

Sociology 431: Sociology of Religion
Fall 2016

Instructor: James J. Preston
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Prerequisites: None

General Education: Upper division Category C2 (Humanities: Literature, Philosophies, Values)

Course Description: This course examines religious institutions, beliefs and practices from a sociological perspective. Special attention will be given to the role of symbolism and the religious imagination in a variety of major world religions, including unique sects and denominations in American religious traditions. Some of the significant topics to be covered will include studies of religious ritual, sacrifice, miracle traditions, healing, pilgrimage, saints and religious protest movements. Religious institutions will be examined in terms of their contributions to processes of socialization, social change and community building. Attention will be given to problems of secularization, the effects of globalization on religious institutions and the increasing rise of New Religious Movements. Students will have a chance to explore a variety of religious traditions through participation, guest presentations and readings.

Required Texts: Books will be available at North Light Books in Cotati.

Anticipated Course Assignments:

Assignment Grade Weight (approx.)

Midterm Exam 30%

Project 20%

Team Presentation 10%

Final Exam 30%

Participation 10%

All information subject to change.