

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Course ID: | Course Title: | Winter 2021 |
| SO 340 | Religion and Culture in Canada | Prerequisite: SO 200-level |
| | | Credits: 3 |

| Class Information | | Instructor Information | | Important Dates | |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------|--|--|-------------|
| Delivery: | In-person | Instructor: | Joel Thiessen, PhD | First day of classes: | Mon, Jan 11 |
| Days: | Tuesday/Thursday | Email: | jathiessen@ambrose.edu | Last day to add/drop, or change to audit: | Sun, Jan 24 |
| Time: | 3:15-4:30pm | Phone: | 403-410-2000 ext.2979 | Last day to request revised final exam: | Mon, Mar 8 |
| Room: | A2131 | Office: | L2105 | Last day to withdraw from course: | Fri, Mar 19 |
| Lab/ Tutorial: | N/A | Office Hours: | Tuesdays, 10:00-11:15am; Thursdays 1:00-3:00pm, by appointment only (in-person or virtual) | Last day to apply for coursework extension: | Mon, Mar 29 |
| Final Exam: | Yes – to be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar | | | Last day of classes: | Fri, Apr 16 |

Course Description

This course explores the relationship between religion and culture in Canada from a sociological perspective. This examination will include a look at the past, present, and potential future relationship between religion and culture in Canada.

Expected Learning Outcomes

The following table captures: (a) the course learning goals; (b) the link between the course learning goals and the larger learning outcomes in the Behavioural Science program (listed following this table); and (c) the assignments where the course learning goals will be demonstrated.

| Course Learning Outcomes | Behavioural Science Program Learning Outcomes | Assignments |
|---|---|--------------|
| To understand the past, present, and potential future dominant (non)religious trends in Canada. | #2 | #1, 3, and 4 |

| | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| To develop the conceptual and theoretical tools in sociology to interpret empirical data on (non)religion in Canada. | #2 and 3 | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |
| To grapple with the multifaceted relationship between Canadian culture and (non)religious individuals and groups. | #1, 2, 5, and 6 | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |
| To grasp key variables related to religious organizational life. | #1 and 2 | #1, 2, 3, and 4 |
| To think theologically and practically about the implications of a sociological understanding of religion in Canada for ministry in Canada. | #1, 2, 7, and 8 | #1 and 2 |

Behavioural Science Program Outcomes:

1. Have a sound understanding of individual and group behaviour which will assist them in dealing with people professionally and personally;
2. Be able to integrate knowledge of both the psychological and societal processes which bear upon human emotions, cognition and behaviour;
3. Have an understanding of research methodology in the behavioural sciences, including constructing and implementing quantitative and qualitative research designs, analyzing and critiquing empirical results, and presenting clear outcomes and recommendations to appropriate audiences;
4. Have a facility with current technology in the field of behavioural science (e.g., electronic databases, computer analysis software such as SPSS);
5. Perceive human needs with empathy, develop ethically responsible attitudes toward social problems and, in particular, vulnerable populations in society, and be empowered to give voice to these issues in the public and professional arena;
6. Be prepared to engage ethically with individuals from diverse backgrounds (i.e., racial, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual orientation) in a manner that maintains the dignity and respect for all people;
7. Develop a Christian view of sociological and psychological processes in conjunction with scientific study;
8. Be prepared to work with integrity and confidence in a variety of human service fields or continue on to graduate work or after-degree programs

Textbooks

Bramadat, Paul and David Seljak, eds. 2005. *Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*. Toronto, ON: Pearson.

Schuurman, Peter J. 2019. *The Subversive Evangelical: The Ironic Charisma of an Irreligious Megachurch*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Thiessen, Joel and Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme. 2020. *None of the Above: Nonreligious Identity in the US and Canada*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Course Schedule

