



**Subject Name Religious Studies 5224A:
Sociology of Religion in Canada
Fall 2022**

Religious Studies 5224A: Sociology of Religion in Canada
Thursdays, 6:00 to 8:30 (Sept. 15 to Dec. 8)
Delivery online via OWL/ Zoom
Prerequisite: none

Instructor: Dr. Neil Elliot
Contact Information: nelliot@huron.uwo.ca
Office Location: Trail, BC ;-)
Office Hours: By appointment - preferably on Fridays

Aims

To learn to observe and analyse our world, and specifically the religious world, as sociologists
To ground our learning in Canadian contexts and issues

Objectives

We will learn to use a range of sociological tools to analyse religious contexts, organisations and institutions
We will engage with the major topics and issues in Sociology of Religion
We will read, hear about, and question significant sociologists of religion
We will identify and apply sociological facts in religious contexts

Method

The course pedagogy will be based primarily on seminar, talking together, not lecture.
I will assume you do the limited and accessible reading identified. There will normally be 3 readings for each session. They will be based on the resources below and on articles I will provide. **Please note there is preparatory reading for the first session.**
You will be expected to do independent research for your presentations and essay.
The course will be collaborative not competitive - we learn best by engaging together.
We are all learners - including me.
The key question will always be "So What?"

On the menu each week will be:

- Learning the tools and data of the sociological trade
- Discussion on the main sociology of religion topic
- Seminars led by students on significant sociologists / Religious communities

I recognise that an evening course on zoom may be a challenge; I will do everything I can to make this lively and fun. Be aware that this is a new course and I am new to teaching at Huron, but I am a qualified adult educator as well as a priest and an academic. I am passionate and excited about this material and I hope to infect you with that passion.

Resources

Essential course books

(expect to read much of each of these through the course)

L. Dawson and J. Thiessen, *The Sociology of Religion: A Canadian perspective* (Ontario, OUP, 2014)
In Print (\$70) or available as 6 month rental e-book for \$50 through vitalsource.com

P. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (Toronto, Random House, 1966) (\$20)

M. Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion* (London, Routledge, 1995)
Available as free ebook through Huron library. This will give you a more in-depth and academic perspective on many of the issues we will cover.

Sociology textbooks

Available from the downloads section on OWL
and originally from the open textbook library (open.umn.edu/opentextbooks)

Sociology: understanding and changing the social world (University of Minnesota, 2016)
W. Little, *Introduction to sociology: 2nd Canadian Edition* (Victoria, BC Campus, 2016)

Other resources

I will provide articles and book chapters as necessary through OWL. There will be links to these both in the downloads section and in the section for each week.

You are encouraged to use the OWL forum to share resources which you have found useful or interesting

I do not have physical access to the library, but it has a good selection of books and journals relevant to this course. I expect you to use, *and demonstrate use of*, the library unless this is not possible for you.

Assessment (see below)

1. Attendance and participation in sessions (10%)
2. Participation in online forum (10%)
3. Seminar on sociologist - notes plus presentation (10% + 10%)
4. Seminar on a Religious Community - notes plus presentation (10% +10%)
5. Essay - from main topic list or by negotiation (10%+30%)

Content

This list is indicative rather than definitive. We cannot cover everything that we would like to cover, and some subjects may need more time and attention. The course is an introduction to an academic field and a way of looking at the world.

Sociology of Religion topics - with particular Canadian emphases

What is Religion?

Four dimensions of Religion, Religion and magic.

