Fall 2016 Syllabus SOCY 4121-001

Sociology of Religion

**Classes meet Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 10:00 – 10:50 Hellems 241**

**Office Hours: Fridays 4:00– 6:00 PM and by appointment. Office: Ketchum 169**

# **Course Description & Outcomes**

This course addresses sociological aspects of religion. We will analyze the social meanings attributed to religion and the social dynamics involved in religiosity (yes, “religiosity” is a real word!) 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**

**Contact Information**

Telephone: 303-818-4839

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

Office Hours Fridays 4:00 – 6:00 and by appointment. Office: Ketchum 169.

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

**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’s research interests are 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 109 classes since then (as of August 8, 2016), the majority of which were at the University of Colorado. Of these, 51 classes were Sociology of Death and Dying classes and 30 were Sociology of Religion classes.

In addition, 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.

At this time Dr. Li devotes full-time to teaching through the Sociology Department and the Department of Continuing Education (on-line courses) at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

**Communication with the Instructor**

***Students are expected to check both their individual CU email and the Desire2Learn course site a minimum of every two days, Monday through Friday.***

You may contact Dr. Li via email at: [liane.gallegos@colorado.edu](mailto:liane.gallegos@colorado.edu) or by phone at: (303) 818 4839. Her preferred method of contact is email. The best time to reach her is during office hours (Fridays 4:00 – 6:00 PM and by appointment). She will make every attempt to respond to questions/messages within 48 hours Monday through Fridays. Saturdays and Sundays are “off-line” days for Dr. Li when she will not be available. She will still check email and phone messages a minimum of every two weekdays.

# **Support and Technical Information**

This course includes embedded and streaming audio and video resources. Most modern browsers should be able to display this content. However, in some circumstances you may need to install the Flash or Quicktime media player. Should you have any difficulty accessing any of your course contents please contact the on campus IT help line at 303-735-HELP (4357) or online at: <http://www.colorado.edu/oit/>

No special technology is necessary for this class. If you can stream movies on your computer, it should be fast enough for this class. No special training or technical experience with computing is necessary for this class. Familiarity with word processing, navigating the web, and use of email should be adequate. If, however, you find that you need assistance, your best source of support is the IT help line (referenced above), or of course, contact the instructor for advice (email preferred, phone with more time-sensitive questions).

The “netiquette” promoted by CU generally is a good guide for this class as well. You can reference the CU policy at: <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-e-mail-policy> and CU policy regarding student conduct in general can be found at:

<http://www.colorado.edu/osc/sites/default/files/attached-files/OSC_Handbook_2014-15.pdf>

# **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 48 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 Monday of each week.

Tuesdays: ***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: ***The second of the two weekly posts is due by Thursday 11:59 PM.*** No direct quotes are required this time. Thursday posts are intended to provide a discussion forum for students to respond to the Tuesday round of posts, ongoing Thursday posts and/or assigned films.

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

# **Discussion Posts**

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. The criteria for each of the two weekly posts are different. For the first post students are to select a direct quote—not already posted by another student-- from the reading assignment (if there are two or more reading assignments, a direct quote must be included from each), along with student commentary on the quote. The **Tuesday 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 reaction to the quote, indicating why it was chosen; and 3) student commentary that indicates that the student understands the quote in context, having read the whole article from which the quote was chosen.

The **Thursday, posts** are due by 11:59 PM on the respective Thursday. Thursday posts do **not** require a direct quote from the readings, but are instead to be contributions to an ongoing, threaded online discussion. Thursday discussions may include multiple threads of discussion, as arise organically as the topics are addressed. These second posts need to reflect the students’ engagement in the online discussion(s), including critical thinking applied to at least one of the weekly discussion threads that emerge. The second post for the week may include observations, questions, suggestions and/or general feedback—the main criterion is that the post contribute to the ongoing discussion in a meaningful way, reflecting critical thought in response to the topic of the week. As with the first post for the week, the second post should be brief, in consideration to the other students, all of whom are required to read all of the week’s posts. The ideal post will be between two and five sentences long, not to exceed 100 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.

