

# SOCIOLOGY / WORLD RELIGIONS

“This excellent collection provides an analytical framework for understanding religion and an overview of important, contemporary topics. Unique in its dual focus on religion as a ground of agency and a source of social control, it is perfect for my Religion in Public Life course and similar undergraduate classes.”

—Penny Edgell, Sociology, *University of Minnesota*

“Wilcox’s approach to contemporary religion masterfully combines breadth of coverage with in-depth analysis. This volume underscores the lively debates that characterize scholarship on the subject. Wilcox is a thoughtful and learned guide through the landscape of contemporary religion.”

—John P. Bartkowski, Sociology, *University of Texas at San Antonio*

“This is an exciting textbook that will help students engage in a range of conversations related to religion in the contemporary world. I strongly recommend it.”

—Wendy Cadge, Sociology, *Brandeis University*

“Thanks to Wilcox’s meticulous organisation, this is an exquisitely-crafted volume. Presenting over 30 classical and contemporary key readings across five important themes, with each theme elegantly framed by Wilcox’s own insightful, lucid, and highly-accessible commentary, this volume provides a systematic and perfectly-pitched guide for the theoretical and empirical exploration of religion in today’s world. I strongly recommend it as essential reading for undergraduates.”

—Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip, Sociology, *University of Nottingham*

“Wilcox’s reader is a welcome addition to a field often criticized for its North American parochialism. Cosmopolitan in focus, it offers a global introduction to the sociology of religion. Exploring the religious dimensions of political violence, sexuality, and social change, it is as relevant as tomorrow’s front page.”

—John Schmalzbauer, Religious Studies, *Missouri State University*

“With this volume, Melissa Wilcox succeeds in giving us a college reader that provides variety, nuance, and sophistication to our understanding of religion. Readings—both classic and contemporary—expose students to a broad range of styles and substantive themes. These smart selections are inherently flexible to suit the curriculum of all social scientists of religion. As a bonus, Wilcox’s introductory essays are thoughtful and useful, accentuating key theorists and ideas to further help beginning students. Altogether a well-constructed text for helping us expand the sophistication of our students.”

—Gerardo Marti, Sociology, *Davidson College*

The importance of religion and religious issues in today’s world is undeniable. Yet sociology of religion as it is conventionally taught in most undergraduate curricula does not reach a broad, lower division student population. Often, the sociology of religion course is taught more as an “ivory tower subject” than as a contemporary, “issues-oriented” subject. With the publication of this new, innovative text/reader, instructors are given a text that accomplishes two important goals:

- first, an analytically rigorous presentation;
- and second, thanks to the five unique foundational essays connected to 32 adapted readings, that allows instructors to involve their undergraduate students in the broad debates and issues that will equip them to analyze, discuss, and make their own judgments about religion/society long after they move on from the course.

**Melissa M. Wilcox** is Associate Professor and Chair of Religion, and Director of Gender Studies at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. She has been teaching courses on the sociology of religion for over ten years, and is the author or co-editor of three other books focusing on religion, sexuality, and gender.