Religion in a **religious** state - *Quebec before the quiet revolution*

The secularisation **phenomena** - *decline of Christianity /Anglican Church of Canada*

The secularisation **thesis**

Fundamentalism - *Fundamentalist Christianity in the USA*

Religion in a **secular** state – *Religion in contemporary Canada*

Immigration and religion - *Islam in Canada*

Religion and Gender

Religious nones and dones Thiessen and Wilkins Laflamme

Indigenous and settler religion – *Canadian First Nations*

Spirituality and spiritualities

Sociological analysis - the tools we will be using

Elements of culture - symbol, values, norms, language, artifacts

Socialisation

Power - institutional / structural and relational

Postmodernity

Social constructionism

Framing and context

Methodological atheism

The Copernican revolution

Religious facts - the data we will work with

Religious Data

Sociological data - Quantitative data and qualitative data

Social facts - Structures, culture

Sociologists of religion (and their big idea)

K. Marx - *The opiate of the masses*

M. Weber - *Work ethic and spirit of capitalism*

E. Durkheim – *Social origin and function of religion*

S. Freud - *Religion as illusion*

A. Maslow - *Peak experiences*

W. James - *Nature of religious experience*

P. Berger - *A Rumor of Angels*

R. Bibby - *The Canadian Religious renaissance*

L. Woodhead - *Spirituality(/ies) vs religion*

R. Stark - *Compensation and rational choice*

C. Gertz - *Religion as cultural system*

R. Otto - *Religion as a priori experience*

Schedule for 2022

Summary

	Sociology of Religion	Sociology tools	Seminar 1	Seminar 2
15-Sep-22	What is Religion	Elements of culture		
22-Sep-22	4 D Religion / Magic	Socialisation	Marx	Freud
29-Sep-22	Religious states - Quebec	Power	Durkheim	Weber
06-Oct-22	Secularisation Phenominae	Postmodernity	Maslow	James
13-Oct-22	Secularisation Thesis	Social construction	Gertz	Otto
20-Oct-22	Fundamentalism	Framing	Berger	Bibby
27-Oct-22	Secular states	Religious data	Stark	Woodhead
03-Nov-22	<i>No class</i>			
10-Nov-22	Immigrant religion	Sociological data		
17-Nov-22	Indigenous religion	Social facts		
24-Nov-22	Gender and religion	Paradigms		
01-Dec-22	Religious nones and dones	Methodological athiesm		
08-Dec-22	Spirituality and Religion	The Copernical revolution		

September 15 – Session 1

Please note there is preparatory reading for the first session

Introductions

Sociology of Religion Topic – What is religion?

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014), Ch2
- [Optionally - Hamilton, Ch1]

Sociology Topic – Elements of Culture

Preparatory Reading – *Sociology* (2016) Ch3

Sociologist Seminars start next week

September 22 – Session 2

Sociology of Religion Topic – Four dimensions of Religion/ Religion and Magic

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014), Ch3
- Hamilton (1995), p28-31

Sociology Topic – Socialisation

Preparatory Reading – *Sociology* (2016), Ch4

Seminars - Marx, Freud

September 22 -- Session 3

Sociology of Religion Topic – Religion in a religious state / Quebec

Preparatory Reading – Berger, *The Sacred Canopy* (1966), Ch2
Article – Zubrzycki, *Beheading the saints* (2016), Ch 2

Sociology Topic – Power

Preparatory Reading – *Sociology*, (2016), Section 14.1

Seminars - Durkheim, Weber

October 6 – Session 4

Sociology of Religion Topic – Secularisation in and out of Western Christianity

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014), Ch 1

- Article – Elliot – Statistics report to ACC house of Bishop (2019)

- Article - Wilkins-Laflamme, *Canadian Religion in Global Perspective* (2022)

Sociology Topic – Postmodernity

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014) Ch 6

Seminars - Maslow, James

October 13 – Session 5

Sociology of Religion Topic – The secularisation thesis

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014), Ch 5

Sociology Topic – Social construction

Preparatory Reading – Berger *The Sacred Canopy* (1966), p1-19

Seminars- Gertz, Otto

October 20 – Session 6

Sociology of Religion Topic – Fundamentalism

Preparatory Reading – Article – Jouet *Exceptional America* (2017) Ch3

Sociology Topic – Framing

Preparatory Reading – Article – Goffman *Frame analysis* (1974) Ch2

Seminars – Berger, Bibby

October 27 – Session 7

Sociology of Religion Topic – Secular states / Religion in Contemporary Canada

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014), Ch7 (not p 176-179)

