

SUBSTANTIVE AREA: Sociology of Religion

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OVERALL SCOPE OF AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EXAM

Students are expected to demonstrate in their exam answers familiarity with the main theoretical perspectives, central debates, and most important published empirical research in the field. In addition to whatever specific readings graduate students engage for their own personal research interests, there is a core set of readings with which sociologists of religion should be familiar in order to claim professional competence and as background to eventually teaching in the sociology of religion. The purpose of doctoral exams is to provide occasions for students to master the essential literatures of their fields of interest and research. Among the core questions in the sociology of religion—which the reading list below address in various ways and about which doctoral exams in sociology of religion will ask—are the following: 1. Subject: What is religion? Why are people religious? How is religion expressed in social terms and forms? 2. Methods: How can religion be studied sociologically? What are the strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches? What are the important issues in measuring religion? 3. Modernity: How does the historical transition from “pre-modern” to modern and postmodern society affect the strength and character of religion? Is modernity secularizing? Are there multiple modernities? What might that mean? 4. Participation and Communities: What social factors and processes influence individuals’ religious beliefs, commitments, practices, conversions, switching, etc. and the strength and character of religious communities, traditions, and subcultures? 5. Reproduction and Change: What influence does religion exert in maintaining and/or challenging established social practices and institutions? Strong exam answers contain specific arguments and references, not simply opinions and unsupported claims.

General standards for exam evaluations are as follows. *Passing* exams demonstrate (a) a breadth and depth of familiarity with the relevant literatures and their intellectual questions, theories, and debates; (b) an ability in writing to organize well the theories, issues, debates, and arguments in the field; (c) a capacity to evaluate well the intellectual and evidential merits of major positions and research programs in the field; AND (d) an ability to take a position on the issue or debate in question and make a reasoned argument drawing on relevant evidence. Exams *Passing with Distinction* demonstrate—in addition to clear evidence of all of those basic, essential qualities (a-d) of writing—(e) a distinctive voice of the author revealing a high level of insight and creativity concerning the theories, issues, debates, and arguments in the field; AND/OR (f) an extraordinary mastery of relevant literatures extending well beyond the standard reading list. In no way may (e) or (f) substitute for (a-d); these marks of distinction must add to and build upon the basic, essential qualities of (a-d). *Failing* exams do not adequately demonstrate to the committee the writing and reasoning qualities of (a-d) above.

EXAM PREPARATION

USE OF READING LISTS

The committee provides a general reading list for students interested in taking the religion exam (available from Trish Snell in the CSRS.) Students should rely on this list as a guide to some of the more important pieces of literature in the field and be able to draw upon them in their exam answers. However, students are encouraged to read and think well beyond the provided list as they prepare for their exams, simply to expand their own breadth and depth of learning. Important literature not on the reading list may certainly be discussed in exam answers but the exam will not contain questions that cannot be answered with reference to the literature on the list alone.

[NOTE: THE 2008-09 READING LIST IS PROVIDED BELOW FOR REFERENCE SAKE, BUT IT IS BEING REVISED FOR 2009-10; WHEN THE REVISIONS ON THE NEW LIST ARE COMPLETE, IT WILL BE CIRCULATED AND WILL REPLACE THE LIST BELOW.]

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED COURSES

The department offers grad seminars on the sociology of religion on a regular basis, approximately one per year. While the committee does not require that students take these courses before taking the exam, we strongly recommend doing so. The committee also recommends regular participation in RASR and relevant 1-credit workshops as a way to prepare for the exam.

EXAM FORMAT

The exam will be comprised of two, four-hour sessions with a different set of questions offered in each of the sessions. Each session requires students to answer two or three (2-3) out of two to four (2-4) possible questions. Students may be given some leeway regarding which questions to answer; however, the committee may also require students to answer certain specific questions or may require that students answer all given questions. Some questions from past exams (perhaps with modifications) may appear again on future exams. Students may submit ideas for potential new questions but will not be responsible for constructing their own exams.

