

**Sociology of Religion**  
**Sociology 3440-090 Online**  
**Spring 2025, University of Utah**  
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### **I. Goals and Learning Outcomes:**

The primary goal of this class is to give students a sociological understanding of religion as a powerful social institution that is associated with many social processes that motivate and influence how people act and understand the world around them. The class relies upon a variety of methods that include comparative analysis, theoretical explanations, ethnographic studies, and empirical studies designed to help students better understand religion and its impact upon societies, global-international events, and personal well-being. The materials and activities are designed to give students a more knowledgeable, intimate, and direct grasp of religion that will challenge many common misconceptions regarding religion. This overview of the functioning and diversity of religious institutions should help students make more discerning decisions regarding cultural, political, and moral issues that are influenced by religion.

In addition to readings and assigned videos, students will engage the materials in online lectures found on the canvas page under Pages and on the Discussions Board. On the Discussion Board students can post up with responses and questions regarding the class materials and posts put up by myself or students. Please use the discussion board to post up on my introduction post string and introduce yourself to the class by noting something about your interests and background. Here, if you like, you may note your preferred gender pronoun or designation.

As will be explained below, students may also write extra credit papers on a variety of subjects and exercises where they may also participate in various religious organizations and events. By the end of the semester students should have a good grasp of key sociological assumptions and their application to religion, along with a deeper understanding of the multidimensional nature of religion and its influence. I do post recommended readings and videos that while not required, can substantially add to the course. If you are a graduate student taking this course at the 5000 level you should be familiar with these materials. This course meets the Social and Behavioral Science Intellectual Exploration (BF) requirement. If given adequate notice the syllabus may be changed and does not constitute a contract.

### **II. Topics To Be Covered:**

The course is laid out in three parts. The first section begins with a review of conventional and theoretical conceptions of religion and an overview of the importance and

centrality of religion to human societies. It emphasizes the diversity and nature of "religious experience" in terms of different denominations, cultures, classes, and individuals. This is followed by an overview of sociological assumptions and theories and their application to religion. Functionalism, conflict theory, exchange theory, sociology of knowledge, sociobiology, feminist theory, symbolic interactionism, postmodern and critical theory will all be addressed in terms of their relevance to understanding religion.

The second part of the course begins with a comparative analysis of the major religions in terms of beliefs, values, norms, practices, and rituals as seen from different theoretical points of view and a variety of methods including ethnography, statistical, historical and critical methods. This comparative analysis surveys Western, Eastern, New Age, and Native American religions, and unaffiliated groups according to their defining beliefs and practices, and concludes with an analysis of the major commonalities and differences between Eastern and Western Religions, Alternative, Native American religions, and unaffiliated groups that include agnostics, atheists and existentialists.

The third part of the course addresses issues associated with modernity, fundamentalism, and terrorism. This section also contains a critical analysis of religion in terms of the extent to which it can be constructive and destructive, and both an impediment to needed social change and an impetus for powerful positive social movements.

Throughout the course issues associated with social change, patriarchy, prejudice, violence, sexism, conflicts between science and religion, modernity, and the separation of church and state will be addressed. The course concludes with a study of master trends in religion in the 21st century, and the role that religion and spirituality may possibly play in meeting the challenges and problems of our age.

### **III. Pedagogy**

This is an online class organized in terms of modules that contain weekly reading assignments, videotaped lectures and assigned videos. There are 4 taped online lectures per week that address core materials, readings, videos, and reviews for exams. Occasionally, I may update or add a new lecture by posting it on Canvas. The lectures are usually about 30 to 35 minutes which adds up to about the same amount of time you spend in class. Note outlines are supplied for the lectures. While there may seem to be a lot of readings, many of them are very short, from 1 to 5 pages. Similarly, while some of the required videos may run about an hour, many are very short averaging from 15 to 30 minutes.

I advise all students to stay up with the readings and assigned videos, and if possible get a week ahead. If you get behind and try to cover everything in the last week before an exam you will not do well. So, stay up with the readings and the class will be more fun and less stressful. Again, I urge each of you to introduce yourself on the discussion page, by noting your interests, major, or something unique about yourself. This is also a good way to make new friends and also a means of extra credit. If you have any problems or questions feel free to call me at my office and if you have technical problems, please contact TACC at 844-527-0328. If they can't solve it call me.

#### **IV. Exams, Extra Credit and Grading:**

The exams are three objective exams, two midterms and a final, The questions are true false, multiple choice, fill in the blank and there will be reviews before all exams. Normally, I assign a final paper, but this semester, instead of assigning a paper, I am giving students extra credit options some of which may include writing a short paper.