| Date | Topic | Reading/Preparation in Advance | Assignment Deadlines |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| PART 1 – COURSE INTRODUCTION | | | |
| Jan.12 | Course Introduction | | |
| Jan. 14 | Historical Overview of Religion in Canada | • TBD | |
| Jan.19 | Indigenous Spirituality & Christianity in Canada | • TBD | |
| Jan.21 | Explaining Religious Trends: Sociological Theories | • TBD | |
| PART 2 – RELIGIOUS NONES | | | |
| Jan.26 | Religious None Growth | • Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme – Introduction & Chapter 1 | |
| Jan.28 | Nones of All Shapes and Sizes | • Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme – Chapter 2 | |
| Feb.2 | Religious Nones, Morality, and Civic Engagement | • Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme – Chapter 3-4 | |
| Feb.4 | Religious Nones & Other Religious Groups | • Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme – Chapter 5 | |
| Feb.9 | Religious Nones in Late Modern Society | • Thiessen & Wilkins-Laflamme – Conclusion | Discussion Board #1a |
| Feb.11 | Religious Nones & Conversion | • TBD | Discussion Board #1b Presentation #1 |
| Feb.16 | NO CLASS (Reading Week) | | |
| Feb.18 | NO CLASS (Reading Week) | | |
| PART 3 – CONGREGATIONS | | | |
| Feb.23 | The Subversive Evangelical | • Schuurman – Chapter 1-2 | |
| Feb.25 | The Subversive Evangelical | • Schuurman – Chapter 3-4 | |
| March 2 | The Subversive Evangelical | • Schuurman – Chapter 5-6 | |
| March 4 | The Subversive Evangelical | • Schuurman – Chapter 7-8 | |
| March 9 | The Subversive Evangelical | • Schuurman – Epilogue | |
| March 11 | Evangelical Congregations | • Documentary - <i>#Blessed</i> | |
| March 16 | Flourishing Congregations | • “What is a Flourishing Congregation? Leader Perceptions, Definitions, and Experiences” – article on Moodle | Discussion Board #2a |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| March 18 | Congregational Growth | • TBD | Discussion Board #2b Presentation #2 |
| March 23 | Multiracial Congregations | • TBD | Presentation #3 |
| PART 4 – RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY | | | |
| March 25 | Beyond Christian Canada | • Bramadat & Seljak – Chapter 1 | |
| March 30 | Ethnic Identities & Religious Communities | • Bramadat & Seljak – Chapter 2-7 | |
| April 1 | Ethnic Identities & Religious Communities | • Documentary – <i>Me and the Mosque</i> | |
| April 6 | Religious Diversity & Public Policy | • Bramadat & Seljak – Chapter 8-10 | |
| April 8 | Toward a new Story about Religion & Ethnicity in Canada | • Bramadat & Seljak – Chapter 11 | |
| April 13 | Religious Diversity & Deep Equality | • TBD | Discussion Board #3a Presentation #4 |
| April 15 | COVID-19, Religion, and Society | • TBD | Discussion Board #3b Presentation #5 |
| April 19 | | | Book Review |

Requirements:

*It is students' responsibility to make note of and submit all assignments by the deadlines below. Failure to submit all assignments will result in an automatic failing final grade. Late assignments will lose 20%/day.

1) Discussion Boards (30%) – Feb.9-11 (“religious nones”), Mar.16-18 (“congregations”), Apr.13-15 (“religious diversity”) at 9:00am on Moodle

This assignment centers on the three key topics in this course: religious nones, congregations, and religious diversity. There are two components to this Discussion Board assignment. In the first component (e.g., Discussion Board #1a), students will write a 400-500 word response to this question: “My greatest take-away on ‘topic’ was...” In the second component (e.g., Discussion Board #1b), students will write a 400-500 word response to one of their peers. This peer-engagement post should aim to advance the conversation in respectful and meaningful ways, consistently drawing the conversation back to course concepts, theories, and data. For example, what do you agree or disagree with? What new insights come to mind for you? What further insights or questions would you put forward in light of their post? Suggested phrases that may assist you with these aims include: “Thank you, I will add... This makes me think of... This point connects to page XX... Reminds of another quote on page XX...”

Both responses should be informed by at least 1 *insight* you gained from assigned readings/lectures, 1 piece of *evidence* that prompted that insight, and 1 larger point of *interpretation/analysis* of the insights and evidence offered. Below are several tips on how to construct thoughtful and rigorous posts in the social sciences:

- Ground all observations and analysis in sociological data and theory
- Avoid “I like/I don’t like” or “I feel” statements, or even opinions that are not informed by concepts, theories, and data acquired in the course.

- Point out especially important passages that are key to the text (cite section or page number): “Here is the author’s goal,” “Brief overview of argument,” “Find 5 key points here.” At the same time, be sure to capture these ideas in your own words (no more than a single and short quotation should be used per post, if at all).
- Raise probing questions that are informed by sociological concepts, theory, and data: “Does this mean... and does it tie into our other reading...?” Follow these questions with some informed responses, grounded in sociological theory and data.
- Build from the evidence of the text: “This demonstrates how... I can see better that... This reveals...”
- Make connections to other readings, videos, lectures, and discussions in the course: “Yes, when you write about... it helps me to connect this to...”
- Provide links to external sources (e.g., YouTube video, article) with concrete illustrations of an idea you are dealing with, or offer more breadth and depth than content covered in the course: “YouTube video of original debate... for more on this concept, see...”

