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### SOCI 491.02: Special Topics - Sociology of Religion

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**SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION**  
**AUTUMN QUARTER, 2013**

**COURSE INFORMATION**

- A. NUMBER: SOCI 491
- B. TITLE: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
- C. CREDITS: 3

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

- A. INSTRUCTOR: JOHN DOMITROVICH
- B. OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAY(1-3 PM-ROOM 317)
- C. TELEPHONE: (251-2337) MISSOULA)
- D. EMAIL: [john\\_domitrovich@skc.edu](mailto:john_domitrovich@skc.edu) OR john.domitrovich@umontana.edu

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

TEXT: RELIGIONS IN PRACTICE: AN APPROACH TO THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION BY JOHN R. BOWEN (2010); 5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION; PEARSON

READING MATERIAL MAY BE HANDED OUT IN CLASS AND ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL WILL BE PLACED ON **eRESERVE AT THE LIBRARY**.

A NUMBER OF VIDEOS WILL BE SHOWN THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER AND STUDENTS WILL BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR VIDEO CONTENT.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

THIS COURSE IS INTENDED AS BOTH A SOCIOLOGICAL AND AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF A BROAD NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES.

**GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

UPON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. DEMONSTRATE A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS BELIEF SYSTEMS USED IN THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD AND APPLY THESE IDEAS TO THE HINDU CONTEXT.
2. EXPLAIN THE COMMONALITIES SEEN IN THE VARIOUS MYSTICAL TRADITIONS FOUND ACROSS THE WORLD.
3. DEMONSTRATE A BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISTINCTIONS SEEN BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND MAGICAL PRACTICE, AND BE ABLE TO GIVE EXAMPLES OF IMITATIVE AND CONTAGIOUS MAGIC.

4. DEMONSTRATE A KNOWLEDGE OF THE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIANS, AND WHERE EVANGELICALS AND FUNDAMENTALISTS FIT INTO THIS CONTINUUM.

5. EXPERIENCE SEVERAL RELIGIOUS SERVICES THAT EXPRESS VARIOUS PRACTICES DISCUSSED IN CLASS.

6. DEMONSTRATE A BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS.

7. DEMONSTRATE A BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF HINDU RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND HINDU RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

A. SEVEN QUIZZES (20 POINTS EACH); ONE QUIZ WILL BE DROPPED IN THE FINAL TALLY

B. ASSIGNMENTS X 5 (20 POINTS EACH=100 POINTS)

C. RELIGIOUS ETHNOGRAPHIES X 2 (50 POINTS EACH=100)

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONS**

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED** AND THEY WILL BE GRADED ON THE DETAIL AND THOROUGHNESS OF THE RESPONSE. RESPONSES MUST BE DESCRIBED IN SUFFICIENT DETAIL THAT I CAN FEEL THAT AN ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF EFFORT WAS PUT INTO THEM. EACH OF THESE ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE WORTH 20 POINTS.

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

**A. AN INCOMPLETE GRADE (“I”) FOR THIS COURSE IS NOT AN OPTION**, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF AN EXTREME EMERGENCY OR THE DEATH OF A FAMILY MEMBER. IN EITHER CASE, THE INSTRUCTOR MUST BE NOTIFIED WITHIN 48 HOURS.

B. GRADES ARE EARNED IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

360-400=A

320-359=B

280-319=C

240-279=D

LESS THAN 240=F

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

ATTENDANCE IS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL. **STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO BE PRESENT AND TO BE PREPARED FOR CLASS.** IN SOME EXCEPTIONAL CASES, WHERE THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE, CLASSES MAY BE MISSED WITH PRIOR APPROVAL FROM THE INSTRUCTOR. IT WILL REMAIN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STUDENT TO ARRANGE FOR GETTING NOTES FOR THE

**MISSED CLASS (ES). THERE WILL BE 80 POINTS GIVEN BASED ON ATTENDANCE. TEN POINTS WILL BE TAKEN OFF FOR EVERY CLASS MISSED. ANY LATE PAPERS/ASSIGNMENTS WILL RECEIVE A LETTER GRADE OF "C". UNLESS PRIOR APPROVAL FOR LATENESS IS RECEIVED FROM INSTRUCTOR.**