EXAM SCHEDULING

Students are encouraged to prepare for the exam collaboratively, not in isolation, and to take the exam together in clusters in order to minimize the number of times per year the exam is offered. Summer exams will be given, but scheduling may be limited by faculty availability. If more than one student is taking the exam in a given semester, students will be asked to find a date/time that works for all examinees. The committee will write and offer *only one exam* per semester. If a student fails the exam, he or she must wait until the next semester before they may retake this exam.

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING CITATIONS

Students do not have to follow one specific citation format or other, but references to published works in exam answers must be clear enough about the author/publication cited to make the committee perfectly clear about to who and what publication specifically the citation is referring. The point of the exam is not to memorize bibliographies but rather to master the issues, arguments, evidence, and other matters needed to be a well-versed scholar in this field. Therefore, the reading

list will be appended to the exams to facilitate clarity of referencing and the focus of the exam will be on the accuracy, organization, and insight of the content of exam answers. Still, the committee expects to see clear and clean references to specific pieces of literature.

EXAM RESULTS

POLICIES REGARDING RE-WRITES

Students will be assigned one of three grades for their exam: pass with distinction, pass, or fail. Students will *not* be allowed to rewrite parts of their exams in order to change a failing grade to a passing one. They will, however, be encouraged to retake the area exam the next semester (or another appropriate time).

FEEDBACK

After the committee renders its decision, the student will be notified of the results by e-mail. The student will then be asked to schedule a meeting with the committee chair to discuss both strengths and weaknesses of the students' performance. This meeting will be scheduled for all students, regardless of whether they pass or fail the exam. Other committee members may provide written feedback to each student, or they may set up a separate meeting to discuss the students' exam performance. This decision will be left at the discretion of faculty on the committee.

(Attachment)

Readings for Comprehensive Exam in Sociology of Religion – Department of Sociology, University of Notre Dame (2008)

→ In addition to whatever specific readings graduate students engage for their own personal research interests, there is a core set of readings with which sociologists of religion should be familiar in order to claim professional competence and as background to eventually teaching in the sociology of religion. The purpose of doctoral exams is to provide occasions for students to master the essential literatures of their fields of interest and research. Scholars inevitably differ somewhat on exactly what literature belongs on such core lists of readings. Listed below, however, are the readings which Notre Dame graduate students will be expected to master for their doctoral comprehensive exams in the sociology of religion.

→ Among the core questions in the sociology of religion—which the readings below address in various ways and about which doctoral exams in sociology of religion will ask—are the following:

1. Subject: What is religion? Why are people religious? How is religion expressed in social terms and forms?
2. Methods: How can religion be studied sociologically? What are the strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches? What are the important issues in measuring religion?
3. Modernity: How does the historical transition from “pre-modern” to modern and postmodern society affect the strength and character of religion? Is modernity secularizing? Are there multiple modernities? What might that mean?
4. Participation and Communities: What social factors and processes influence individuals’ religious beliefs, commitments, practices, conversions, switching, etc. and the strength and character of religious communities, traditions, and subcultures?
5. Reproduction and Change: What influence does religion exert in maintaining and/or challenging established social practices and institutions?

→ Readers tackling this list as a whole are suggested to read those references marked with asterisks (**) first, followed by the remainder, taken in thematic groupings.

Ammerman, Nancy. 1997. *Congregation and Community*. Rutgers.

Ammerman, Nancy. 1997. “Golden Rule Christianity,” pp. 196-216 in David Hall (ed.), *Lived Religion in America*. Princeton.

Becker, Penny E. 1999. *Congregations in Conflict*. Cambridge.