There are three options for extra credit. First, to receive 7 extra credit points, all students can post-up at least 10 times during the semester on the discussion board with a question or response regarding materials addressed in the lectures and readings or materials. All posts should be thoughtful, respectful, clearly written and address the topic at hand, and be more than just token responses. Students also have two other writing alternatives for extra credit, and can only do one, not both.

**Writing Alternative One:** To receive 3 extra credit points write a 2 page (double-spaced) paper on a movie or documentary chosen from the Suggested Movies or Documentaries listed in the syllabus. In this short paper, a student should cover the main themes or ideas put forth and summarize their relevance to theories, concepts and materials addressed in the class. This paper will not require a title page or reference page.

**Writing Alternative Two:** To receive 6 extra credit points write a 4 to 5 page (double-spaced) paper on any of the optional topics listed below. This paper will require a title page with a short abstract on the title page and a reference page if required.

For the first option the student can do participant observer or ethnographic research on a religion or religious practice. This will entail spending time throughout the semester, at least six events, in a particular religious institution or group that she is not affiliated with and record her experiences in a journal. After completing the journal entries, in the paper the student will summarize the journal entries, noting any particular patterns or events or beliefs that seemed salient and important, and then address what she has learned and how it may relate to theory, concepts and research studied in the class, and any moral or spiritual significance it may have.

The second option entails a role taking experiment in which the student makes a consistent daily attempt to live by specific religious principles or emulate a religious role model, say Jesus, Moses, Gandhi, Mohammad, Buddha, the Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King or Albert Schweitzer for a period of at least 3 or 4 days or more. Students may also spend four days adopting and acting out an alternative or ancient religious perspective such as Native American, Wicca, or pantheistic, shamanic or animistic religions and traditions. While doing this, students should record their experiences and the reactions of others, and then analyze them in terms of what she has learned and how it relates to any theory or concepts discussed in class along with any relevant personal, moral or political issues. Students cannot engage in any illegal, immoral or dangerous activities.

The third option allows the student to write a formal research paper that addresses a particular religious practice such as prayer, meditation, circumcision, religious clothing,

faith, or sacraments. These papers should address the effect these practices and traditions have upon human wellbeing and associated moral and political issues such as freedom, sexism, patriarchy, inequality, the separation of church and state, modernity, and religious extremism. Students may also use this option to address the extent to which religious traditions, social movements, and social organizations have and can promote constructive solutions to a variety of social, moral, and political issues. For this research paper a student may also use content analysis or develop and test a hypothesis regarding religion and carry out an appropriate experiment or survey that will shed light on it. Students doing surveys or experiments should clear their topics with me before starting.

The fourth option entails writing a comparative analysis of any two religions or religious and philosophical perspectives. This could entail comparing Catholicism with Buddhism, eastern religions with western religions or comparing western religion or eastern religion to existentialism, agnosticism to religious zealotry, science and religion, or faith verses skepticism. When appropriate, students should apply concepts and research from class, and they should address religions other than the one they may be associated with.

The fifth option entails writing a sociological analysis or response to one of the books on the suggested readings list. These papers should summarize major themes and ideas and conclude with a critical analysis of the book or movie in terms of concepts and research addressed in the class and its moral and human significance.

For the sixth options, students can summarize what they found to be the most important and significant ideas and concepts regarding religion that were addressed in the class. This paper may focus upon a particular theoretical perspective or concept and or related research and their application to religion or a variety of concepts and ideas. Most importantly, this paper should address what you take away from the class in terms of new insights and their relevance to your life and to how you see the world .

All extra credit papers should be double spaced in a reasonable sized font, with a title page and a short abstract at the bottom of the title page, and a reference page if needed. You may write longer papers if you clear it with me first. Plagiarism will result in an E grade, and be consistent following either the ASA, APA or MLA guidelines. My specific criteria for grading the two page extra credit papers are as follows and are doubled for the longer 4 to page papers.

- 1 point if the paper is readable, coherent, with few grammatical errors.
- 1 point for correct application of concepts and materials.
- 1 point if the paper is creative, authentic, and insightful.

The first midterm is worth 60 points, and the second is worth 50, points, with the shorter final accounting for 40 points, which makes 150 total points for the class, plus up to 20 extra credit points that can be applied to the student's total points. Final grades reflect the following scale: 95-100%=A, 90-94%=A-, 87-89%=B+, 82-86%=B, 80-81%=B-, 77-79%=C+, 72-76%=C, 70-71%=C-, 67-69%=D+, 62-66%=D, 60-61%= D-, below =E. If no one gets 100% on an

exam, I will add points to all the scores until at least one or more students get 100%. In studying for the online objective exams, after reading all the materials and watching assigned videos, I urge all students to go over your lecture notes and then focus on the weekly reviews which will be the source of many exam questions.

