

BA (H) SOCIOLOGY
CORE COURSE -06
SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

COURSE OBJECTIVE

1. This course exposes students to the distinctiveness of the sociological approach to the study of religion.
2. The individual and the group encounter religion and/or religious phenomenon in myriad ways be it through custom, ritual, beliefs or other practices. Students will be familiarized with the basic theoretical and methodological perspectives on the study of religion and also exposed to ethnographic texts on various aspects of religious phenomenon.
3. The last section of the course touches upon some aspects of religion in contemporary times such as secularization and multiculturalism.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will be acquainted with representative texts that symbolize the development of knowledge in the field of Sociology of Religion. They will be able to identify different theories, approaches and concepts that make up the study of religion, distinguish between them and also use terms specific to the field in specific context.
2. Students will be able to make a link between texts and paraphrase their arguments and use these to communicate their ideas in research papers, projects and presentations.
3. By encompassing contemporary developments the course enables students to think about linkages between religion and society at various levels.

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1: Theorising Religion and Society (Weeks 1-5)

- 1.1 Religion and Sociology**
- 1.2 Formulating a Theory of Religion**

Unit 2: Rationality (Weeks 6-8)

Unit 3: Elements of religion (Weeks 9-11)

- 3.1 Ritual**
- 3.2 Myth**
- 3.3 Body**
- 3.4 Time**

Unit 4: Religion and the State (Weeks 12-14)

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COURSE CONTENTS

Unit 1. Theorising Religion and Society (Weeks 1-5)

1.1 Religion and Sociology

Bèteille, Andre'.2002. "Religion as a Subject for Sociology", in *Sociology Essays on Approach and Method*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp 184-200.

1.2 Formulating a Theory of Religion

Durkheim, Emile. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press. Book one and Conclusion, pp. 21-44, 418-448.

Weber, Max. 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Stephen Kalberg. England: Roxbury Publishing Press, pp. 103-126.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1948. *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. Selected, and with an introduction by Robert Redfield. Boston: The Free Press, pp. 37-50.

2. Rationality (Weeks 6-8)

Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1990. *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-41.

Smith, Jonathan Z. 1998. "Religion, Religions, Religious." Critical terms for religious studies pp. 269-284

3. Elements of religion (Weeks 9-11)

3.1 Ritual

Srinivas, M. N. 1952. *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*. Clarendon: Oxford, pp100-122.

Emile Durkheim. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press. Book three, pp. 303-412.

3.2 Myth

Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1948. *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. Selected, and with an introduction by Robert Redfield. Boston: The Free Press, pp. 119-124.

3.3 Body

Hertz, Robert. 1973 (1909). "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand." In *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*, edited by R. Needham. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-10, 13-14, 16-17, 19-21.

3.4 Time

Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1963 (1940). "Time and Space." In *The Nuer*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 94-98, 100-108.

4. Religion and The State (Weeks 12-14)

Marx, Karl. 2008/9 [1843]. "On the Jewish Question" in *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Proofed and Corrected: by Andy Blunden, Matthew Grant and Matthew Carmody. www.marxists. Org

Smith, Donald, E. 1963. *India as a Secular State* Princeton University Press, Princeton. Pp.1-40.

REFERENCES

COMPULSORY READINGS

Beteille, Andre. 2002. "Religion as a Subject for Sociology", in *Sociology Essays on Approach and Method*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp 184-2

Durkheim, mile. 1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press. Book one and Conclusion, pp. 21-44, 303-412, 418-448.

Evans-Pritchard. E. E. 1963 (1940). "Time and Space." In *The Nuer*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 94-98, 100-108.

Hertz, Robert. 1973 (1909). "The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand." In *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*, edited by R. Needham. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-10, 13-14, 16-17, 19-21.

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Weber, Max. 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Stephen Kalberg. England: Roxbury Publishing Press, pp. 103-126.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Berger, P.L. 1990. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, 2nd Edition, New York: Anchor.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays. Basic Books, 1973, Religion as a Cultural System*, pp.87-125.

Van Gennep, A. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS

- a. The course is primarily a lecture course with a healthy dose of discussion based on the readings listed. Students are expected to read the required material each week and come prepared for discussion in class.
- b. The instructor will draw attention to details that are likely to be missed by the students and encourage them to expand the area of application of themes, concepts and issues covered by the course.
- c. Interactive classroom sessions are designed to help students develop group skills including listening, brainstorming, communicating and negotiating with peers.
- d. Teaching based on the syllabus will be supplemented with audio-visual resources, field visits and other contemporary media.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Assessment will be in the form of written assignments, experience papers, projects and presentations.

KEY WORDS

Religion, sociology of religion, church, sacred, profane, belief, ritual, religion and social structure, Protestant Ethic, magic, myth, rationality, secular, secularization.