Both posts – each worth 100 marks – will be evaluated based upon the following criteria: (a) **Sociological Content:** accurately connects breadth and depth of key concepts, theories and data from the course to the question; (b) **Clarity of Thought:** responses are clear, logical, and well-articulated; and (c) **Original Thinking:** responses are original, thoughtful, and engaging, and showcase critical thinking skills and analysis (not just regurgitation or constantly agreeing with another’s ideas). Assessment and feedback will center on “Excellent,” “Good,” and “Needs Work.” If all three categories are rated “Excellent,” students should anticipate a grade of 90%+; “Good” entails 70-90% range; “Needs Work” 60%-range or lower. Each post – the initial post as well as the peer-engagement post – is worth 5% of your final grade (x6 posts = 30% of final grade).

2) Seminar Presentation and Discussion (25%) – Feb.11, Mar.18, Mar.23, Apr.13, and Apr.15

In this 60-minute research-based presentation and class discussion facilitation, students will collaborate in groups of 4 (depending on final class size; sign up on professor’s door – can select your own groups) and address one of the topics below. In addition to course readings, a minimum of twelve peer-reviewed scholarly sources should be incorporated into the final project.

- **February 11:** If religious groups wish to “convert” religious nones to “believe, behave, and belong” in a religious group, what must religious groups know, do, and anticipate as a result?
- **March 18:** If congregations wish to grow, what should they know, do, and anticipate as a result?
- **March 23:** If congregations wish to be more multiracial, what should they know, do, and anticipate as a result?
- **April 13:** If Canada wishes to foster “deep equality” among and between different (non)religious individuals and groups, what must different social institutions know, do, and anticipate as a result?
- **April 15:** Sociologically, what has COVID-19 revealed about religion and culture in Canada, and what might COVID-19 mean for the future of religion and culture in Canada?

Groups must submit a detailed written outline of key presentation ideas 10 days prior to the presentation, as well as meet virtually with the professor no later than 7 days prior to the presentation, to receive and discuss feedback. All visual aids (including detailed ASA formatted Reference list) must be sent to the professor no later than 12pm on the day of the presentation. Due to COVID-19 limitations for physical distancing, flexibility is assumed regarding who and how many from the group actually deliver the presentation.

Evaluation is based on the following: (a) breadth, depth, and accuracy of sociological content, analysis, and formatting (45 marks); (b) logical and coherent organization and presentation of ideas (25 marks); (c) effectiveness to facilitate

thoughtful class discussion (15 marks); (d) ability to clearly, confidently, and creatively communicate ideas throughout (15 marks).

3) Book Review (20%) – Due Monday, April 19 @ 12:00pm (noon) on Moodle

In this 4-5 page assignment (excluding title page and References), students will review one of the course textbooks of their choice. In the review, summarize the central arguments (1.5 pages), and then discuss points of agreement and disagreement with the central arguments. Points of agreement and disagreement should be informed by empirical data and sound logic and reason, and ought to draw in material from at least one of the other course textbooks. No formal introduction or conclusion is required for this assignment – simply begin with the summary and move directly into your engagement with that material.

Papers should be double spaced, with 1" (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12-point font, and ASA formatting. Evaluation of this assignment is based on: (a) summary of the book (20 marks); (b) analysis of the book (30 marks); (c) logical and coherent argument (20 marks); (d) grammar and spelling (20 marks); (e) formatting (10 marks). See grading rubric later in the syllabus.

Note that your paper submission may go through a plagiarism software – Turnitin – that compares your paper against other books, articles, online sources, and papers submitted to other universities and Ambrose. It is your responsibility to be aware of what constitutes plagiarism (see “Policies” section of the syllabus).

4) Final Exam (25%) – Scheduled by Registrar’s Office

In each section of the course, students will receive a few essay-based questions that could appear on the final exam. At the three-hour final exam, students will be given five questions from that list, and must answer four of those five questions.

Communication and Attendance:

My sole task in this course is to help create an environment for you to maximally learn and succeed. Toward this end, student-initiated communication with me is critical, especially if you have questions about course content and expectations, or if you are falling behind. Unless you reach out and communicate with me, I have no way to know what your needs are or how to best help you through this course. I want to encourage you to proactively communicate with me, and to not leave your communications until it is too late. When it comes to assignments, you will be held accountable for your communication (or lack thereof).

I have a high regard for our times together in class – this time is sacred. You are free to attend class or not, but should you decide to do so, I expect the following without exception:

- Read the assigned materials in advance of class
- Arrive on time
- Actively participate in class activities

If you cannot uphold all three of these expectations, you are discouraged from attending class. Should honoring these class boundaries become a problem, the professor reserves the right to ask you to leave class or possibly withdraw from the course.