**Bell, Daniel. 1980. “The Return of the Sacred?” *The Winding Passage*. Basic Books (Ch. 17).

- **Bellah, Robert. 1967. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus*. 96 (Winter). Pp. 1-21.
- **Bellah, Robert. 1970. "Between Religion and Social Science" and "Appendix: the Systematic Study of Religion." In Bellah, *Beyond Belief*. Harper and Row.
- Bellah, Robert et al. 1985. *Habits of the Heart*. California. (Chapters 1-6, 9-10)
- Benson, Peter, et al. 1993. "The Faith Maturity Scale." *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*. Vol. 5. Pp. 1-26.
- **Berger, Peter. 1969. *The Sacred Canopy*. Anchor.
- **Berger, Peter L. 1996. "Secularism in Retreat." *The National Interest*. (Winter).
- Beyerlein, Kraig and John R. Hipp* 2006. "From Pews to Participation: The Effect of Congregation Activity and Context on Bridging Civic Engagement.? *Social Problems*. 53(1): 97-117.
- Beyerlein, Kraig and Mark Chaves. 2003. "The Political Activities of Religious Congregations in the United States." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 42: 229-246.
- Beyerlein, Kraig and John R. Hipp. "From Pews to Participation: The Effect of Congregation Activity and Context on Bridging Civic Engagement." *Social Problems* 53 (1):97-117.
- **Bruce, Steve. 2002. *God is Dead*. New York: Blackwell.
- Burdick, John. 1993. *Looking for God in Brazil*. California.
- **Casanova, Jose. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago.
- Chaves, Mark. 2003. *Congregations in America*. Harvard.
- **Chaves, Mark. 1994. "Secularization as Declining Religious Authority." *Social Forces*. March. 72(3): 749-775.
- Chaves, Mark and Phil Gorski. 2001. "Religious Pluralism and Religious Participation." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 27: 261-281.
- Chaves, Mark and Mary Ellen Konieczny, Kraig Beyerlein, and Emily Barman. 1999. "The National Congregations Study: Background, Methods, and Selected Findings." *JSSR*. 38:4 (Dec): 458-476.
- Davidman, Lynn. 1991. *Tradition in a Rootless World*. California.
- **Davies, Grace. 1990. "Believing Without Belonging." *Social Compass*. 37: 456-69.
- **Durkheim, Emile. 1995 [1915]. Karen Fields, translator. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Free Press.
- Ebaugh, Helen Rose and Janet Chafetz. 2000. *Religion and the New Immigrants*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira. and/or R. Stephen Warner and Judith Wittner. 1998. *Gatherings in Diaspora*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- **Eisenstadt, S.E. 2000. "Multiple Modernities." *Daedalus*. Winter, 129(1): 1-29.

- Ellison, Christopher and Jeffrey Levin. 1998. "The Religion-Health Connection." *Health Education and Behavior*. 25(6): 700-720.
- Emerson, Michael & Christian Smith. 2000. *Divided by Faith*. Oxford.
- Epstein, Barbara. 1991. "The Religious Community: Mass Politics and Moral Witness." In Epstein. *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*. California. (Ch. 6).
- Euben, Roxanne. 1999. *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism: A Work of Comparative Political Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Finke, Roger. 1989. "How the Upstart Sects Won America: 1776-1850." *JSSR*. 28 (March): 27-44.
- Finke, Roger. 1990. "Religious Deregulation: Origins and Consequences." *Journal of Church and State*. 32 (Summer): 609-626.
- **Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*. Rutgers.
- **Fowler, Robert Booth. 1989. *Unconventional Partners*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Gallagher, Sally K. and Christian Smith. 1999. "Symbolic Traditionalism and Pragmatic Egalitarianism." *Gender and Society*. 13(2): 211-233.
- **Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Religion as a Cultural System." in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.
- Gorski, Phillip. 2000. "Historicizing the Secularization Debate." *ASR*. 65:1 (February): 138-167.
- Gorski, Phillip. 2003. *The Disciplinary Revolution*. Chicago: Chicago.
- **Greeley, Andrew. 1972. *Unsecular Man*. Dell Publishing. Pp. 17-83.
- Greeley, Andrew. 1989. *Religious Change in America*. Harvard.
- Hadaway, Kirk, Penny Long Marler, and Mark Chaves. 1993. "What the Polls Don't Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance." *ASR*. 58: 741-52. (Also see follow-up symposium in *ASR*, 63(1), Feb 1998).
- Hatch, Nathan. 1989. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven: Yale. (Chs. 1-3, 8).
- Hill, Peter & Ralph Wood (eds.). 1999. *Measures of Religiosity*. Birmingham: Religious Education Press (for general reference on measurement).
- Hart, Stephen. 1996. *What Does the Lord Require?* Rutgers.
- Hoge, Dean, Benton Johnson, and Donald A. Luidens. 1994. *Vanishing Boundaries*. W/JK Press.
- Hunter, James. 1983. *American Evangelicalism*. Rutgers (pp. 3-19, 49-101).
- Hunter, James. 1987. *Evangelicalism—the Coming Generation*. Chicago.