## **V: Videos:**

Videos are essential to this class. There are three categories of videos, (1) Required, (2) Recommended, and (3) Suggested. Required and Recommended videos can be watched on Canvas. Some are about an hour in length, while others are from 15 to 30 minutes. Recommended Videos should be watched if you want a deeper grasp of the materials. Suggested videos can be used as the basis for 5 point extra credit papers. They are not on Canvas, but can be found online or at the Marriott library.

**VI. Texts: There are two texts, some videos, and some E-Reserve Readings which can be accessed on the course Canvas Page by clicking on the appropriate link.**

*Gods in the Global Village. The World's Religions in Sociological Perspective*, Fourth Edition, Pine Forge Press, 2012 (Available at the bookstore and online at the Marriott Library and Amazon.com)

*God and His Demons*. Michael Parenti, Prometheus Books, 2010 (PDF version available on Canvas, free of charge. Just click on it to open it and select chapter. A hardback copy is also available at the bookstore and online at Amazon.com and other locations)

## **VII. Course Outline**

### [Week One, \(January 6\): Introduction / Defining and Studying Religion / Religious Vocabulary](#)

- Lectures: Intro and 1-4
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- Gods in the Global Village Chapter One: Religious Life in the Global Village.
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction, Wade Clark Roof (1-4)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Classical Sociological Definitions of Religion, Patricia Chang (5-8)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Elementary Forms of the Religious life, Emile Durkheim. (9-14)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: From Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, Karl Marx (15-16)
  
- Online Video: Bill Moyers Interviews Joseph Campbell (sacred myths) (40 minutes)

[Week Two \(January 13\): Basic Sociological Model and Religion / Institutions and the Social Order / Social Roles & Identity/ Status / Stratification / Authority / Power / Social Control & Change](#)

- Lectures: 5-10
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- God's in the Global Village. Chapter Five. The Religious Ethos.
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Religious Organizations, Institutions, and Authority, Susanne C. Monahan (225-230)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Religion, Michael Emerson (78-79)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Social Class and Religion, William Mirola (144-150)
- 
- Online Video: The Amish (40 minutes)
- 
- **Recommended Reading: Mountain People**
- 
- **Recommended Online Video: Bill Moyers Interview with Ann Provost on the Bible**

[Week Three, \(January 20\): Sociological Theory and Religion: Functionalism / Social Change](#)

- Lectures 11-15
- 
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Religion as a Cultural System, Clifford Geertz (16-22)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: The Sacred Canopy, Peter L. Berger (23-29)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Belief and Ritual, Susanne Monahan (30-34)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader; Ways of Seeing Ecstasy: David Yamane (70-77)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Religious Experience, William Angel (51-57)
- E-Reserve, Jonestown as Perverse Utopia, Rose Laub Coser.
- 
- Online Video: Religion and Magic (40 minutes)
- 
- Online Video: The Polygamists (40 minutes)
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- **Recommended E-Reserve. The Sacred Canopy; Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. Peter L. Berger, Chapter Three, The Problem of Theodicy**

[Week Four, \(January 27\) Sociological Theory and Religion: Conflict Theory / Exchange Theory / Symbolic Interactionism](#)

- Lectures 16-20
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- God and His Demons. Part I. All in the Bible.
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Salvation on Sand Mountain, Gaines (37-42)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Gender and Religion, Lori Beaman (115-117)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Sexual Identity and Religion, William Mirola. (173-175)
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Negotiating a Religious Identity: The Case of the Gay Evangelical, Scott Thumma (189-195)
  
- Online Video: Bill Moyers On Faith and Reason. Interview Salmon Rushdie (30 mins)
- Online Video clip: Why is Jesus White, Mohammad Ali (5 minutes)
  
- **Recommended E-Reserve, Escape From Evil, Chapter 8, The Nature of Social Evil.**
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- **Recommended Video. Martin Luther King, "I Have a Dream."**
- **Recommended Video: Pink Smoke Over the Vatican. (religion and sexism)**

[Week Five. \(February 3\): Sociology of Knowledge / Phenomenology / Feminism / Sociobiology / Neo-Marxists / Critical Theorists / Theory Overview](#)

