Classics in the Sociology of Religion focuses on the very different paradigms for the study of religion in the seminal writings of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. Beginning with the Weberian paradigm, the seminar will explore its leading concepts (e.g., charisma, rationalization, legitimation), hypotheses and comparative studies of the world religions. The main focus of the course will be on Emile Durkheim’s contributions to the study of religion (The Division of Labor, The Rules of the Sociological Method, Suicide, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life), their foundational assumptions, leading concepts (e.g., anomie, solidarity, collective representation, the sacred, ritual, civil religion, community, individuality/individualism) and main hypotheses. The course will conclude with several recent books by Robert Bellah, Jonathan Lear and Robert Wuthnow that grapple with major themes in Weber and Durkheim.

**Learning outcomes** include understanding: (1) the very different paradigms for the study of religion in the seminal writings of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim; 2) the original meaning of some of the leading concepts in the field, such as charisma, rationalization, legitimation, anomie, the sacred, ritual, civil religion); 3) the ways some contemporary sociologists (e.g. Bellah, Tipton, Wuthnow, ) grapple with major themes in the classical sociological texts studied.

**Course requirements**: Two 15 page papers, one due by Oct 28, the other by December 20. The first should be on one of the concepts, hypotheses or theories studied in the course. The other may be a topic of your own choosing related to some aspect of the course. Weekly reflection papers should raise a question or two on one page that you would like to discuss in class.

**Course Evaluation**: 40% for each paper. 20% for class participation and reflection papers. More than one absence will require instructor's consent.

**WEEK 1**
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

**WEEK 2**
BASIC CONCEPTS IN WEBER’S COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS MORALS


WEEK 3 WEBER ON THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND MODERNITY

Weber, Max, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

or

Walzer, Michael The Revolution of the Saints.


WEEK 4 WEBER’S COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS MORALS


WEEK 5  
DURKHEIM’S METHODOLOGY AND SOCIAL ONTOLOGY


WEEK 6  
DURKHEIMIAM SOCIOLOGY AND THE INTEGRATION OF MODERN SOCIETIES

Wallwork, Durkheim: Morality and Milieu ch. 4, pp. 75-85.  
Durkheim, Selections from The Division of Labor in Robert Bellah, ed., Emile Durkheim, pp. 63-146. These selections are from The Division of Labor in Society, pp. 174-229, 329-409.

Supplementary Readings: on The Division of Labor see: Robert K. Merton, “Durkheim’s Division of Labor in Society,” in Emile Durkheim, ed., Nisbet, pp. 105-112; Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, pp. 308-324; Steven Lukes, Emile Durkheim, ch. 7, pp. 135-178; Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and Modern Social Theory, pp. 70-81; Raymond Aron, Main Currents in Sociological Theory, Vol. II, ch. 1, pp. 11-23; Dominick LaCapra, Emile Durkheim, ch. 3, pp. 79-143; Georges

**WEEK 7  DURKHEIM’S THEORY OF SUICIDE AND COMMUNAL MORALITY**

Wallwork, Ernest, Durkheim: Morality and Milieu, ch. 3, pp. 47-53. Durkheim, Emile, Suicide, Book Two, chs. 2-5, (pp. 152-276), Book Three, ch. 3 (pp. 361-384).


**WEEK 8  DURKHEIM ON THE STATE, MEDIATING STRUCTURES AND ETHICS**


Challenger, Durkheim Through the Lens of Aristotle; Michele Moody-Adams, Fieldwork in Familiar Places: Morality, Culture and Philosophy.

WEEK 9 DURKHEIM’S INTERPRETATION OF RELIGION


Durkheim, Emile, The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. Be sure to read the “Introduction,” Book One, ch. 1; Book Two, chs. 7 & 8, Book Three, chs. 1, 2 (pp. 337-381, 385-392), ch. 5 (pp. 434-435, 442-449, 455-461), “Conclusions” (pp. 462-479).


WEEK 10 CIVIL RELIGION


Richey, Russell and Jones, Donald, American Civil Religion, chs. 2, 4,5, 6,12. President Reagan’s Second Inaugural Address (Reprint)

Supplementary Readings: Richey and Jones, American Civil Religion,

WEEK 11 CONTEMPORARY AMERICA’S TROUBLED ETHOS

Bellah, Robert, et al., Habits of the Heart.


WEEK 12 THINKING WITH DURKHEIM TODAY

Lear, Jonathan. Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation, chs 1-3


And/or

WEEK 13 Wuthnow, Robert. America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity, Preface, chs 1-6 and 10 (pp. 286-295, 306-314).

WEEK 14 Student Paper Reports

Books at SU Bookstore:


Walzer, Michael. The Revolution of the Saints


Academic Integrity Statement: The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see http://academicintegrity.syr.edu.

Disability Statement: Students who may need academic accommodations due to a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the semester. In order to obtain authorized accommodations, students should be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309 (315) 443-4498 and have an updated accommodation letter for the instructor. Accommodation and related support services such as exam administration are not provided retroactively and must be requested in advance. For more information about services and policy, visit the Office of Disability Services website at http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/ or contact the office at the addresses below:

Syracuse University
Office of Disability Services
804 University Avenue Room 309
Syracuse, NY 13244-2330

Phone: (315) 443-4498
TDD: (315) 443-1371
Email: odssched@syr.edu