- **Hunter, James. 1983. "The New Religions: Demoderization and the Protest Against Modernity." In Bryan Wilson (ed.). *The Social Impact of New Religious Movements*. Rose of Sharon Press. Pp. 1-19.
- Hunter, James. 1991. *Culture Wars*. Basic Books. (pp. 31-51).
- **Iannaccone, Laurence. 1994. "Why Strict Churches are Strong." *AJS*. 99(5): 1180-1211.
- Iannaccone, Laurence. 1990. "Religious Practice: A Human Capital Approach." *JSSR*. 29 (September): 297-314.
- Jenkins, Philip. 2002. *The Next Christendom*. Oxford.
- Kelley, Dean. 1972. *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. Harper & Row.
- Lechner, Frank. 1991. "The Case Against Secularization: A Rebuttal." *Social Forces* 69 (June): 1103-19.
- Lofland, John and Rodney Stark. 1965. "Becoming a World-Saver: a Theory of Conversion." *American Sociological Review*. 30: 862-875.
- **Luckman, Thomas. 1967. *The Invisible Religion*. Macmillan.
- Mahmood, Saba. 2005. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press.
- Martin, David. 1978. *A General Theory of Secularization*. New York: Blackwell. Pp. 1-99.
- Martin, David, 2005, *On Secularization: Toward a Revised General Theory*. Burlington (VT): Ashgate (Intro, Chapter 9).
- Marwell, Gerald. 1996. "We Still Don't Know if Strict Churches are Strong, Much Less Why." *AJS*. 101(4). January: 1097-1104.
- **Marx, Karl. "Theses on Feuerbach." "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction." "The German Ideology: Part I" (up to A2). In Robert Tucker (ed.). 1978. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Norton.
- McNamara, Patrick. 1992. *Conscience First, Tradition Second*. SUNY (pp. 1-47).
- Nelson, Timothy. 1996. "Sacrifice of Praise: Emotion and Collective Participation in an African-American Worship Service." *Sociology of Religion*. 57(4): 379-96.
- **Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular*. Cambridge: Cambridge.
- Pattillo-McCoy, Mary. 1998. "Black Church Culture as a Community Strategy of Action," *ASR*. 63:6 (December): 767-784.
- Pope, Liston. 1942. *Millhands and Preachers*. Yale. (Chs. 5, 8-10, 14).
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone*. Simon and Schuster. (Ch. 4).
- Roof, Wade Clark. 1999. *Spiritual Marketplace*. Princeton.