- Lectures 21-25
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- God and His Demons Part II. Divine Design
- God and His Demons Part III. When the Ethereal Becomes Material
- E-Reserve Downloading God, "Big Box Churches, and the Crystal Shop around the Corner; Religious Adaption in the High Tech, Digital Age," Religion Matters, Emerson, Mirola, and Monahan
- 
- Online Video clip: Abundance Theology, (14 minute clip)
- Online Video clip: Elmer Gantry (15 minute clip)
  
- **Recommended Online Audio Lecture: The Political Uses of Religion. Michael Parenti**

[Week Six. \(February 10\): Gods, the Devil, Evil, and Faith as Social Constructions](#)

- Lectures 26-30
- 
- God and His Demons. Part IV. Hypocrites, Reactionaries and Vipers
- God and His Demons. Part V. Theocracy, Past, Present and Future
- 
- Online Video: A Purpose Driven Life, Rick Warren (30 mi)

Week Seven: (February 17): Music and Religion, Midterm Review and Midterm

- Music and Dance and the Origin of Religion: Online Essay and clips on Canvas
- 
- Lecture 31, Midterm Review
- 
- Online Midterm on Weeks 1-7, February 13-14. (Due by Midnight)

Week Eight (February 24): Statistical Portrait of Religion in the U.S. / Putnam on Religion in the U.S. / Axial Age, Pre-Axial Age / Animism to Polytheism to Monotheism

- Lectures 32-35
- 
- Egyptian, Greek, and Roman God's and Goddess on Canvas video and notes
- 
- Gods in the Global Village Chapter 3. The Tour: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- E-Reserve, The World As I See It. Albert Einstein. Religion & Science
- 
- Online Video: Ten Commandments: History Channel (60 minutes)
- Online Videos: Saint Francis: A Man of His Word, Preview (5 minutes) (4 min) (2 Min)
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- **Recommended Video: The Twentieth Century: True Believers**

Week Nine: (March 3): Old Testament / Ten Commandments / Separation Church and State

- Lectures 36-39
- 
- Gods In the Global Village: Chapter 2, Turning East
- Famous Jewish Writers, Artists, Musicians and Comedians
- Yiddish: Contribution to American Language and Culture
- 
- Online Video: Bill Moyers Interview with Pema Chodron on Buddhism (30 min,)
- Online Video: Lust for Life (14 minute clip)
- Online Video: Monastic Life (10 min)
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- **Recommended E-Reserve: Gandhi on Non-Violence, Thomas Merton,**
- **Recommended E-Reserve Mini Ching (Divination), Sheila Heti, Harper's Mag**
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- **Recommended Video: Western Religion**

Week Ten: (March 10) Spring Break: (No Lectures or Readings) (Assigned Video)

- Online Video: Journey of the Universe: Science, Philosophy, Post Modern Religion



### Week Eleven: (March 17) Faith and Western Religions / Islam

- Lectures 40-43
- 
- E-Reserve: Think on These Things, Krisnumurti on Education: PP. 1-26
- Required Video: Inside Islam
- 
- **Recommended Video: Saint Francis: A Man of His Word**

### Week Twelve: (March 24): Western Religions / Christianity / Turning Points in Christianity, / Free Will and Saint Augustine

- Lectures 44-47
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- God's in the Global Village. Chapter 4, Indigenous Religions.
- E-Reserve Spiral Dance, Starhawk, Chapter One
- 
- Online Video: A Common Destiny, (Hopi) (60 minutes)
- Online Video: What is Scientology (7 mins)
- 
- **Recommended E-Reserve: Obituary Notice, Friedrich Nietzsche, Silas-Maria**
- **Recommended E-Reserve, Lower Than Angels; Benjamin Hale, Harpers Mag.**
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- **Recommended Video: Spirituality, Allen Wheelis**

### Week Thirteen: (March 31): Eastern Religions, Alternative, Emerging, and Native American Religions /Agnostics, Atheists, and Existentialists / 2nd Midterm on Weeks 8-12

- E-Reserve: Emma Goldman, "The Philosophy of Atheism," Mark Twain, "Thoughts of God," Albert Einstein, Selected Writing on Religion, Salman Rushdie, "Imagine There's No Heaven," from The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens Editor. (approx. 20 pages)
- E-Reserve: The Moral Landscape. Sam Harris, pp. 145-152
- E-Reserve Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved Frans De Wall, Princeton University Press, 2006, Introduction pp. x-xix.
- 
- Online Video: Bill Moyers Interview with Colin McGinn Atheist (30 minutes)
- Online Video: Pink Panther Existentialist Cartoon (5 min)
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- Online Midterm #2, Weeks 8-13, Lectures 32-47, March 27-28.
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- **Recommended E-Reserve. A Pagan Sermon, C. Wright Mills**
- **Recommended E-Reserve. The God Delusion. Chapter 5, Richard Dawkins**
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- **Recommended Video: Why I Am Not a Christian, Bertrand Russel (42 min)**
- **Recommended Video: Bill Moyers & Mary Gordon on Christianity**
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[Week Fourteen: \(April 7\): Comparative Analysis of Modern Religions, Spirituality, and Existentialism / On Religious Experience / Philosophical, Biological, Psychological, and Anthropological views on the Origins Religion and Magic \(Zeitlin\)](#)

