

**Sociology of Religion**

Code: 101133  
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500262 Sociology	OB	3	1

**Contact**

Name: Avi Astor  
Email: Avi.Astor@uab.cat

**Use of Languages**

Principal working language: spanish (spa)  
Some groups entirely in English: No  
Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes  
Some groups entirely in Spanish: Yes

**Other comments on languages**

It is possible to complete course assignments in Spanish, Catalan, or English.

**Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Objectives and Contextualisation**

The objective of this subject is to offer an overview of the sociology of religion. The aim is to familiarize students with the main sociological debates around religion and to provide them with the methodological tools necessary for studying religious phenomena empirically.

With these objectives in mind, the subject is divided into two main parts:

A) The first block is called "The sociological view on religion: theoretical, methodological and conceptual introduction" and focuses on offering a conceptual introduction to the discipline and on offering tools for the empirical study of religion.

B) The second block is entitled "Conceiving religion in a global world: contemporary debates". It is structured around five current research topics in the sociology of religion. The aim is to understand the genesis, characteristics and implications of contemporary global religious transformations.

**Competences**

- Analysing the problems arising from the implementation of public policies and conflict situations by recognising the complexity of the social phenomena and political decisions affecting democracy, human rights, social justice and sustainable development.
- Applying the concepts and approaches of the sociological theory, specially the explanations of social inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups, to the implementation of public policies and to the resolution of conflict situations.
- Assessing the contributions of sociological approaches to the study of culture, education, interaction between society and environment, social policy, and work.

- Demonstrating a comprehension of the approaches of the sociological theory in its different aspects, interpretations and historical context.
- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

## Learning Outcomes

1. Comparing the different theoretical approaches about culture.
2. Comparing the reading of cultural phenomena from several ideologies of the social reality of Spain and Catalonia.
3. Defining the sociological concepts that interpret the cultural phenomena.
4. Defining the underlying social phenomena of cultural policies and conflicts.
5. Developing self-learning strategies.
6. Distinguishing the explanations of cultural inequalities between classes, between genders and between ethnic groups that these actors take for granted.
7. Distinguishing the sociological concepts about culture adopted by the actors involved in these policies and conflicts.
8. Distinguishing the sociological concepts, as well as the methods and techniques of social investigation commonly used to analyse culture.
9. Distinguishing the underlying cultural phenomena of specific policies or conflicts.
10. Explaining the social interpretations of culture according to these approaches.
11. Expressing the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to culture.
12. Relating the concepts, methods and techniques used to analyse culture with general theoretical and methodological debates.
13. Relating the debates regarding these approaches, that refer to culture, with the historical context in which they emerged.
14. Relating the explanations of cultural inequalities with general theoretical and methodological debates.
15. Relating the theoretical approaches with debates about social order and action.
16. Respecting the diversity and plurality of ideas, people and situations.
17. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.

## Content

Part A. "The sociological view on religion: theoretical, methodological and conceptual introduction"

- a.1. What do we mean when we talk about religion? Conceptual clarifications
- a.2. The sociological perspective in the analysis of religious phenomena: Gods as creators of people and people as creators of Gods
- a.3. Classical views on the sociology of religion: death, opium of the masses, and neurosis
- a.4. Studying religion empirically: epistemology, ethnography and context

Part B. "Conceiving religion in a global world: contemporary debates"

- b.1. Modernity and secularization: a chronicle of a complex relationship
- b.2. Globalization and religious fundamentalism
- b.3. Spirituality, transcendence and body: the search for meaning
- b.4. Migration and religious diversity: coexistence, conflict and accommodation

b.5. Gender and religion: empirical, legal and political implications

b.6. Religion in the public sphere: rights, freedoms and dilemmas

## Methodology

The subject is organized around three activities:

- a) Lectures that outline the main approach to the subject
- b) "Practical classes" where readings are discussed and / or joint work is carried out around specific issues
- c) The students carry out an ethnographic work that the teacher supervises during student meetings and during designated class times

## Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	35	1.4	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
Type: Supervised			
Empirical project and essay on readings	20	0.8	1, 3, 11, 13
Type: Autonomous			
Assignments	45	1.8	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 12, 13, 15, 14

## Assessment

The subject will be evaluated on the basis of three types of exercises:

- 1) An exam or final test in which students must demonstrate that they have correctly understood the main contents of the program, and that they are able to argue theoretical positions in a rigorous way. The exam will count for 40% of the final grade.
- 2) An empirical project that with an ethnographic component that will focus on a religious community. The work will be done in groups of 2-3 people and will have a value of 40% of the final grade.
- 3) Students should choose a text, read it in its entirety, and write a short essay of 1,500-2,000 words. The essay will be presented and discussed briefly in class. Students may write about unassigned texts, but the consent of the teacher must be obtained. This assignment will be worth 20% of the final grade.

