Sociology of Religion

Fall 2018 Syllabus SOCY 4121-001

**Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 – 12:15 MUEN E114**

**Instructor: Liane Pedersen-Gallegos, Ph.D. Office hours Thursdays 1 – 3 and by appt. in Ketchum 169**

# **Course Description**

This course addresses sociological aspects of religion. We will analyze the social meanings attributed to religion and the social dynamics involved in religiosity with a focus on the contemporary United States.

By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

* Describe and discuss specific theoretical perspectives of social dynamics related to religion through various written exercises, including discussion posts, and a presentation.
* Describe and discuss significant social influences in the history of religion in western civilization.
* Apply sociological theory to issues such as terrorism in the context of religion.

**Instructor Information**

Email: [liane.gallegos@colorado.edu](mailto:liane.gallegos@colorado.edu)

Office Hours: Thursdays 1 – 3 and by appointment. Office: Ketchum 169. This is the best time to reach her.

She will make every attempt to respond to questions/messages within 48 hours Monday through Fridays. Saturdays and Sundays, and after 9 PM every day are “off-line” times for Dr. Li when she will not be available

The preferred method of communication is email. Please, no text messages.

*Students are expected to check both their individual CU email and the Desire2Learn course site a minimum of every two days, Monday through Friday, as there may be new announcements on the Home Page.*

**Instructor Biography**

Liane Pedersen-Gallegos earned a Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Dr. Pedersen-Gallegos (also known as “Dr. Li” by many students) earned a M.A. in Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder and a B.A. in Sociology/Psychology (double major) at the Metropolitan State College of Denver. Dr. Li worked 12 years as a research associate at the University of Colorado at Boulder. The focus of her research was the evaluation of pedagogical innovations in the teaching of physical sciences at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with an emphasis on student career development. Dr. Li was the co-director of Ethnography & Evaluation Research for 7 years and was the director for 3 years.

Dr. Li’s research interests are primarily the Sociology of Risk and Resilience, the Sociology of Thanatology (the study of death and dying) and the Sociology of Religion. Dr. Li has been teaching at the University of Colorado since 1985. She has taught 129 classes since then (as of August, 2018), the majority of which were at the University of Colorado. Of these, 57 classes were Sociology of Death and Dying classes, 36 were Sociology of Religion classes, and she is currently working with Professor Don Grant on developing the Risk and Resilience class as part of a new certificate offering. At this time Dr. Li devotes full-time to teaching through the Sociology Department at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

# **Reading Assignments**

There are three textbooks required for this class:

Roberts, Keith A. and Yamane, David, *Religion in Sociological Perspective 5*th Edition*,* Pine Forge Press, Los Angeles, 2016. 978-1-4129-8298-6 *(This is the main textbook for the course, most of it will be assigned.)*

Prothero, Stephen, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn’t,* Harper Collins, San Francisco, 2007. 978-0-06-084670-1. *(About half of this book will be assigned reading.)*

Juergensmeyer, Mark, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003. 0-520-24011-1 *(Selected chapters from this book will be assigned—a little less than half the book.)*

The total amount of reading assigned each week is comparable, although it may be made up of several shorter, individual reading assignments or fewer, more in-depth assignments. Every student is expected to read all of the assignments.  ***It is necessary to keep up with the readings and the assignments in order to succeed in the class.*** The posting sites for each week will be “open” for a 40 hour period, closing at midnight on the day assignments are due.

A suggested weekly assignment routine, which includes ***firm*** due dates for weekly posts is as follows:

Mondays: The reading assignment for each week should be finished by class time on the Tuesday of each week.

Tuesdays: See you in class! ***The first of two weekly posts is due by Tuesday 11:59 PM***. The Tuesday posts are to include a direct quote from each of the assigned readings (see full directions on the discussions page). No quotes are to be repeated, so you will need to make sure that you are not repeating those chosen by others who have posted ahead of you. ***No credit will be given for repeated quotes***.

Wednesdays: Read all students’ Tuesday posts.