- Lectures 48-51
- 
- Gods in the Global Village: Chapter 6, Modernism and Multiculturalism.
- E-Reserve: Sociology of Religion, Lundscow, Chapter 7, Cults.
- 
- Online Video: Crisis of Faith (60 minutes)
- 
- **Recommended E-Reserve. End of Faith, Reason in Exile, Sam Harris**
- **Recommended Video: Religulous with Bill Maher**

[Week Fifteen: \(April 14 \): Crisis of Modernity / Conflict / Modern Cults.](#)

- Lectures 52-55
- 
- Gods in the Global Village. Chapter 8. Religion and Social Conflict.
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- Online Video: Online Video: Jesus Camp (60 minutes)
- Online Video: The Dark Side of Polygamy (Warren Jeffs) (30 mins)
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- **Recommended E-Reserve. Flesh of my Flesh, Daniel Bergner**
- **Recommended E-Reserve, Terror in the Mind of God, Mark Juergensmeyer**
- **Recommended E-Reserve: Infidel, Ayann Hirisi, Chapter Two.**
- **Recommended E-Reserve: Acts of Faith, The Story of An American Muslim, The Struggle for the Soul of a Generation, Eboo Patel,**

[Week Sixteen: \(April 21\): Fundamentalism / Terrorism / Constructive and Destructive Aspects of Religion / Future Trends](#)

- Lectures 56-59
- 
- Religious Sages and Activists lecture and notes in Canvas.
- 
- E-Reserve: Beyond Fundamentalism: Confronting Religious
- Extremism in the Age of Globalization, Reza Aslan. Prologue and Introduction
- Fields of Blood: Religion and Violence, Afterword, Karen Armstrong
- E-Reserve, On God's Side, Jim Wallis, Chapter One. A Gospel For the Common Good.
- E-Reserve: Spiritual Ecology: The Bells of Mindfulness, Thich Nhat Hanh
- 
- Online Video: Bright Light: When Spirit Meets Action, (Required) (90 minutes)
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- **Recommended Video: The Power of Forgiveness**
- **Recommended E-Reserve; What ISIS Really Wants, Atlantic Magazine**

- Recommended E-Reserve: Tomorrow's God, Neale Donald Walsh, Ch. 1,
- Recommended E-Reserve: Does God Have A Future? Karen Armstrong
- Recommended E-Reserve: God's Politics. Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It. Jim Wallis . Introduction. pp. XVII-XXVIII Why Can't We Talk

#### Week Seventeen: (April 28): Final Exam

- All Extra credit work (Discussion Posts and Papers) due by midnight December April 28, before the Final begins.
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- Final Review Online: April 28
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- Final Exam on Weeks 13-16: April 29-30

#### VIII. Suggested Readings:

- The Meaning of Life. Edward O. Wilson (Sociobiologist)
- Faith and Struggle in the Lives of Four African Americans: Ethel Waters, Mary Lou Williams, Eldridge Cleaver and Muhammad Ali.
- 50 Spiritual Classics, Tom Butler-Bowdon
- God's Politics, Jim Wallis (Religious social activism)
- On God's Side, Jim Wallis (Religious activism on politics)
- Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth
- The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success, Rodney Stark
- Why I Am Not A Christian, Bertrand Russell (classic philosophical view or Christianity)
- Civilization and its Discontents, Sigmund Freud
- Varieties of Religious Experience, William James
- Life is a Miracle, Wendell Berry (Deep Ecologist addresses religion and science)
- The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Emile Durkheim (classic)
- The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Max Weber (classic)
- The "God" Part of the Brain, A scientific Interpretation of Human Spirituality and God, Mathew Alper
- Journey to Ixtlan, Carlos Castaneda (60's spirituality and anthropology)
- The Places That Scare You.: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times. Pema Chodron (Application of Buddhism to modern world)
- The Tao of Physics. The Parallel Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism. Fritjof Capra
- Strong Religion, The Rise of Fundamentalism Around the World, Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan
- The True Believer, Eric Hoffer (classic on origins of social movements)
- The Voice of the Buddha. The Dhammapada and Buddhist Teachings. Manjusura
- When Religion Becomes Evil, Charles Kimball
- The Denial of Death or Escape From Evil, Ernest Becker
- Consilience, Edward O. Wilson (Debate between science and religion)
- The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion, Peter Berger

