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Section I What is Religion? 1

ESSAY: "TILTING AT WINDMILLS: DEFINING AND PREDICTING RELIGION"

Readings:

Defining Religion 17

1. Asad, Talal. 1993. "The Construction of Religion as an Anthropological Category." From *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, 27–54. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 17
This classic essay challenges Clifford Geertz's famous definition of religion, and suggests that the concept of religion itself may be a social construct that is fundamentally shaped by Western, Christian assumptions.
2. McGuire, Meredith B. 2008. "Contested Meanings and Definitional Boundaries: Historicizing the Sociology of Religion." From *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, 19–44. New York: Oxford University Press. 35
This essay recounts some of the history of the concept of religion, and argues that sociologists should be paying greater attention to the concept of lived religion rather than focusing primarily on official religions.

Imagining Religion's Future 56

3. Berger, Peter L. 1967. Selections from *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, 106–111, 125–128. Garden City: Doubleday. 56
These selections from Berger's classic book present the secularization thesis that was dominant in the sociology of religion throughout much of the twentieth century.
4. Warner, R. Stephen. 1993. Selections from "Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States." *American Journal of Sociology* 98(5): 1044–1046, 1074–1093. 61
Warner's classic "new paradigm" essay describes a movement away from secularization theory among some sociologists of religion. Warner suggests that a "new paradigm" of religious change is growing in the field.
5. Berger, Peter L. 1999. "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview." In *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger, 1–18. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans. 68

As if in reply to Warner's essay, Berger began in the 1990s to openly renounce his allegiance to secularization theory. This essay offers a clear explanation of his decision.

6. Bruce, Steve. 2001. "The Curious Case of the Unnecessary Recantation: Berger and Secularization." In *Peter Berger and the Study of Religion*, ed. Linda Woodhead, 87–100. New York: Routledge 79
Not all sociologists of religion have taken on Warner's new paradigm. Some, particularly in Europe, continue to believe that European societies are becoming permanently secular. Steve Bruce is an important proponent of secularization theory, and in this essay he lays out his support for the theory, countering Berger's arguments against it.
7. Heelas, Paul and Linda Woodhead. 2005. Selections from "Bringing the Sacred to Life: Explaining Sacralization and Secularization." From *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, 77–82, 94–110, 123–128. London: Blackwell. 90
Heelas and Woodhead offer another perspective on religious change in Europe, suggesting that there has been a shift from "life-as religion," or ascribed and dogmatic religion, to "subjective-life spirituality," or a more personalized, negotiated form of religious belief and practice.

Section II Religion and Social Institutions 111

ESSAY: "RELIGION, STATE, AND NATION"

Readings:

Religion, State, and Law 125

8. Ashiwa, Yoshiko. 2009. "Positioning Religion in Modernity: State and Buddhism in China." In *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, ed. Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank, 43–70. 125
Ashiwa's article traces the complicated relationship between Buddhism and the Chinese state over the course of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first.
9. Hann, Chris and Mathijs Pelkmans. 2009. "Realigning Religion and Power in Central Asia: Islam, Nation-State and (Post)Socialism." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61(9): 1517–1541. 146
Hann and Pelkmans' study of Islam in several central Asian states dovetails nicely with Ashiwa's piece, offering not only a perspective on the role of religion in two former Soviet republics but also an analysis of the relationship between Muslims in Western China and the Chinese state.

Religion and the Nation 165

10. Bellah, Robert N. 1967. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus* 96(1): 1–21. 165
Bellah's classic essay on civil religion sparked the interest and curiosity of many scholars of religion. Written during the U.S. war in Vietnam, this piece concludes with a consideration of the U.S. culture's response to what Bellah calls a "third time of trial."
11. Long, Charles H. 1995. "Civil Rights–Civil Religion: Visible People and Invisible People." From *Significations: Signs, Symbols, and Images in the Interpretation of Religion*, 161–168, 170. Aurora: The Davies Group. 179
Just as many scholars of religion have found the concept of civil religion helpful in pondering the relationship between religion and the nation, so too others have leveled powerful critiques against the concept. In this essay, Charles Long asks who is actually included in the civil religion of a country built on the backs of slaves.

12. Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2008. "The Militant Christian Right in the United States." From *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State, from Christian Militias to al Qaeda*, 182–192. Berkeley: University of California Press. 185
Nationalism can take many forms, and one of those forms believes in the necessity of a theocratic future for the United States. Juergensmeyer's study introduces the reader to some of these movements.
13. Skya, Walter A. 2009. Selections from *Japan's Holy War: The Ideology of Radical Shintō Ultrnationalism*, 297–328. Durham: Duke University Press. 194
Skya explores the connections between religion and nationalism in early twentieth-century Japan, up to and including World War II. Though he does not mention civil religion, his analysis bears a striking resemblance to Bellah's concept, raising the possibility that civil religion can be just as dangerous as, to Bellah, it is powerful.

Section III Religion and Social Power

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ESSAY: "RELIGION, OPPRESSION, AND RESISTANCE"

Readings:

Theorizing Religion and Power

231

14. Marx, Karl. [1844] 1986. Introduction to the *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*. Reprinted in *Karl Marx: A Reader*, ed. Jon Elster, 301–302. New York: Cambridge University Press. 231
This selection is Marx's classic statement on religion—required reading for anyone seeking to understand the connections between religion and social power.
15. Du Bois, W.E.B. [1903] 1995. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" and "Of the Faith of the Fathers." From *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Randal Kenan, 43–53, 210–225. New York: Signet Classics. 233
An early sociologist with a strong interest in Black cultures in the United States, Du Bois offers a perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of religion in resisting the powerful forces of slavery and racism.
16. Medina, Lara. 2006. "Nepantla Spirituality: Negotiating Multiple Religious Identities among U.S. Latinas." In *Rethinking Latino(a) Religion and Identity*, ed. Miguel A. de la Torre and Gastón Espinosa, 248–266. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press. 245
The Nahuatl word nepantla refers to a middle space. Medina uses this concept to theorize the lived religions of Latinas and their ancestors, blended religions that often exist en nepantla, or in the middle, between at least two official, or established, religions.

Enacting Religion and Power

256

17. McCarthy Brown, Karen. 1991. Selections from *Mama Lola: A Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn*, 109–133. Berkeley: University of California Press. 256
This selection from Brown's classic study of Vodou examines the ways in which Vodou practice and beliefs affect a Haitian-American family's dealings with the racism and xenophobia of the state.
18. Mahmood, Saba. 2005. "Agency, Gender, and Embodiment." From *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 153–188. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 271
Mahmood's excellent study of conservative Muslim women in Egypt led her to question Western feminist ideas about agency and women's oppression. In this selection, she explores how the women with whom she worked laid claim to authority and navigated the complex networks of power within Egypt at the end of the twentieth century.

19. Yip, Andrew K.T. 2005. "Queering Religious Texts: An Exploration of British Non-heterosexual Christians' and Muslims' Strategy of Constructing Sexuality-affirming Hermeneutics." *Sociology* 39(1): 47–65. 297
This article offers readers a study of how British gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals negotiate with religious traditions often deemed homophobic, in order to create space for themselves within those traditions.
20. Dzmura, Noach. 2010. "Intersexed Bodies in Mishnah: A Translation and an Activist's Reading of Mishnah Androgynos" and "An Ancient Strategy for Managing Gender Ambiguity." In *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in the Jewish Community*, ed. Noach Dzmura, 163–166, 170–181. Berkeley: North Atlantic Books. 309
Dzmura's essay complements Yip's article, in that Dzmura demonstrates some of the strategies described by Yip. Drawing from the tradition of rabbinic commentary in Judaism, Dzmura argues that the Jewish tradition has both space and resources for the inclusion of transgender people.

Section IV Religion and Social Movements 319

ESSAY: "CHANGING RELIGIONS, CHANGING WORLDS"

Readings:

Religion in Social Movements 333

21. Jeung, Russell. 2007. "Faith-Based, Multiethnic Tenant Organizing: The Oak Park Story." In *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*, ed. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, 59–73. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press. 333
Jeung bases his article on a lengthy study conducted while he was living in sub-standard housing in the San Francisco area. A scholar-activist, Jeung played a role in assisting his largely immigrant neighbors in their successful legal battle against their landlord for better living conditions. The article focuses on the role of religion in organizing for social justice.
22. Campbell, David C. and Carin Robinson. 2007. "Religious Coalitions for and Against Gay Marriage: The Culture War Rages On." In *The Politics of Same-Sex Marriage*, ed. Craig A. Rimmerman and Clyde Wilcox, 131–154. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 345
Many people in the United States and elsewhere believe that the only role religion plays in debates over same-sex marriage is a conservative one, seeking to maintain the status quo and working against efforts to legalize same-sex marriage. However, Campbell and Robinson demonstrate that, as with many social issues, religious groups have coalesced on all sides of the same-sex marriage debates.
23. Smith, Lisa Ann and Lori G. Beaman. 2010. "Displacing Religion, Disarming Law: Situating Quaker Spirituality in the 'Trident Three' Case." *Social Compass* 57(4): 503–520. 360
The "Trident Three" peace activists significantly damaged a submarine control center in Scotland, bringing a sizeable number of Britain's nuclear weapons offline. Smith and Beaman discuss the roles that religion played in the activists' motivation and in the subsequent trial.