In addition, it is important to consider the following issues:

- Students who have not completed the course assignments will receive a grade of "No Present"
- Students will have the chance to take a 'recovery' exam for the final exam but not other course assignments.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to use the work of others as if it were your own. When using books, articles, websites or any other material, it is mandatory to reference the original work, clearly indicating within the text which references correspond to which phrases or sentences. When quoting a text word by word, it is essential to put the

fragment quoted in quotation marks. Plagiarism is a serious infraction, equivalent to copying on an exam. It will result in a grade of zero.

For more information on plagiarism, you can look at the guide on "How to quote and how to avoid plagiarism": <http://blogs.uab.cat/suportcampus/files/2018/03/Alumnat.-Citar-per-a-Avoid-the-Plagi.pdf>.

## Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Class reading and participation	40	10	0.4	3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 17, 12, 13, 16
Empirical project	20	30	1.2	2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16
Final exam	40	10	0.4	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 12, 13, 15, 14

## Bibliography

### General bibliography

- Ardèvol Piera, E, and Munilla, Glòria, eds., *Antropología de La Religión. Una Aproximación Interdisciplinar a Las Religiones Antiguas y Contemporáneas* (Barcelona: UOC, 2003)
- Asad, Talal, et al. *Is critique secular?: blasphemy, injury, and free speech*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Beckford, J. A., *Theorising Religion: Classical and Contemporary Debates* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2006)
- Beckford, J. A., *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- Berger, P. L. *El dosel sagrado: para una teoría sociológica de la religión*. (Barcelona: Editorial Kairós, 1999).
- Berger, P.L. *Para una teoría sociológica de la religión*. (Barcelona: Kairós, (1971 [1967])).
- Berger, P. *Una gloria lejana: La búsqueda de la fe en época de credulidad*. (Barcelona: Herder, (1994 [1992])).
- Berger, P. L., *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999)
- Berger, P., and T. Luckmann, *La Construcció Social de La Realitat* (Barcelona: Herder, 1996)
- Berger, P., G. Davie, and E. Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe?: A Theme and Variations* (London: Ashgate Pub Co, 2008)
- Berger, P. *El Pluralismo y la Dialéctica de la Incertidumbre*. (Estudios Públicos, 67, 1997).
- Beckford, J. A. *Social Theory and Religion*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- Casanova, J. *Public religions in the modern world*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- Cantón Delgado, Manuela, *Bautizados En Fuego: Protestantes, Discursos de Conversión y Política En Guatemala (1989-1993)*. (Guatemala: Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, 1998).
- Cantón Delgado, Manuela, *La Razón Hechizada*. (Ariel, Barcelona, 2001).
- Davie, Grace, *Europe: The Exceptional Case*. London: Darton (Longman & Todd, 2002)
- Davie, Grace, *Sociología de La Religión* (Madrid: Akal, 2011)
- Delgado Ruiz, M. *La ira sagrada: anticlericalismo, iconoclastia y antiritualismo en la España contemporánea*. (RBA: Barcelona, 1992)
- Eliade, Mircea (1996). *Lo sagrado y lo profano*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- Estruch, Joan, *L'Opus Dei i Les Seves Paradoxes*. (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1993)
- Estruch, Joan, Joan Gomez, Maria del Mar Giera, i Agustí. Iglesias, *Les Altres Religions. Minories Religioses a Catalunya*. (Barcelona: Mediterrània, 2004)
- Estruch, Joan. *Entendre les religions. Una perspectiva sociològica*. (Barcelona: Mediterrània, 2015).
- Giera, M. i Urgell, F. *Consumiendo Religión*. (Barcelona: La Caixa, 2003).
- Hervieu-Léger, D. *La religión, hilo de memoria*. (Barcelona: Herder, 2005).
- Luckmann, T. *The invisible religion: The problem of religion in modern society*. (Macmillan New York, 1967).

- Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject*. Princeton University Press, 2011.
- Prat, J. *El estigma del extraño*. (Barcelona: Ariel, 1997).
- Roy, O. *La santa ignorancia* (Barcelona: Península, 2010).
- Weber, Max, *Ensayos Sobre Sociología de La Religión*. (Madrid: Taurus, 1987).

## **Pàgines web d'interès**

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>
- <http://www.thearda.com/> (theassociation of religious data archives)
- <http://www.kent.ac.uk/religionmethods/index.html>
- <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/sociology/disciplineresources.html>
- <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/>