Thursdays: See you in class! ***The second of the two weekly posts is due by Thursday 11:59 PM.***

Fridays: Read all students’ Thursday posts. Fridays are a good day to begin the readings due on the following Tuesday.

Discussion Posts

There are two posts due each week, each worth five points for a total of ten post points per week. The first post of each week is due on Tuesday at 11:59 PM and the second is due on Thursday at 11:59 PM. For each post students will have a two-day window in which to complete the post, from 8:00 AM the day before the post is due until 11:59 PM the day the post is due. Late posts will not be accepted—the two-day window allows students enough time to complete each assignment.

The purpose of the post assignments is two-fold: to demonstrate that the reading assignments have been done and to provide a forum for students to apply critical thinking to the topic at hand. Tuesday posts are to include a unique quote (ones not chosen by another student—repeated quotes do not receive credit), with student commentary. Posts will ideally be comprised of three to five sentences to include: 1) the quote itself, which may be part of a sentence or a whole sentence, but should be no longer than one sentence, and must include an author and page reference so the readers can easily find the quote; 2) the student’s commentary that indicates that they understand the quote in context, having read the whole article from which the quote was chosen, and applied to your own topic of research.

Thursday quotes are to include a direct quote from the week’s assigned readings (as specified in the CANVAS discussion page). Note: occasionally, on both Tuesdays and Thursdays there may be more than one reading to cite.

Posts should be brief, in consideration to the other students, all of whom are required to read all the week’s posts. The ideal post will be a paragraph long (between three and six sentences long), not to exceed 150 words each. The limits placed on the posts are intended to keep the workload manageable for all students, while ensuring everyone has a voice in the on-line discussion. Remember, students are to read all the posts each week.

The tenor of the posts is to remain collegial. This is not to say that everyone must agree with what others post—in fact a range of ideas and opinions is ideal—it is to say that the tone of the interchange is to be considerate.

Grading Criteria for Discussion Posts

Both of the weekly posts are worth 5 points. Credit is earned by adhering to the assignment guidelines: use of an original quotation (one not already chosen by another student). (In the event that students contribute additional posts, only the first post for a given post assignment will be graded).

Developing good writing skills is a fundamental part of higher education. Correct grammar and spelling are also social courtesies writers extend to their readers and reflect a level of investment the writer has in their own thinking and writing. The occasional misspelling and grammatical error will be overlooked, but points will be deducted if the quality of the post is diminished due to errors (3 or more errors in a single posting).

Missing posts may not be made up, as the timeliness of the online discussion is key. The discussion pages will be open for a limited time, closing at 11:59 PM on the respective due dates. The CANVAS system will close at that time, even if the post is in progress, making it important to begin posts in a timely fashion. Students may edit their posts during the window of time the posts are “open,” but at 11:59 PM on the post due date, CANVAS will automatically close the page. If, on occasion, a student misses the deadline by a minute or two, **immediately** email the post to the instructor, indicating your problem. Late posts must be submitted **within 30 minutes** to be considered for partial credit. Students are responsible for ensuring their posts are accepted into the system. Similarly, the instructor will make every effort to provide timely grading and feedback for weekly discussion posts, available to students via the online gradebook.

The instructor will provide guidance to facilitate discussions and students’ comprehension of the material as appropriate. Students’ responses to the readings should be about a paragraph in length—and limited to 150 words. Grades for discussion contributions will be based on the following: indication that the student has read and understands all of the readings for the week and contributions to the online discussion reflect insight (See *Bloom’s Taxonomy* on CANVAS for more information regarding grading written work.

Points from the posts will be deducted for: lack of correct citation for quotes, three or more typos in the post, “thin” post that contains too little indication of comprehension or critical thinking, and no credit will be given for quotes already used by another student.

Students are expected to read all of the posts for the week, including any instructor feedback. Instructor commentary provided on the discussion posts will be helpful in clarifying important concepts in the class.