- The Sociology of Religion, Max Weber
- The End of Faith, Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason, Sam Harris
- Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer
- Remember, Be Hear Now. Ram Dos
- The Autobiography of Malcolm X. Alex Haley
- Black Elk Speaks. Diary of a Holy Man. John G Neihardt
- The Anatomy of Peace, The Arbinger Institute
- The Devil, Peter Stanford
- A History of God, Fundamentalism, Karen Armstrong
- The Great Transformation, Karen Armstrong (religious trends)
- Wherever You Go There You Are, Jon Kabat Zinn (Buddhist applications to modernity)
- Mountains and More Mountains. Dr. Paul Farmer (modern liberation theology practitioner)
- Under the Banner of Heaven, A Story of Violent Faith, John Krakauer (religious deviance)
- Galileo's Daughter, A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love, Dava Sobel
- The God Delusion, Richard Dawkins
- Beyond Good and Evil, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche
- Think on These Things, Krishnamurti
- Infidel, Ayaan Hirsi Ali
- Acts of Faith, The Story of An American Muslim. Eboo Patel
- The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation, A. L. Mauss
- Mormon America, The Power and the Promise. R. N. Ostling and J. K. Ostling
- Secret Ceremonies, Deborah Laake (Mormon experience with ostracism)
- The Crucible, Arthur Miller (Salem Witch Trials)
- Tomorrow's God: Our Greatest Spiritual Challenge. Neal D. Walsch
- The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens
- God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything, Christopher Hitchens
- Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, Steven Prothero
- In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg (Terror Management Theory)
- Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence, M. Juergensmeyer
- The Razor's Edge, Somerset Maugham (Existentialist novel)
- Siddhartha, Herman Hesse (novel based on life of Siddhartha)
- Beyond the Chains of Illusion, Eric Fromm (critique of religion)
- The Power of Now. Eckhart Tolle (New spirituality & modern world)
- Long Way Gone, Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, Ishmael Beah (Telling story of boys forced into violent soldiering)
- The Art of War, Sun Tzu (Taoist text) (classic eastern philosophy)
- God's Battalions, The Case for the Crusades, Rodney Stark
- Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved. Frans De Wall
- The World As I See It. Albert Einstein
- Conversations with God. Neal Walsch
- How to Win a Cosmic War, God, Globalization and the End of the War on Terror, Reza Aslan. (Religion and Terrorism)

- The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of The Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess. Starhawk (modern spirituality and shamanism)
- The Way of the Peaceful Warrior. Dan Millman (Buddhist coping with modernity)
- The Qur'an. Bruce Lawrence
- Seven Theories of Religion. Daniel L. Pals
- The Moral Landscape: Sam Harris
- American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon, Stephen Prothero
- Upanishads (Hindu philosophical meditations)
- Rig-Veda (Hindu hymns to Pantheon of gods)
- Quran (Koran)
- Old or New Testament, Bible
- Torah (First five books of the Bible)
- The Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith
- Wu Ching, (Confucianism, five classic works)
- Sutra Pitka (Discourse of the Buddha)
- Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse (Taoism)
- The Art of Loving, Erich Fromm (classic on living a meaningful life)
- The Art of Being, Erich Fromm (classic on living a meaningful life)
- Escape From Freedom, Erich Fromm (Critique of modernity and capitalism)
- The Happiness Hypothesis, Jonathan Haidt, (Current research on happiness)
- The Lucifer Effect: How Good People Become Evil. Philip C. Zimbardo (Role playing and cruel behavior, authority)
- Why I Am Not an Atheist: Christopher Hedges
- Siddhartha, Herman Hesse
- The Stranger, Albert Camus (Existentialism)
- The New Testament: A Bible for 21st Century Combining Traditional and Newly Discovered Texts: Hal Tausig
- On Violence, Hannah Arendt, (Classic on violence)
- On Totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt) classic
- Buddha's Brain. The Practical Neuroscience of happiness, Love, and Wisdom, Rick Hansen, Richard Mendius (Research on the efficacy of Eastern mental discipline)
- Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence. Rick Hansen, Richard Mendius (Effective cognitive discipline)
- Religion and the History of Violence, Karen Armstrong (History of religion & violence)
- The Closing of the Western Mind: The Rise of Faith and the Fall of Reason, Charles Freeman
- How the West Won: The Neglected Story of the Triumph of Modernity. Rodney Stark
- American Grace, How Religion Divides and Unites Us, Robert D. Putnam, David E. Campbell
- Answering the Call, The Doctor Who Made Africa his Life, Albert Schweitzer,
- Search for the Historical Jesus, Albert Schweitzer
- Genesis, Bill Moyers, (biblical reinterpretation)
- Fiver and the Psychology of Rabbits, Dr. Frank J. Page (a novel addressing meaning, morality, and modernity) (available at Amazon.com)