Religions as Social Movements**374**

24. Shaffir, William. 1995. "When Prophecy is Not Validated: Explaining the Unexpected in a Messianic Campaign." *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 37(2): 119–136. 374
Shaffir's study focuses on Hasidic Judaism—a pietistic, ultra-Orthodox movement that believed its chief rabbi to be the Messiah—and considers how the movement reacted to the rabbi's death. In the process of considering these events, Shaffir revisits Leon Festinger's mid-twentieth century work on the failure of prophecy.
25. Urban, Hugh B. 2006. "The Age of Satan: Satanic Sex and the Black Mass, from Fantasy to Reality." From *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*, 191–221. Berkeley: University of California Press. 387
There is perhaps no better example of the power of stereotypes than that of the new religious movement known as the Church of Satan. Beseiged—sometimes to followers' dismay, sometimes to their delight—by images of Satanists as rapists, animal torturers, and child molesters, the Church of Satan is in reality an anti-religion hedonist group that has more in common with Nietzsche than with the serial killers that fill horror movies. In this selection, Urban traces the history and development of this much-maligned group.

Section V Religion, Local and Global**409**

ESSAY: "LOCAL AND GLOBAL: BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES"

Readings:**Religion, Immigration, and Transnationalism****421**

26. Levitt, Peggy. 2007. "A New Religious Architecture." From *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape*, 113–135. New York: The New Press. 421
Drawn from a larger study of religion and immigration, this selection proposes a number of models for the interaction of religion with immigrant and transnational communities.
27. Redstone Akresh, Ilana. 2011. "Immigrants' Religious Participation in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(4): 643–661. 437
One of the few quantitative studies among these readings, Akresh's work revisits the long-standing question of how immigrants change their religious practices and commitments when they arrive in the United States. She confirms the suggestion that others have made based on qualitative and historical data, that involvement in religious institutions increases upon immigration.
28. Bendixsen, Synnøve. 2010. "Islam as a New Urban Identity? Young Female Muslims Creating a Religious Youth Culture in Berlin." In *Gender, Religion, and Migration: Pathways of Integration*, ed. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio and Vivienne S.M. Angeles, 95–114. New York: Lexington Books. 449
In this study of young Muslim women in Berlin, Bendixsen explores the phenomenon of a "return to Islam" and the women's quest for a "pure" as opposed to "traditional," form of their religion.

Religion and Violence, Local and Global**462**

29. Nason-Clark, Nancy. 2009. "Christianity and the Experience of Domestic Violence: What Does Faith Have to Do with It?" *Social Work and Christianity* 36(4): 379–393. 462
Nason-Clark, who has dedicated her career to work on religion and domestic violence, reviews in this article the varied and complex interactions between Christianity and domestic violence, from resources for working against domestic violence to teachings that encourage it.

30. Jacobs, Janet. 2011. "The Cross-Generational Transmission of Trauma: Ritual and Emotion among Survivors of the Holocaust." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 40(3): 342–361. 470
Jacobs' article examines the relationship to Jewish ritual among Holocaust survivors and their descendants. Jacobs finds that even though the descendants did not experience the Holocaust directly, they are indirectly and powerfully affected by it. Those effects, in turn, fundamentally influence their relationship—both positive and negative—to Jewish ritual.
31. Wessinger, Catherine L. 2000. "How the Millennium Comes Violently." From *How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate*, 12–29. 482
 New York: Seven Bridges.
Wessinger proposes a model for understanding the connections between millennialism—the belief in an end time—and violence perpetrated both by and against religious groups.
32. King, Richard. 2007. "The Association of 'Religion' with Violence: Reflections on a Modern Trope." In *Religion and Violence in South Asia: Theory and Practice*, ed. John R. Hinnells and Richard King, 226–257. New York: Routledge. 495
King's article brings the book full-circle, in that like Asad, King is suspicious of Western-centered explanations of religion—in this case, specifically of religion and violence—that purport to be universal yet rely on few examples from outside of Europe and North America.

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