

Course ID:	Course Title:	Winter 2020
SO 320	Sociology of Religion	Prerequisite: SO 200-level
		Credits: 3

Class Information		Instructor Information		Important Dates	
Days:	Monday	Instructor:	Joel Thiessen, PhD	First day of classes:	Tue, Jan 7
Time:	6:30-9:15pm	Email:	jathiessen@ambrose.edu	Last day to add/drop, or change to audit:	Sun, Jan 19
Room:	A2210	Phone:	403-410-2000 ext.2979	Last day to request revised exam:	Mon, Mar 9
Lab/ Tutorial:	N/A	Office:	L2105	Last day to withdraw from course:	Fri, Mar 20
		Office Hours:	Tuesday 2:30-4:00pm Thursday 9:30-11:00am	Last day to apply for coursework extension:	Mon, Mar 30
Final Exam:	Final Exam Schedule will be available January 30 through the Office of the Registrar.			Last day of classes:	Thurs, Apr 9

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the theories and concepts utilized by sociologists to interpret religious behaviour and the organization of religion. The intent is not to judge truth claims made concerning religion, but to investigate how religion contributes to social life.

Expected Learning Outcomes

1. Grasp the socially constructed elements to religious belief, behaviour, and belonging for individuals, groups, and society
2. Comprehend and apply the varied approaches to defining and measuring religion in sociology
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various methodological tools that sociologists draw upon to study religion in society
4. Understand cornerstone sociological theories of religion, and utilize those theories to interpret religion/irreligion in a late modern context, particularly in Canada
5. Grapple with the multi-faceted impact that religion does or does not have on individuals, groups, and society as a whole, and vice versa
6. Apply critical thinking skills, and where applicable Christian thought, when examining religion

Textbooks

Ammerman, Nancy. 2014. *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*. New York, NY: Oxford.

Dawson, Lorne L. and Joel Thiessen. 2014. *The Sociology of Religion: A Canadian Perspective*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic & Assigned Reading
January 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Introduction Religion in Canada, the West, and the Rest of the World (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.1)
January 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining and Measuring Religion and Spirituality (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.2-3; Ammerman, Ch.1-2)
January 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insights from the Sociological Theories of Religion (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.4) Arguments For and Against Secularization Theory (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.5)
February 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion & Late Modernity (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.6) *Spiritual Practices in Everyday Life & Religious Communities and Spiritual Conversations (Ammerman, Ch.3-4)
February 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Everyday Life at Home (Ammerman, Ch.5) *Nine to Five: Spiritual Presence at Work (Ammerman, Ch.6)
February 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>NO CLASS (Reading Week)</i>
February 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm Examination
March 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Everyday Public Life: Circles of Spiritual Presence and Absence (Ammerman, Ch.7) *Bodies and Spirits: Health, Illness, and Mortality (Ammerman, Ch.8)
March 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>NO CLASS – Two Documentaries (“Jesus Camp” and “Root of All Evil?”) on Moodle</i>
March 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of Documentaries The Religious Life of Contemporary Canadians (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.7)
March 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Religious Movements (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.8) Religion and Immigration in Canada (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.8)
March 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious Nones (Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.8)
April 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spiritual Tribes: Toward a Sociology of Religion in Everyday Life (Ammerman, Ch.9; Dawson & Thiessen, Ch.9)

Requirements

*Failure to submit all assignments will result in an automatic failing final grade. Late assignments will receive a 10% per day deduction.

1) Exams (50%) – February 24 & TBD (Final Exam Schedule will be available January 30 through the Office of the Registrar.)

There are two exams in this course, each worth 25% of your final grade. Each exam will include a combination of multiple choice (20 questions); two sets of two short answer/essay questions (about 0.75 page per response, worth ten marks each), where students must answer one question in each set (total of two responses); and two sets of two long answer/essay questions (about 1.5 pages per response, worth twenty marks each), where students must answer one question in each set (total of two responses).

2) Seminar Presentation and Discussion (25%) – February 3, February 10, March 2

In pairs, students will lead one of five 75-minute seminar presentations and class discussions based on material in Nancy Ammerman's, *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes* (denoted in the course schedule with an asterisk* - sign up on professor's office door). Drawing on the assigned reading, seminar presentations and discussions will:

- Account for the core research questions/focus
- Describe the methods/sample used, plus assess the methodological strengths/weaknesses relative to the core research questions/focus
- Summarize and engage five central ideas
- Consider how/why this topic matters to the Sociology of Religion as a discipline (e.g., relative to concepts and theories learned in the course to date), and to individuals and society more specifically
- Raise unanswered questions, highlight further opportunities for research, and lead discussion on possible ways forward in these areas
- Incorporate a minimum of six peer-reviewed academic sources on the topic at hand, in addition to course textbooks
- Include a visual presentation (e.g. powerpoint or prezi) and a handout for everyone in the class, including a complete Reference list (ASA formatting) – these resources must be emailed to the professor by 12pm on the day of your seminar
- Facilitate thoughtful engagement, discussion, and reflection among the entire class

Evaluation is based on the following: (a) breadth, depth, and accuracy of sociological content and analysis (45 marks); (b) logical, coherent, and effective organization and communication of ideas (30 marks); (c) suitable and thought-provoking questions and class facilitation (15 marks); and (d) correct fulfillment of each requirement in the list above (10 marks).