Grade Summary:

The available letter grades and percentages for course grades are as follows. A detailed chart of what constitutes an 'A,' 'B,' or 'C,' etc. is also included below:

| | | | | | |
|----|---------------|-------------|----|-----------|-------------|
| A | 96% and above | (GPA – 4.0) | C | 63 - 67% | (GPA – 2.0) |
| A | 91 - 95% | (GPA – 4.0) | C- | 60 - 62% | (GPA – 1.7) |
| A- | 86 - 90% | (GPA – 3.7) | D+ | 56 - 59% | (GPA – 1.3) |
| B+ | 82 - 85% | (GPA – 3.3) | D | 50 - 55% | (GPA – 1.0) |
| B | 75 - 81% | (GPA – 3.0) | F | Below 50% | |
| B- | 72 - 74% | (GPA – 2.7) | | | |
| C+ | 68 - 71% | (GPA – 2.3) | | | |

Because of the nature of the Alpha 4.00 system, there can be no uniform University-wide conversion scale. The relationship between raw scores (e.g. percentages) and the resultant letter grade will depend on the nature of the course and the instructor's assessment of the level of each class, compared to similar classes taught previously.

Please note that final grades will be available on the student registration system. Printed grade sheets are not mailed out.

Grading Rubric

| | Theory, Method, Data: Correctly employs paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study. | Analysis and Application: Student is able to extend past summarizing research/theory, and clearly analyze and apply the research/theory (e.g., implications and consequences) | Logical and Coherent Argument: Logical and coherent argument that flows from beginning to end. | Grammar and Spelling: Writing is clear and effective communicating central ideas | Formatting: Use of appropriate writing style (i.e., ASA) and other formatting particulars (i.e., page length, font size, margins) | Oral Presentations: Material is clearly, confidently, and creatively communicated. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study. |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| A 86-100 | Consistently achieved – paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used | The majority of assignment demonstrates a balance in summarizing and describing theory/research and analysis and application | Clearly states central thesis and purpose of paper Each sentence/paragraph logically leads to the next | Few to no spelling, grammar, or other writing errors. Words, sentences, and | Consistently achieved | Communicates effectively main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation. |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|-----------------|--|
| | accurately and in relevant ways | | Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis | paragraphs flow smoothly | | Establishes order to ideas and points out relationships between them. Number and quality of main points are sufficient Presentation of ideas develops to a logical conclusion and/or summary Strong presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact. |
| B 72-85 | Mostly achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used fairly accurately. | Some idea of how chosen topic bears on the development of sociological thought (i.e., some analysis and application beyond merely summarizing existing theory/research) | Clear central thesis Appropriate details/synthesis most of the time. Sentences/paragraph generally flow logically together | Some spelling, grammar, and writing errors Some awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs | Mostly achieved | Communicates to some degree the main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation. Ideas follow a general logical flow with presenter providing some synthesis between points |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|--|-------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | <p>Number and quality of main points are sufficient</p> <p>Logical conclusion and/or summary provided that develops from the presenter's points</p> <p>Moderate presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact</p> |
| C 60-71 | Inconsistently achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are often summarized or used inaccurately, or not at all. | Little to no connection made to the development of paradigmatic thought in terms of analyzing or applying the theory/research | <p>Adequately limited central thesis</p> <p>Details/synthesis may be repetitious or absent altogether.</p> <p>Sentences/paragraphs rarely, if ever, flow logically together</p> | <p>Several spelling, grammar, and writing errors</p> <p>Several awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs</p> | Inconsistently achieved | <p>Unclear presentation of main theme, thesis or focus of presentation</p> <p>Little order to ideas and relationships between points not clarified clearly</p> <p>Number and quality of main points are lacking in sufficiency</p> <p>Weak conclusion and/or summary</p> |

grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Registrar's Office in writing and providing the basis for appeal within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to acknowledge to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage students to build mental health supports and to reach out when help is needed.

On Campus:

- Counselling Services: ambrose.edu/counselling
- Peer Supportive Listening: One-to-one support in Student Life office. Hours posted at ambrose.edu/wellness.
- For immediate crisis support, there are staff on campus who are trained in Suicide Intervention and Mental Health First Aid. See ambrose.edu/crisissupport for a list of staff members.

Off Campus:

- Distress Centre - 403-266-4357
- Sheldon Chumir Health Care Centre - 403-955-6200
- Emergency - 911

Sexual Violence Support

All staff, faculty, and Residence student leaders have received *Sexual Violence Response to Disclosure* training. We will support you and help you find the resources you need. There is a website with on and off campus supports – ambrose.edu/sexual-violence-response-and-awareness.

Off Campus:

- Clinic: Sheldon Chumir Health Centre - 403-955-6200
- Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse - 403-237-5888

Note: Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.