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

The first weekly post will be worth up to 6 points and the second weekly post will be worth up to 4 points. Credit is earned by adhering to the assignment guidelines: using an original quotation in the case of the first weekly post, placing the quote in context sufficient to demonstrate that one has read the whole assignment, relevance of commentary in the case of the second weekly post that indicates that the other posts have been read; and the application of insight/critical thinking in all cases. The second posts need to be substantial, in that they are more than a statement of agreement or disagreement with positions others have stated—critical thinking is the key here. The occasional misspelling and grammatical error will be overlooked, but points will be deducted if too little attention is given to the quality of one’s post. That is to say, that correct grammar and spelling are social courtesies writers extend to their readers, and reflect a level of self-respect the writer has for their own thinking and writing. Inattention to spelling and grammar (other than the occasional, minor error, of course) demonstrates a careless attitude toward one’s readers, and obvious disregard for or disinterest in the project at hand and those engaged in it. For this reason, significant lapses in attention to the quality of one’s contributions will result in the loss of points.

Late posts will not be accepted, 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. Similarly, the instructor will make every effort to provide timely grading for weekly discussion posts, available to students via the online gradebook.

In summary, the posts will constitute an online “discussion” among the class members. Every student is to post two responses to each week’s reading assignment (in the event of additional posts, only the first post for a given post assignment will be graded). 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 100 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 D2L for more information regarding grading work, both on quizzes and discussion submissions).

Points from the Tuesday posts (worth 6 points) will be deducted for: lack of correct citation for quotes, three or more typos in the post, “thin” post that contains very little indication of comprehension or critical thinking, and no credit will be given for quotes already used by another student.

Points from the Thursday posts (worth 4 points) will be deducted for: three or more typos in the post, “thin” posts that contain very little indication of comprehension or critical thinking, and lack of reference to the ongoing discussion.

The instructor will provide feedback on the posts, especially if points are deducted or to highlight a particularly insightful post.

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 an earlier class follows:

**Sample Post**

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: "The effects of death are strikingly portrayed in the medieval concept of death as an *equalizer*, or leveler. Since death then was ever present then due to plague, epidemics, and wars, a uniquely social conception of death developed" (69). 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. Another important factor is medicine (or the lack thereof): due to the primitive medical practices and knowledge at the time, those in the Middle Ages could not expect to be saved if they fell terribly ill; they knew that their death was inevitable. However, in modern societies, illnesses can be treated, and people can live long after their bodies have largely deteriorated due to modern life support systems. We feel science can save us from any malaise, thus there is no need to worry about death. Therefore, we can see how changes in science and technology have affected social constructions of death over time.

# **Student Presentations**

Each student is to attend a religious service of their choosing (must be approved by the instructor by the date of the second quiz, in March) and will make a presentation to the class. The object of the assignment is to attend and observe in a small group of 3 or 4 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 quizzes and one final during the semester, as noted in the course calendar: Friday, September 23; Friday, October 28; and the final exam on Sunday, December 11 7:30 – 10:00 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**

The course is designed for topics to be studied in sequential order. Readings can be started and/or finished up to two weeks ahead of time, but all posts must be submitted during the two days up to and including the due date and time, in the interest of keeping the discussions current.

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

1. **Week of August 21 (first day of class is Monday, August 22) Introduction**

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday, Aug 23 (See special instructions on Discussions Page)

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, Aug 25 (See special instructions on Discussions Page)

**2 Week of August 28 The Social Costs of Religious Illiteracy**

Reading Assignment:

* Prothero Parts 1 and 2 (Chapters 1 through 4)

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Aug 30**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Sep 1**

**3 Week of September 4 Sociological Perspectives of Religion**

***No class Monday, September 5 in observance of Labor Day***

Reading Assignment:

* Roberts & Yamane Chapters 1 and 2

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Sep 6**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Sep 8**

**4 Week of September 11 Religious Experience and Religious Ritual**

Reading Assignment:

* Roberts & Yamane Chapters 3 and 4

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Sep 13**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Sep 15**

**5 Week of September 18 Socialization, Conversion, and Switching**

Reading Assignment:

* Roberts & Yamane Chapters 5 and 6

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Sep 20**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Sep 22**

**Quiz #1 Friday, September 23**

**6 Week of September 25 Forms of Religion (Cult, Sect, Denomination, Ecclesia)**

Reading Assignment

* Johnstone “The Church Sect Continuum of Religious Organization” *(Available on D2L)*

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Sep 27**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Sep 29**

**7 Week of October 2 The Protestant Reformation and the Protestant Work Ethic**

Reading Assignment:

* Roberts & Yamane Chapters 8 and 9

Film Assignment

* *“Luther” (Available on D2L)*

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Oct 4**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Oct 6**

**8 Week of October 9**

Reading Assignment **Dilemmas of Institutionalization; Contemporary Issues of Gender and Sexuality**

* Roberts & Yamane Chapter 7 and 11

Film Assignment

* *Documentary on Scientology* (*Available on D2L)*

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Oct 11**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Oct 13**