3) Research Project (25%) – Thursday, April 2 @ 11:55pm

Students will select one of the following two options, and submit projects as an 8-10 page paper or propose and submit an alternate creative medium (e.g., video, poster/bulletin board, board/card game). If students choose an alternative creative medium, they must discuss the proposed idea and receive approval and specific parameters moving forward from the professor prior to Monday, February 10. Students can work on this project on their own or in groups of two (the same grade is given to both students).

Observation Exercise

Attend a religious/secular service in a tradition different than your own (e.g., if you are a Protestant, you could attend a service associated with Roman Catholicism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Secularism, etc.), and document your field research observations and analysis. Before gathering this research data it is imperative that you read/research background context and information on the group that you visit (not from internet sources), which will help to anchor your knowledge and observation experience. Detailed guidelines on how and what to observe are found in the supporting materials on Moodle.

Projects should both summarize observations from “the field” (approximately four pages) and incorporate sociological concepts, theories, and data that help to interpret the observations sociologically – to explain “what is going on here?” In addition to assigned course readings, a minimum of eight peer-reviewed sources (i.e. academic books and articles) are expected. After the Reference list, please include a detailed and well-organized set of typed notes from the “field” observations.

Evaluation is based on the following: (a) appropriate breadth and depth of description related to field research observations (25 marks); (b) breadth, depth, and accuracy of sociological content and analysis (25 marks); (c) logical and coherent argument (20 marks); (d) grammar and spelling (20 marks); and (e) formatting (10 marks). See Grading Rubric later in the syllabus.

Research Project

Create an answerable research question regarding one of the topics noted below, which must be approved by the professor via a face-to-face meeting prior to Monday, February 10. In addition to assigned course readings, a minimum of twelve peer-reviewed sources (i.e. academic books and articles) are expected.

- Religion and Young People (teens and/or young adults)
- Religion over the Life Course
- Religion and Ethnicity
- Religion and Immigration
- Religious Nones
- Congregations
- New Religious Movements
- Religion and Technology
- Religion and Politics
- Religion and Sexuality
- Religion and Law
- Religious Fundamentalism
- Religion and Gender
- Religious Radicalization
- Religion and Socioeconomic Status
- Another topic proposed by the student

Evaluation of this assignment is based on the Grading Rubric later in the syllabus: (a) theory, method, and data (25 marks); (b) analysis and application (25 marks); (c) logical and coherent argument (20 marks); (d) grammar and spelling (20 marks); (e) formatting (10 marks).

Formatting & Submission Instructions

A title page and Reference list (in addition to the 8-10 pages) are expected, correctly formatted to ASA guidelines (see links provided on Moodle and Johnson book on reserve). Papers should be double spaced, with 1" (2.54cm) margins on all sides, and 12 point font.

There are two components to this assignment. Every student must exchange their completed project with one other classmate of their choosing, no later than March 24. In turn, students will read and provide typed feedback no later than March 30. Feedback should focus on areas in the grading rubric at the end of the syllabus, in the context of the assignment description above. What did your peer do well? Where is more attention needed? What suggestions would you recommend to strengthen the paper? A "peer feedback" document is provided for you on Moodle, to fill out when offering feedback to your peers. Students are then encouraged to take this feedback into account in the revision process before a final submission to the professor. Assignment submissions should include the written feedback from your peer at the end, following the Reference list.

Submit an electronic copy of your assignment on Moodle. Note that your paper submission goes 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).

Attendance

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 and do not disturb those around you

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.

Student Success

We at Ambrose want students to succeed as whole persons throughout the educational experience. Students have a responsibility to take the lead in their own well-being. Ambrose offers a range of supports to help students, and students are encouraged to make use of these resources if or when helpful to do so.

Student Success Workshops

Want to learn more about how to budget your money or your time? Trying to find your way amidst academic jargon, or you want to learn to take better notes or develop helpful study strategies? Not sure where to begin your research project or how to communicate your research when it is complete? Aiming to take care of your mental health? Check out workshops on these and many other great topics throughout the semester at <https://ambrose.edu/workshops>.

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

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 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 accurately and in relevant ways	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 Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis	Few to no spelling, grammar, or other writing errors. Words, sentences, and paragraphs flow smoothly	Consistently achieved	Communicates effectively main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation. 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/psychological 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 Number and quality of main points are sufficient Logical conclusion and/or summary provided that develops from the presenters points Moderate presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication,

						body language, voice, and eye contact
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	Adequately limited central thesis Details/synthesis may be repetitious or absent altogether. Sentences/paragraphs rarely, if ever, flow logically together	Several spelling, grammar, and writing errors Several awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs	Inconsistently achieved	Unclear presentation of main theme, thesis or focus of presentation Little order to ideas and relationships between points not clarified clearly Number and quality of main points are lacking in sufficiency Weak conclusion and/or summary Presentation style lacking as demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact <i>And so on....</i>

Ambrose University Academic Policies:

Communication

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, they will need to forward all messages from the Ambrose account to another personal account.

Registration

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty or record. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a "Request to Withdraw from a Course" form or by sending an email to the Registrar's Office by the **Withdrawal Deadline**; please consult the List of Important Dates on the my.ambrose.edu website. Students will not receive a tuition refund for courses from which they withdraw after the Registration Revision period. A grade of "W" will appear on their transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Exam Scheduling

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a Revised Examination Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) the student has three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to use electronics for purposes unrelated to the course during a class session. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. Some professors will not allow the use of any electronic devices in class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a

laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information (information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual) may be required as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a course Extension from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date; please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the 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.

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