UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Sociology of Religion

Code: 101133
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Sociology	OB	3

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this document.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with major sociological debates around religion and to provide them with a qualitative methodological foundation for studying religious phenomena empirically. The course surveys classical approaches to studying religion from a sociological perspective, critically examines theories of secularization, and explores a range of sub-topics currently of interest in the field, including religious diversity, religion and nationalism, globalization and religious fundamentalism, conversion, and new age spiritualities. It also includes seminars dedicated to ethnographic methods, and qualitative research more generally.

The course is divided into three main sections:

1. "SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION: A CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION." This section introduces students to sociological approaches to studying religion and clarifies the differences between sociology and theology. The focus is primarily on the classics (e.g., Marx, Weber, and Durkheim), and the ongoing relevance of their ideas to contemporary dynamics surrounding religion.

2. "MODERNIZATION AND SECULARIZATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS." In this section, we examine theories of secularization, as well as various extensions and criticisms of such theories.

3. "GLOBALIZATION, PLURALISM, AND RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION." This section is structured around several current research topics in the sociology of religion related to globalization, pluralism, and religious transformation, including conversion, religious fundamentalism, the governance of religious diversity, 'lived religion', and new age spiritualities.

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: SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON RELIGION: A CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

A.1. Course introduction: How do you study religion from a sociological perspective?

A.2. Classical views on religion: Marx

A.3. Classical views on religion: Weber

A.4. Classical views on religion: Durkheim

PART B: MODERNIZATION AND SECULARIZATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

B.1. Theories of secularization

B.2. Multiple secularities

B.3. Secularization in Spain and Catalonia

PART C: GLOBALIZATION, PLURALISM, AND RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

C.1. Lived religion

C.2. Globalization and religious fundamentalism

C.3. Religious pluralism

C.4. Religion and the far right

C.5. Cultural religion

C.6. Religious sects

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	35	1.4	1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
Type: Supervised			
Oral group presentation	10	0.4	1, 3, 11, 13
Type: Autonomous			
Assignments	55	2.2	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 17, 12, 13, 15, 14

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 prepare and deliver an oral group presentation that the professor supervises during office hours and during designated class times

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final exam	40%	15	0.6	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 7, 9, 10, 11, 17, 12, 13, 15, 14
Mid-term exam	40%	15	0.6	1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 17, 12, 13, 14
Oral group presentation	20%	20	0.8	1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 14, 16

The subject will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

1) Oral group presentation (20%): The presentation will be prepared and delivered by groups of 3-4 students on a subject related to the class.

2) Mid-term exam (40%): The exam will consist of several short essays on topics to be specified during the course. Students ust demonstrate that they have correctly understood the main contents of the first half of the course, and that they are able to argue theoretical positions in a rigorous way.

3) Final exam (40%): The exam will consist of several short essays on topics to be specified during the course. Students must demonstrate that they have correctly understood the main contents of the entire course, and that they can engage critically and creatively with lectures and assigned readings.

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

- Students who have not completed the course assignments or taken the tests will receive a grade of "not evaluable."

- If a student does not pass, there is the possibility of a 'retake' exam. To participate in the retake exam, students must have been previously assessed in a set of activities whose evaluation comprises a minimum of two thirds of the total grade of the course. Students must also have obtained a minimum grade of 3,5. If a students takes the retake exam, the maximum possible grade for the course is a 5,0.

Single evaluation

For those who choose to undergo a single assessment, it will consist of a comprehensive exam of greater length comprising essays on material from the entire class.

The revision of the final grade follows thesame procedure as for the continuous evaluation, and the recovery exam will be the same.

Artificial Intelligence policy

For this subject, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively in support tasks, such as bibliographic or information searches, text correction or translations. The student must clearly identify which parts have been generated with this technology, specify the tools used and include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and the final result of the activity. A lack of transparency in the use of AI for class activities will be considered a lack of academic honesty and may lead to a partial or total reduction in the grade of the activity, or to greater sanctions in serious cases.

Plagiarism and other irregularities

Plagiarismis 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 indicatingwithin the text which references correspond to which phrases orsentences. 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. In accordance with academic regulations, any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade of an evaluated activity will result in a grade of 0. In the event that several irregularities occur in evaluated activities for the same course, the final grade for this course will be 0.

For more information on plagiarism, see the guide on "How to cite and how to avoid plagiarism": <https://www.uab.cat/doc/GuiaCitesiPlagiEstudiants>. See also: <https://www.uab.cat/web/study-and-research/how-to-cite-and-create-your-bibliography-1345738248581.html>.

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Software

This subject does not require use of specific software.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(SEM) Seminars	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed
(SEM) Seminars	51	Catalan/Spanish	first semester	afternoon
(TE) Theory	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	51	Catalan/Spanish	first semester	afternoon