## **VIX. Suggested Videos (full length movies) (documentaries)**

- Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Spy, Assassin, (Religious leader fighting fascism) James Dassler
- A Small Thing Like This, ( Abusive Nuns, true story) Cillian Murphy
- A Boy Erased, (coerced gender therapy) Nichol Kidman, Russel Crowe
- Saint Francis: A Man of His Word (Documentary)
- Molokai, The Story of Father Damien, (Liberation theology, in practice with lepers)
- The Ten Commandments, Charlton Heston (conventional view of Old Testament)
- For The Bible Tells Me So. (Critical documentary on gay religious experience.)
- The Rapture, (fictional drama about evangelical beliefs regarding end times)
- Everyman for Himself, and God Against All, (socialization without God)
- When Nietzsche Wept, (Excellent drama/bio on Nietzsche & Freud) Armand Assante, Ben Cross)
- Religulous, Bill Maher (atheist criticism of religion)
- Elmer Gantry, Burt Lancaster (fundamentalist extremism and hegemony)
- The Black Robe, (religious / cultural imperialism)
- Gulliver's Travels, Jonathan Swift (early social criticism of religion and government)
- Galileo's Daughter, (Knowledge and conflict between religion and science)
- What the Blib Do I Know? (human nature, epistemology, spirituality)
- Jesus Camp, (documentary on aggressive evangelicals)
- 8: The Mormon Proposition. (Mormon politics)
- Mind Walk, (existential and religious views on modernity)
- The Razor's Edge, (classic on existentialism) Bill Murray
- The Mission, (religion and colonial exploitation), Robert De Niro
- Jonestown, The Life and Death of the Peoples Temple, (Doc. mass suicide)
- The Mormons PBS
- God in America. PBS
- Friendly Persuasion, Gary Cooper (Classic on Colonial American, Puritans, a study in syncretism)
- The Crucible, Arthur Miller (Salem Witch Trials)
- September Dawn, John Voight (Mountain Meadow Massacre)
- Inherit the Wind, George C. Scott, (Scopes Trial)
- Resurrection, Ellen Burstein (Gift of Healing, Faith in modern world)
- A Serious Man. Cohen Brothers (anomie and religious culture)
- Lust for Life, Kirk Douglas (Biography of Vincent Van Gogh)
- Sons of Perdition, (ex-Mormon Polygamists)
- The Examined Life. (Morality, Existentialism, Modernity)
- Martin Luther (Stacy Keach) bio-drama
- The Scarlet Letter. Colonial Puritan America
- The Magdalene Sisters (Movie based on documentary about cruel catholic work houses run by Nuns. in Ireland)
- Missionaries of Hate, (Documentary on Evangelical persecution of Gays in Uganda)
- Peaceful Warrior. (drama, fiction, Buddhism applied in modern America)
- Rabbit Proof Fence. (Religion and modernity)
- Breaking the Wave (religion, guilt, crisis of modernity)
- Fill the Void. (love and marriage in a conservative Jewish community)

- Mandela: The Long Walk to Freedom, (Bio on Nelson Mandela)
- King: From Montgomery to Memphis
- Pink Smoke Over the Vatican. (Religion and Sexism)
- Burying the Past: Legacy of the Mountain Meadow Massacre.
- A History of God. Karen Armstrong (History Channel)
- Constantine's Sword (Religious Prejudice)
- Malcom X
- Fiddler on the Roof. (Musical-Jewish life, Persecution)
- With One Voice (modern spirituality vs organized religion)
- Five Broken Cameras (Israeli / Palestinian conflict)
- The Gate Keepers (Israeli / Palestinian conflict)
- American Jesus (variations on Christianity in modern America)
- The Light in the Jungle, (docudrama and biography on Albert Schweitzer, and the hospital he built in Africa, circa 1915)
- The Longest Hatred (Anti-Semitism)
- End of Times, Left Behind (History channel)
- The World In Our Eyes (Native American Religion)
- Richard Dawkins: An Atheists call to Arms.
- Prayer In America
- Eastern Religions (survey)
- History of God, Karen Armstrong
- Inside the Great Silence (life in a monastery)
- Voodoo Rituals (documentary)
- The Four Horsemen: Hitchens, Dawkins, Dennett, Harris, (atheist dialogue)
- Sex in a Cold Climate: (Documentary on Cruel Catholic Work Houses run by Nuns in Ireland)
- Prophets Prey: (Documentary on exploitive polygamists in Utah)
- He Called Me Malala (Woman shot because she championed women's education in Pakistan)
- The Two Popes, Anthony Hopkins, Jonathan Price