Sociology Topic – Religious data

Preparatory Reading – Article- Elliot *How grows the vineyard* (2016)

Seminars – Stark, Woodhead

November 3 – No session – **Religious Community seminars start next week**

Essay Proposals Dues Nov 24th

November 10 – Session 8

Sociology of Religion Topic – Religion and Immigration / Islam in Canada

Preparatory Reading – Dawson and Thiessen (2014), p186-201

- Article - McDonough and Hoodfar, *Muslims in Canada*, (2005)

Sociology Topic – Sociological data

Preparatory Reading – Little *Introduction to sociology* (2016), Ch2

Seminars – Religious Communities

November 17 – Session 9

Sociology of Religion Topic – Indigenous Religion

Preparatory Reading – Article - Kim-Cragg, *The power and practise of Indigenous Christian rituals and ceremonies* (2021)

Sociology Topic – Social Facts

Preparatory Reading – Article - Durkheim *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), Ch1

Seminars – Religious Communities

November 24 – Session 10

Sociology of Religion Topic – Gender and Religion

Preparatory Reading – Articles - Woodhead *Feminism and the Sociology of Religion* (2001)

Woodhead *Gender Differences in Religious Practice and Significance* (2007)

Sociology Topic – Paradigms

Preparatory Reading – en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradigm

Seminars – Religious Communities

Essay Proposal Deadline

December 1 – Session 11

Sociology of Religion Topic – Religious Nones and Dones

Preparatory Reading – Article - Thiesen and Wilkins-Laflamme (2020) Ch2

Sociology Topic – Methodological Atheism

Preparatory Reading – Berger *The Sacred Canopy* (1967) p100-101

Seminars – Religious Communities

December 8 – Session 12

Sociology of Religion Topic – Spirituality and Religion

Preparatory Reading – unpublished articles – Elliot, *Defining spirituality* and *Spirituality as frame*

Sociology Topic – The Copernical revolution

Preparatory Reading – Article Preface to James *Varieties of Religious experience* (1902) pvii

Seminars – Religious Communities

Assessment

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2. Participation in online forum (10%)
3. Seminar on sociologist - notes plus presentation (10% + 10%)
4. Seminar on a Religious Community - notes plus presentation (10% +10%)
5. Essay - from main topic list or by negotiation (10%+30%)

1. Attendance and participation (10% of final mark)

You are expected to be present online for each session. That is how we will learn. We need each other's insights and assistance. We need each other's questions and comments. I need to know what you understand, and what you do not understand. This will aid **your** learning and **our** learning. If you are not able to be present, please let me know in advance.

2. Participation in online forum (10% of final mark)

The OWL forum is a place to discuss and reflect on the week's learning - both before and after the session. This may take the form of asking questions or answering questions. I will expect specific thoughts and feedback on each week's sessions on the forum. This should be more substantive than "lovely sermon, vicar". You are expected to participate regularly in the OWL forum.

3. Sociologist seminar (September 21 to October 26)

Each student will write a resume and then present and lead a discussion on one of the sociologists named above. Allocation and delivery slot will be first-come, first-choice basis. The resume and the presentation should be submitted via OWL by noon on the day of your seminar.

i) Create a 500 word/ two page resume for the sociologist (10% of final mark)

- Dates
- publications,
- Influences/ Context
- Big Idea (s)
- Biographic notes
- Fun facts
- Why is this person significant?

ii) Present and lead a discussion on the sociologist's "big idea" (10% of final mark). This should include a small number (3 or 4) of PowerPoint (or similar) slides. You should aim this seminar at your fellow learners who will be depending on your information and insights.

Your resume should not just rely on Wikipedia, although I expect everyone to have read the relevant articles each week! You should show evidence of having read both the original work of the sociologist, and critiques of the sociologist. At least four academic references should be included.