An example of a good post (including quotation from assigned reading) from another class with a single quote follows:

*Sample Post*

**“The effects of death are strikingly portrayed in the medieval concept of death as an *equalizer,* or leveler. Since death was ever present then due to plague, epidemics, and wars, a uniquely social conception of death developed” (Charmaz, p 69).**

In our society, we often think of death as something "other", something unpleasant, and something unworthy of acknowledgment or review. However, as Charmaz writes, this was not always the case. This can help explain why our modern conception of death differs from that of the past. Death was much more ubiquitous in medieval societies, and of particular importance is the fact that it was not just the old who were dying. The infant mortality rate was astronomically high compared to today, thus both the young and old knew that death could come for them at any point.

# **Student Presentations**

Each student is to attend a religious service of their choosing (must be approved by the instructor) and will make a presentation to the class. The object of the assignment is to attend and observe in a small group of 4 or 5 students, and then describe their experience, drawing on concepts learned in the class. The service is to be one of interest to the student, but not one that they are already experienced with (not the religion of their upbringing, for example). The idea is to choose a group that is unfamiliar to them. The group will make a presentation to the class in which each student will have about five minutes for their individual presentations. The goal for the presentations is to apply concepts learned in the class while sharing one’s field trip with the class, providing presentation experience to the participants, and enhancing all students’ comprehension of the concepts learned this semester.

**Grading Criteria for the Presentations:**

* Analysis of experience, relating it to concepts learned in the class 20 points
* Clarity, organization of presentation 10 points

30 points total

# **Exams**

There will be two exams and one final during the semester, as noted in the course calendar: the final exam will be on Saturday, December 15th 1:30 – 4:00 PM. Each exam is worth 30 points. The exams will be essay format. Answer questions as completely as possible, explaining your answers. Your explanation of your answers is the heart of your answer—points are awarded for complete answers, including context provided.

COURSE CALENDAR

Dr. Li reserves the right to adjust the course calendar and will alert students if there are any adjustments.

1. **Week of August 26 (first day of class is Tuesday, August 28) Introduction**

Reading Assignment: “Laptops are Great. But not During a Lecture or a Meeting” (on CANVAS Contents Page)

1. **Week of September 2 The Social Costs of Religious Illiteracy**

Reading Assignment: Prothero Parts 1 and 2 (Chapters 1 through 4)

Tuesday Post due September 4

Thursday Post due September 6

**3 Week of September 9 Sociological Perspectives of Religion**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 1 and 2

Tuesday post due September 11

Thursday post due September 13

**4 Week of September 16 Religious Experience and Religious Ritual**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 3 & 4

Film Assignment: “The History of God” (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday post due September 18

Thursday post due September 20

**5 Week of September 23 Socialization, Conversion, and Switching**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 5 and 6

Tuesday post due September 25

Thursday post due September 27

**Test #1 Thursday, September 27**

**6 Week of September 30 Forms of Religion: Cult, Sect, Denomination, Ecclesia**

Reading Assignment: Johnstone “The Church Sect Continuum of Religious Organization” (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday post due October 2

Thursday post due October 4

**7 Week of October 7 The Protestant Reformation and the Protestant Work Ethic**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 8 and 9

Video Assignment: “Luther” (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday post due October 9

Thursday post due October 11

**8 Week of October 14 Dilemmas of Institutionalization: Contemporary Issues of Gender and Sexuality**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 7 and 11

Video Assignment: “Going Clear” (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday post due October 16

Thursday post due October 18

**9 Week of October 21 Religion, Inequality, and Social Action**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 10 and 12

Video Assignment: “Romero” (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday post due October 23

Thursday post due October 25

**10**  **Week of October 28 Secularization and Alternative Forms of Religion**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 13 and 14

Video Assignment: “The History of God” (Available on Canvas)