**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE**

WEEK ONE	8/25) SYLLABUS REVIEW; AMERICAN RELIGION <b>READ CHAPTERS 1 ("STUDYING RELIGION THROUGH PRACTICE") AND 2 ("THE TWIN TRANSFORMATIONS OF RELIGION") IN THE TEXT</b>
WEEK TWO	9/2) NO CLASS (LABOR DAY HOLIDAY)
WEEK THREE	9/9) SYMBOLS AND SYMBOL SYSTEMS; HINDU ICONOGRAPHY  <b>READ "GOD TALK" (eRESERVE)</b>  <b>READ CHAPTER 3 ("DOMAINS AND BOUNDARIES OF RELIGION") IN TEXT</b>
WEEK FOUR	9/16) RELIGION AS A BELIEF SYSTEM; ETHOS; WORLD VIEW; WAYS OF KNOWING; MYSTICISM  <b>READ "DEINDIVIDUATION" AND "COMMITMENT MECHANISMS" (eRESERVE)</b>  <b>READ CHAPTER 4 ("RITUALS OF TRANSITION") IN TEXT</b>
WEEK FIVE	9/23) RITES OF PASSAGE; DEINDIVIDUTION; COMMITMENT MECHANISMS; VIDEO ("RITES OF PASSAGE")  <b>READ "MAGICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE" (eRESERVE)</b>  <b>READ CHAPTER 5 ("HEALING THROUGH RELIGION") IN TEXT</b>
WEEK SIX	9/30) MAGIC AND HEALING; UMBANDA; POSSESSION CULTS; VIDEO ("HEALERS")  <b>READ CHAPTER 6 ("SORCERY, WITCHCRAFT, AND MODERNITY") IN TEXT</b>
WEEK SEVEN	10/7) CONTINUE MAGIC; PRESENTATION ON WICCAN PRACTICES AND IDEOLOGY

**READ CHAPTER 8 (“IMAGERY AND FAITH: FOCUS ON  
WORLDWIDE CATOLICISM”)**

**READ MODULE ON “WITCHCRAFT” (eRESERVE)**

WEEK EIGHT      10/14) WITCHCRAFT AND DIVINATION; AFRICAN SLIDES;  
VIDEO (“WITCHCRAFT”)

**READ CHAPTER 9 (“TRANSATLANTIC RELIGION”) IN TEXT**

WEEK NINE      10/21) SACRIFICE; VIDEO (SACRED PAIN”); VODOO

**READ “SEMANTIC AMBIGUITY” (eRESERVE)**

**READ CHAPTER 10 (“SPEECH AND POWER”) IN TEXT**

WEEK TEN      10/28) PROHIBITIONS AND BOUNDARIES; SEMANTIC  
AMBIGUITY; POLLUTION CONCEPT IN INDIA

WEEK ELEVEN      11/4) IMAGES, OBJECTS AND WORSHIP; TALISMANS AND  
AMULETS; EVIL EYE; NATHAN DOMITROVICH PRESENTATION  
ON BUDDHISM IN THAILAND

**READ CHAPTER 11(“AUTHORITY AND LEADERS”) IN TEXT**

WEEK TWELVE      11/11) NO CLASS (VETERAN’S DAY)

**READ CHAPTER 12(“NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS”) IN  
TEXT**

WEEK THIRTEEN      11/18) ROB BALCH PRESENTATION ON THE SOCIAL BASIS OF  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

**READ CHAPTER 13 (“MIGRATION AND ADAPTATION”) IN  
TEXT**

WEEK FOURTEEN      11/25) SACRED SPEECH AND DIVINE POWER; SACRED SPACE  
AND PILGRIMS

**READ CHAPTER 14(“VIRTUAL RELIGION”) IN TEXT**

**READ ‘RELIGION AND CLASS’ (eRESERVE)**

WEEK FIFTEEN      12/2) MILLENARIAN MOVEMENTS; CREATION-DAY/WORLD  
AGE; CHRISTIAN EVANGELICALS AND FUNDAMENTALISTS

**READ CHAPTER 15(“SECULARISM AND RELIGION IN  
MODERN STATES”)**

WEEK SIXTEEN      12/9) FINAL EXAM AND FEAST