## Institutional Policies & Procedures

1. ***The Americans with Disabilities Act.*** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, (801) 581-5020. CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in an alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.
2. ***Addressing Sexual Misconduct.*** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's

status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

3. ***Drop/Withdrawal.*** Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties. Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A “W” grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade “W” is not used in calculating the student’s GPA. See the [Academic Calendar](#) for the last day to withdraw from term, first and second session classes.
4. ***Plagiarism/Cheating.*** It is assumed that all work submitted to your instructor is your own work. When you have used ideas of others, you must properly indicate that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on an individual assignment, and/or failure in the course. Academic misconduct, according to the University of Utah Student Code, “*includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one’s work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information...It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.*” For detailed definitions and possible sanctions please see the **Student Code** below. <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>
5. ***Wellness Statement.*** Your personal health and wellness are essential to success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationships, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student’s ability succeed in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructor or TA before issues become problems. Additional resources can be found at [www.wellness.utah.edu](http://www.wellness.utah.edu) or 801-581-7776. If you have any type of infection, including Covid-19 or any variant, please contact me or my TA and the appropriate accommodation will be made.
6. ***Veterans Support Center.*** The Veterans Support Center is a “one stop shop” for student veterans to find services, support, advocacy, and camaraderie. They are located in the Park Building Room 201. You can visit their website for more information about their services and support at <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu>.
7. ***LGBT Resource Center.*** The University of Utah has an LGBT Resource Center on campus. They are located in Room 409 of the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. You can visit their website to find more information about the support they can offer, a list of events through the center and links to additional resources: <http://lgbt.utah.edu>.



8. ***Learners of English as an Additional/Second Language.*** If you are an English language learner, please be aware of several resources on campus that will support you with your language and writing development. These resources include: the Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.utah.edu>); the Writing Program (<http://writing-program.utah.edu>); the English Language Institute (<http://continue.utah.edu/eli>).
9. ***The University of Utah*** values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801-585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [safeu.utah.edu](http://safeu.utah.edu).
10. ***Class Rosters*** are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name as well as "Preferred first name" (if previously entered by you in the Student Profile section of your CIS account. While CIS refers to this as merely a preference, I will honor you by referring to you with the name and pronoun that feels best for you in class or on assignments.
11. If your immigration status presents obstacles to engaging in specific activities or fulfilling specific course criteria, confidential arrangements may be requested from the Dream Center, and will not jeopardize your student status, financial aid, or any other part of your residence. **The Dream Center** offers resource to support undocumented students \*with and without DACA) as well as students from mixed-status families, and can be contacted at 801-213-3697.

## 12. R-1 Statement

As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state of the art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

## 13. University Safety Statement.

The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort call campus police at 801-585-COPS, 801-585-2677. You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit [Utah.edu](http://Utah.edu).

## 14. CSBS Emergency Preparedness Information

Study the information below, making sure you know the evacuation plan for each relevant building.

# CSBS Emergency Action Plan



## **BUILDING EVACUATION**

EAP (Emergency Assembly Point) – When you receive a notification to evacuate the building either by campus text alert system or by building fire alarm, please follow your instructor in an orderly fashion to the EAP marked on the map below. Once everyone is at the EAP, you will receive further instructions from Emergency Management personnel. You can also look up the EAP for any building you may be in on campus at

<http://emergencymanagement.utah.edu/eap>

## **CAMPUS RESOURCES**

**U Heads Up App:** There's an app for that. Download the app on your smartphone at <http://alert.utah.edu/headsup> to access the following resources:



- **Emergency Response Guide:** Provides instructions on how to handle any type of emergency, such as earthquake, utility failure, fire, active shooter, etc. Flip charts with this information are also available around campus.
- **See Something, Say Something:** Report unsafe or hazardous conditions on campus if you see a life threatening or emergency situation, please call 911!
- **Safety Escorts:** For students who are on campus at night or passed business hours and would like an escort to your care, please call 801-585-2677. You can call 24/7 and a security officer will walk with you or give you a ride to your desired on-campus location.

