Syllabus Spring 2018 SOCY 4121-001

Sociology of Religion

**Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 – 12:15 HLMS 267**

**Instructor: Liane Pedersen-Gallegos, Ph.D. Office hours Thursdays 1 – 3 and by appt. in 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 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 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 123 classes since then (as of January, 2018), the majority of which were at the University of Colorado. Of these, 53 classes were Sociology of Death and Dying classes and 34 were Sociology of Religion classes. At this time Dr. Li devotes full-time to teaching through the Sociology Department at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

# **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>

**Student Engagement in the Class**

***Texting, checking email and surfing the web during class is considered disrespectful. Therefore the instructor and TA will not do these things. Students are asked to refrain as well.*** Student engagement/participation is important. The “student engagement grade” is not based on how much you speak in class. This grade reflects the attention paid to lecture and class discussion. Because it is necessary to be present in order to be engaged in the class, attendance will be taken and considered in the “student engagement” grade. Attendance will be documented by “one minute papers” students are to submit at the end of each class, based on a specific question asked at the end of the class. ***“Class attendance” implies the student is present for the entire class.*** On a campus the size of CU Boulder, walking from one class to another in the brief time allotted can be a challenge, so students’ occasional late arrival is understandable. If a student’s classes are sufficiently far apart that arriving to class on time is routinely a problem, as a courtesy please notify the instructor. However, leaving class early constitutes an absence for the day, even when notifying the instructor ahead of time (which is an appreciated courtesy if a student knows ahead of time that they need to leave early). Inappropriate use of a laptop, tablet, cell phone, or similar device ***will*** negatively affect your class engagement grade.

# **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 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.*** 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 Tuesday.

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. Students are to select a direct quote—not already posted by another student-- from the first reading assignment listed on the syllabus, along with student commentary on the quote. 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.

Posts 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 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.

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 will be worth 5 points. Credit is earned by adhering to the assignment guidelines: use of an original quotation (one not already chosen by another student), and placing the quote in context sufficient to demonstrate that one has read the whole assignment.

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 D2L system will close at that time, even if the post is in progress. Similarly, the instructor will make every effort to provide timely grading and feedback for weekly discussion posts, available to students via the online gradebook. 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.

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 assignments (in the event that students contribute 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 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 D2L 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 an earlier class 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 Wednesday, May 9th 4:30 – 7:00 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 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 January 14 (the first day of class is Tuesday, January 16) Introduction**

Reading Assignment: “Laptops are Great. But not During a Lecture or a Meeting” (on D2L Contents Page)

Practice Discussion Post due Thursday, January 18

**2 Week of January 21 The Social Costs of Religious Illiteracy**

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

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, January 23

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, January 25

**3 Week of January 28 Sociological Perspectives of Religion**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 1 and 2

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, January 30

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, February 1

**4 Week of February 4 Religious Experience and Religious Ritual**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 3 and 4

Video Assignment: “The History of God” *(Available on D2L)*

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, February 6

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, February 8

**5 Week of February 11 Socialization, Conversion, and Switching**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 5 and 6

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, February 13

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, February 15

**Test #1 Thursday, February 15**

**6 Week of February 18 Forms of Religion (Cult, Sect, Denomination, Ecclesia)**

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

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, February 20

Second Discussion Post due` Thursday, February 22

**7 Week of February 25 The Protestant Reformation and the Protestant Work Ethic**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 8 and 9

Film Assignment: *“Luther” (Available on D2L)*

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, February 27

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, March 1

**8 Week of March 4 Dilemmas of Institutionalization; Contemporary Issues of Gender and Sexuality**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapter 7 and 11

Film Assignment: “*Going Clear”* (*Available on D2L)*

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, March 6

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, March 8

**9**  **Week of March 11 Religion, Inequality, and Social Action**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 10 and 12

Film Assignment: *“Romero” (Available on D2L)*

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, March 13

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, March 15

**10 Week of March 18 Secularization and Alternative Forms of Religion**

Reading Assignment: Roberts & Yamane Chapters 13 and 14

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, March 20

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, March 22

**Test #2 Thursday, March 22**

**Week of March 25 Spring Break No Assignments**

**11 Week of April 1 Civil Religion and Globalization**

Reading Assignment: Article “Civil Religion in America” *(Available on D2L) and*

Roberts & Yamane Chapter 15

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, April 3

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, April 5

**12 Week of April 8 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment Juergensmeyer Chapters 1 and 7

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, April 10

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, April 12

**13 Week of April 15 Religion and Terrorism**

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

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, April 17

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, April 19

1. **Week of April 22 Religion and Terrorism**

Reading Assignment Juergensmeyer Chapters 9 and 10

First Discussion Post due Tuesday, April 24

Second Discussion Post due Thursday, April 26

1. **Week of April 29 Summary and Synthesis**

Reading Assignment: Study guide for final exam

**Final Exam Wednesday, May 9 4:30 – 7:00 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*

# **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,
* three exams, and
* 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**

**Student Engagement in the Class**

All cell phone ringers must be turned off during class. Use of electronic equipment for taking notes is permitted, but not recommended (for more information on this policy, see the article “Laptops are Great. But Not During a Lecture or A Meeting” on the class D2L content page). Students are asked to refrain from using all electronic devices during class (please, don’t even bring power tools to class). Cell phone ringers must be turned off during lecture.

**Late Assignments**

Missing posts cannot be made-up, as their value lies largely in their inclusion in class discussion. However, in the event that D2L times out before finishing your post, immediately (must be sent **within 30 minutes** of closing) email your post to the instructor for possible partial credit.

**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.

# Exam/Test Accommodations (In the event of an approved make-up exam)

Exams/tests for students **who qualify for accommodations** **through Disability Services** can be administered by Sociology Staff Mondays 3:30 – 5:00, Tuesdays 3:00 – 5:00, Wednesdays 9:30 – 1:30, and Fridays 12:30 to 3:00.  Exams/tests must be scheduled through the Sociology Staff at least one day in advance.

**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 along with the Sociology exam/test proctoring form. More information can be found at this link: <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/faculty-staff/working-disability-services-students/providing-accomodations>. Students needing to cancel an exam/test scheduled with Sociology Staff need to communicate with the professor and Sociology Staff no less than 2 hours 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 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 email at [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu?subject=Recommended%20Syllabus%20Statement). If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Injuries guidelines](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=c02f92182b03a08e51aee081b09346a95206d22dfd8b5a1ee04815848f7bbf8135de1499086d3528) under the Quick Links at the [Disability Services website](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=c02f92182b03a08e62ce0b227450e474f95d616b2fd01263573bee29f3ea6701fd96209a013cc9db) and discuss your needs with your professor.  
   
**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, students are asked to speak with the instructor during the first two weeks of the semester about any anticipated absences related to religious observances.   
  
See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=c02f92182b03a08e370c6117e6b3fb10fc028d1c43a5dfb81337166dce8f31bfaded2cfcebaf6eb0) for full details.  
   
**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 and the student code.  
**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=c02f92182b03a08e1415127e03dbb1747e834ac93f527e5f7b58065ff0bc750e936df4c52038c98d).

**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=c02f92182b03a08e2c3cd83edc8437002aff546948ec7d3e2cde276673656094dfc1b51c78c43cd9) 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?subject=Incident%20of%20Academic%20Misconduct); 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 [http://honorcode.colorado.edu](http://click.communications.cu.edu/?qs=c02f92182b03a08e5980e75feb85863ca19fd19c865d0007c8fbd37c949f77939c64aa064c267fb9).

**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.