**9**  **Week of October 16 Religion, Inequality, and Social Action**

Reading Assignment

* Roberts & Yamane Chapters 10 and 12

Film Assignment

* *“Romero”*

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Oct 18**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Oct 20**

**10 Week of October 23 Secularization and Alternative Forms of Religion**

Reading Assignment

* Roberts & Yamane Chapters 13 and 14

Film Assignment

* *Documentary “A History of God” (Available on D2L)*

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Oct 25**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Oct 27**

**Quiz #2 Friday, October 28**

**11 Week of October 30 Civil Religion and Globalization**

Reading Assignment

* + Article “Civil Religion in America” *(Available on D2L)*
  + Roberts & Yamane Chapter 15

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Nov 1**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Nov 3**

**12 Week of November 6 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment

* + Juergensmeyer Chapters 1 and 7

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Nov 8**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Nov 10**

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

Reading Assignment

* Juergensmeyer 8 and one to be announced (Note: special instructions TBA in class)

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Nov 15**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Nov 17**

**Week of November 20: Fall Break No Classes**

1. **Week of November 27 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment

* Juergensmeyer Chapters 9 and 10

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Nov 29**

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Dec 1**

**15 Week of December 4 Synthesis**

Reading Assignment Study Guide for Final Exam

Initial Discussion Post due Tuesday **Dec 6** (Note: special instructions for this week’s posts)

Second Discussion Post due Thursday **Dec 8**

**Final Exam Sunday, December 11 7:30 – 10:00 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 in the event of lower-than-expected average points accumulated.

Discussion Postings 150 points A 243 - 270

Quiz #1 30 points B 216 - 242

Quiz #2 30 points C 189 - 215

Presentation 30 points D 162 - 188

Final Exam 30 points

*270 Total Points Possible*

Discussion posting grades will be determined by the instructor and recorded only in the student’s own grade book, which are available only to that specific student. Likewise, exams will be administered and submitted online, and students’ individual feedback and grades will be available only to the specific student whose work is being evaluated.

Study guides will be provided prior to the exams, and the test questions will be based on the study guides, reading and film assignments, and lectures.

# **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, and
* participation in weekly online threaded discussions with the class, and
* three exams (two quizzes and one final exam)
* one group presentation (dates to be determined)

Students are responsible for keeping up with postings and other class announcements. ***Students are expected to check both their individual CU email and the Desire2Learn course material a minimum of every two days, Monday through Thursday.***

# **Class Policies**

**Late and Missing Assignments**

Assignments must be submitted sequentially (in the order assigned). Late posts are not accepted, as their value lies largely in their inclusion in class discussion. Missing assignments will receive zero points.

**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.

**Class Policies**

**All cell phones and paging devices must be turned off during class. Use of electronics is limited to typing (not recording) lecture notes.**

**Late and Missing Assignments**

Assignments must be submitted sequentially (in the order assigned). Late posts are not accepted, as their value lies largely in their inclusion in class discussion. Missing assignments will receive zero points.

**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.

**University Policies**

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu). If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebdaaa68ff667880859001182b328a9a96107f5799ca20daed12a77c3a9251753d79) guidelines under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebda41b6a27c7a7d1704f9fff17983fbfdf3d7cccd4b6ffaa9b61dbc2fd095a648d9) and discuss your needs with your professor.

**Religious Holidays**

Every effort will be made to provide students with accommodations for religious holidays, should there be a conflict with a scheduled class, assignment, or exam. Students must inform the instructor of any such conflicts early in the semester to ensure that appropriate accommodations can be made in a timely manner. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebdab32af5ad423ff6049a189c96147098a5316ba60d4d3379e38db36a6579bcb7fa) for information on CU policy with regard to accommodations for religious holidays.

**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 differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, and nationalities. 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://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebdacbfc24a952b2f0005fae72fb42850a7972b18b0b8e4968b972fe3325d83fc907) and [the student code.](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebda660e1d9ec9c4daf4f0171d93b282413ac6e95b3c7cba81552a423709c7003a55)

**Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebdaf8ae12873827d639594f6b3e537f60be2849511c18100612628bd3ec59ddf90c).

**Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [academic integrity policy](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebdaf94f581ae9e03075d507cbd263c02ef845a189f7a37bece2d648ea61affd74b3) of the institution. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at [honorcode.colorado.edu](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=3274c0295486ebda1244ab4772de95c7cd17c130fcf2f953069aa84fee542b78e83b264cbf325ef8).

**The honor code**:

On my honor, as a University of Colorado at Boulder student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work.