4. Religious community seminar (November 9 to December 7)

i) Write a 500 word/ two page analysis on a church, denomination or religion of your choice. (10% of final mark)

Again, we will co-ordinate these via OWL so we do not have repeat analyses. Delivery slot will be on first-come first-served basis. The analysis and the presentation should be submitted via OWL by noon on the day of your seminar.

You will analyse the community using appropriate sociological tools

Include:

- Significant cultural elements
- Context, Framing
- Formal power structures
- Membership criteria

ii) You will also present and lead a discussion on your analysis (10% of final mark). This should include a small number (3 or 4) of PowerPoint (or similar) slides. This seminar will be an important part of all of our learning.

5. Essay

For your essay you will reflect on how one of the main themes of sociology of religion impacts your personal context. The essay should not simply report, summarize, or review class materials, but demonstrate thoughtful reflection and analysis. This work will be in two parts, an essay proposal and a final essay.

i. Essay Proposal and Bibliography (10% of final mark) **(Deadline Nov 24th)**

In preparation for your final paper, you will submit a 1-page essay proposal and bibliography. This assignment should only be 1 page! If it is much more than that, it is probably not done correctly.

The Essay Proposal is a brief paragraph where you outline the topic you would like to explore in the final paper, and the approach you will take.

The Bibliography is a list of at least 4 sources that you plan to use for the final paper. This can change later on, but for now these are the academic sources (normally books, e-books, or journal articles) most relevant to your chosen topic.

ii. Final Essay (30% of final mark) **(Deadline December 12th)**

Your final essay will be between 2000 and 2500 (8-10 pages) plus the bibliography you actually use. In it you should describe the context and social facts you have chosen and use the sociological tools and sociology of religion theme to analyse that context. You should come to a clear "So what?"

For example, you might look at the membership and attendance patterns of your local church; analyse how secularisation is affecting them; discuss how the secularisation thesis might apply; and suggest what action might be appropriate for that community.

Papers should incorporate at least 6 scholarly sources, normally books or journal articles from the Huron library database. You may use course readings as sources and are encouraged to do so if appropriate.

All written work including slides should be submitted via OWL. Chicago referencing is expected.

**Appendix to Course Outlines:
Faculty of Theology Academic Policies & Regulations 2022–2023**

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean and the Instructor to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/attendance.pdf.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf. The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on the Recording of Class Activities

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems ("Clickers")

Personal Response Systems ("clickers") may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else's clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work: Medical or Non-Medical Absences & Accommodation

MDiv and MTS students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester must consult with the Dean's Office. MDiv and MTS students are excluded from using the Self Reported Absence option as that is restricted to bachelor-level students. Students may request academic consideration on medical grounds by contacting the Dean of Theology office at srice@huron.uwo.ca. To protect student privacy, details of the medical accommodation need only be disclosed to the Dean, who will communicate to the instructor(s) the necessary accommodation. Instructors may not request medical or other documentation from students. The Dean may require medical or other documentation, and the student may be required to complete the Student Medical Certificate, available online at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf. Following a determination of accommodation, the Dean will contact the instructor(s) and the student who will then arrange a new deadline for missed work.

Students seeking academic consideration for a non-medical absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) may be required to provide appropriate documentation to the Dean's Office. All consideration requests must be directed to the Dean's Office with notice also given to the instructor.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at:

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf. Consult the Dean's Office for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation (see above), students should contact Sandra Rice in the Dean's Office at srice@huron.uwo.ca.

Your Faculty Advisor is also able to answer questions about your program and to assist with any concerns about academic matters. Contact them for a conversation whenever you need.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult with the Dean. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here:

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with your course instructor and the Dean, who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect your full-time status and therefore have implications for OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

An outline of the range of services offered to Huron students is found on the Huron website at:

<https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>

Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>

Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>

Learning Development and Success: <https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>

Accessible Education: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>

Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Mental Health & Wellness Support at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca

Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Chaplaincy: gthorne@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.