effort to contact you if you have scheduled an appointment during such times. If I am able to remain accessible on another part of campus, I will indicate my location on my door. Please accept my apologies in advance for this possible inconvenience.

Please Note: Topics & Assignments May Shift; Changes in will be Announced

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics &amp; Exams</th>
<th>Read, Think &amp; Explore</th>
<th>Analyze, Write &amp; Create</th>
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| February 1,3 | Racial Segregation and the Formation of Church Structures  
-- Chap. 1, Construction of Black and White in early America (R)  
-- Chap. 1, Principles of Black theology (R)  
-- Chap. 5, Black theology and the Black church (R) | Pre-Discussion Papers |
-- Chap. 8, Mormonism and race (R)  
-- Chap. 11, Islam and Arab ethnicity (R)  
- Chap. 10, Are Hindus White people (R)  
-- Chap. 5, Asian immigrant Buddhist temple (R)  
Thematic paper topic |
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<td>May 3</td>
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