Tuesday post due October 30

Thursday post due November 1

**Test #2 Thursday, November 1**

**11 Week of November 4 Civil Religion and Globalization**

Reading Assignment: Article “Civil Religion in America (Available on Canvas) and

Roberts & Yamane Chapter 15

Tuesday post due November 6

Thursday post due November 8

**12 Week of November 11 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment: Juergensmeyer Chapters 1 and 7

Tuesday post due Tuesday, November 13

Thursday post due Thursday, November 15

**Week of November 18 Fall Break**

**13 Week of November 25 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment: Juergensmeyer Chapter 8 and one to be announced (check Canvas)

Tuesday post due November 27

Thursday post due November 29

**14 Week of December 2 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment: Juergensmeyer Chapters 9 and 10

Tuesday post due December 4

Thursday post due December 6

**15 Week of December 9 Summary and Synthesis**

**Final Exam: Saturday, December 15 1:30 – 4:00 PM**

# **Grading Criteria**

Letter grades are assigned only at the end of the semester as final grades for the course. Individual assignments and exams will receive points and the final letter grade will be based on points accumulated, as indicated below. The instructor will make every effort to grade assignments and exams within one week of the date submitted. The instructor reserves the right to curve the final grades.

Discussion Postings 130 points 243 – 270 A

Exam #1 30 points 216 – 242 B

Exam #2 30 points 189 – 215 C

Presentation 30 points 162 – 188 D

Final Exam 30 points

Engagement in Class 20 points

*270 Total Points Possible*

**Class Policies**

**Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to participate in assigned online discussions. ***It is necessary to keep up with reading and all other assignments to succeed in the class.*** In sum, this is made up of:

* weekly readings,
* participation in weekly online threaded discussions with the class, and
* presentation of field trip to a religious service

Students are responsible for keeping up with postings and other class announcements. ***Students are expected to check both their individual CU email and the Canvas course material a minimum of every two days, Monday through Thursday.***

All cell phone ringers must be turned off during class. Use of electronics is limited to typing (not recording) lecture notes.

**Late and Missing Assignments**

Late posts are not accepted, as their value lies largely in their inclusion in class discussion. Missing assignments will receive zero points. Late paper-related assignments will lose one point a day up to a week late (includes week end days) and will not be accepted after that without instructor approval.

**Plagiarism Policy**

Class policy regarding plagiarism is in keeping with the university policies. Assignments turned in via Desire2Learn are routinely submitted to an anti-plagiarism soft-ware program. Appropriate citation of all sources used is required on all assignments. Failure to accurately and adequately cite sources is considered plagiarism.

**Accommodations**

Exams/tests for students who qualify for accommodations through Disability Services can be administered by our student assistants (sociology@colorado.edu). Exams/tests must be scheduled through the the student assistants at least one week in advance, with the request coming from the instructor. This semester we will have less availability to administer accommodations due to less student support as well as less space. We will do our best to assist when we can, but Disability Services is always available to proctor exams for these approved students. We can also help reserve a room if you are administering the exam/test.

***The student must be approved by the student’s Disability Access Coordinator*** to have accommodations provided. Please provide the student's accommodation letter to the staff (sociology@colorado.edu) along with the Sociology exam/test proctoring form. More information can be found at the following:

<https://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/faculty-staff/working-disability-services-students/providing-accommodations>  
  
Students needing to cancel an exam/test scheduled with student assistants need to communicate with the professor and student assistants no less than 1 day before the scheduled exam/test. Students should expect that exams/tests will be proctored, and that they will be observed in person. A proctor is allowed to check materials that the student has in her/his possession. Items such as notes, books, and calculators cannot be used by the student unless confirmed by the professor prior to the exam. Personal items may not be taken into the testing area. Food, drinks, and gum (excluding water) are not allowed in the testing area unless it is an authorized accommodation. Students are responsible for bringing her/his own supplies and references, as have been permitted by the professor or per the student’s accommodations letter. If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty during an exam, Sociology staff will inform the professor who will determine any consequences.

University Policies

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students/temporary-medical-conditions) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) and the [Student Code of Conduct](http://www.colorado.edu/osccr/).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/honor-code).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0PnqVK4kkIJIZnf), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please notify the instructor a minimum of one week before the requested excused absence. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.