- Sherkat, Darren. 1999. "Tracking the 'Other': Dynamics and Composition of 'Other' Religions in the General Social Survey, 1973-1996." *JSSR*. 38:4 (Dec): 551-560.
- Sherkat, Darren and Christopher Ellison. 1999. "Recent Developments and Current Controversies in the Sociology of Religion." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 25: 363-94.
- Slade, Stanley. 1994. "Popular Spirituality as an Oppressive Reality." In Guillermo Cook (ed.). *New Face of the Church in Latin America*. Orbis Books.
- **Smith, Jonathan. 1998. "Religion, Religions, Religious." In Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Chicago (pp. 269-84).
- Smith, Christian. 1991. *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*. Chicago.
- Smith, Christian. 1996. *Resisting Reagan*. Chicago. (pp. xv-86, skim 87-132, read 133-208).
- Smith, Christian (ed.). 1996. *Disruptive Religion*. Routledge. (Introduction and assorted chapters)
- **Smith, Christian et al. 1998. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago.
- **Smith, Christian. 2003. *Moral Believing Animals*. Oxford.
- Smith, Christian (ed.). 2003. *The Secular Revolution*. California. (Introduction and select chapters)
- Smith, Christian. 2005. *Soul Searching*. New York: Oxford.
- Smith, Christian. 2003. "Theorizing Religious Effects among American Adolescents." *JSSR*. 42(1): 17-30.
- Snow, David A., and Richard Machalek. 1982. "On the Presumed Fragility of Unconventional Beliefs." *JSSR*. 21 (March): 15-26.
- Stark, Rodney. 1997. *The Rise of Christianity*. Harper San Francisco.
- Stark, Rodney. 2003. *For the Glory of God*. Princeton.
- **Stark, Rodney & Roger Finke. 2000. *Acts of Faith*. California.
- Stark, Rodney and Laurence Iannaccone. 1994. "A Supply-side Reinterpretation of the 'Secularization' of Europe." *JSSR*. 33:3 (Sept): 230-253.
- Steensland, Brian, et al. 2000. "The Measure of American Religion: Toward Improving the State of the Art." *Social Forces*. 79. (September): 291-318.
- Thompson, E.P. 1966. *The Making of the English Working Class*. Vintage (Esp. Chs. 11, 12).
- **Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1969. *Democracy in America*. Doubleday (Pp. 277-301, 441-454).
- Walzer, Michael. 1965. *The Revolution of the Saints*. Harvard. (Pp. 1-65).
- **Warner, Stephen. 1993. "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *AJS*. 98:5 (March): 1044-93.

**Weber, Max. [1958]. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Scribners.

Weber, Max. [1978]. *Economy and Society*. California (pp. 3-33, 399-602).

Weber, Max. "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," and "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Direction." In Gerth and Mills (eds.). 1946. *From Max Weber*. Oxford. Pp. 267-359.

**Wilson, Bryan. 1979. *Contemporary Transformations of Religion*. Oxford. (Ch 1)

Wolfe, Alan. 2003. *The Transformation of American Religion*. New York: Free Press.

Wood, Richard. 2002. *Faith in Action*. Chicago.

Woodberry, Robert and Christian Smith. 1998. "Fundamentalists, et al." *Annual Review of Sociology—1998*. Vol. 24. Annual Reviews. pp. 25-56.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1994. *Producing the Sacred*. Illinois.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1998. *After Heaven*. California.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1988. *The Restructuring of American Religion*. Princeton.

Young, Michael. 2006. *Bearing Witness Against Sin*. Chicago: Chicago.

→ In addition, Notre Dame Sociology graduate students may also propose other readings that reflect their specific research interests in sub-fields (e.g., religion and gender; peace, violence, and terrorism; religion and politics; religious conversion; new religious movements; etc.) and about which they might be questioned on their doctoral comprehensive exams.

→ Finally, Note these Minimal Related Theory-of-Culture Readings that Sociologists of Religion Ideally Should Know But are Not Formally Required to Know for the ND Doctoral Exam:

Alexander, Jeffrey. 1990. "Analytic Debates." Pp. 1-27 in Alexander and Seidman (eds.), *Culture and Society: Contemporary Debates*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

Bonnell, Victoria and Lynn Hunt (eds.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn*. Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. 35-61).

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. "Structure, Habitus and Power: Basis for a Theory of Symbolic Power." Ch 4, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books (pp. 3-30).

Hechter, Michael. 1993. "Should Norms be Written out of the Sociological Lexicon?" *Sociological Theory*. 10:2 (Fall): 214-230.

Sahlins, Marshal. 1976. *Culture and Practical Reason*. Chicago Press (pp. vii-x, 166-204).

Sewell, William. 1992. "A Theory of Structure." *American Journal of Sociology*. 98:1 (July).

Smith, Philip. 2001. *Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. Blackwell. [best introductory overview of culture theory available]

Swartz, David. 1997. *Culture and Power*. Chicago: Chicago. (Chs. 1-6, 9).

Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review*. 51: 273-286.

Williams, Raymond. 1983. "Culture." *Keywords*. Oxford: Oxford. (pp. 87-93).

Wuthnow, Robert. 1987. *Meaning and Moral Order*. Berkeley: California. (Chs. 1-3, 5, 9-10)