

SOS2700 – Religion in contemporary societies, fundamentalism, radicalization and religious violence

Course content

This course provides a theoretical and empirical introduction to religion as a sociological phenomenon, religion in contemporary society, fundamentalism, religious radicalization, and violence. We will discuss theoretical perspectives which will be combined with current debates and research on religion.

The course provides knowledge and insight into different concepts of religion and debates on religious change in contemporary society. Are Western societies post-secular? Or are they increasingly secular? We will discuss these topics by relating sociological theories to empirical studies of the role of religion in Norwegian and Nordic public spheres.

Another aspect of religious change in modern times is religious radicalization and religious violence. Which aspects of all world religions can be used to legitimize violence? In order to understand fundamentalism, religious radicalization and violence, we will discuss different perspectives that have been used in empirical studies: social psychology, cultural analysis, and social movements.

This course will provide useful knowledge and skills for people who work in education, research, the media, public administration, the health and social services, business, politics, and international affairs.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

The course will provide:

- An overview of major trends in religious change in contemporary societies
- Key sociological concepts and theories used in the study of religion
- Analytical perspectives in explanations of fundamentalism, religious radicalization and violence

Skills

You will develop the skills to:

- Use relevant concepts, theories and empirical knowledge in analyses of religion
- Provide a critical analysis of different theories in the sociology of religion
- Provide a critical analysis of the empirical studies included in the syllabus
- Discuss and write such analyses, following the basic rules of social scientific inquiry

Competences

- Think analytically about religious phenomena
- The ability to distinguish between academic knowledge based on empirical studies versus personal perceptions
- Respect for ethical considerations involved in scientific work in general and sociological studies of religion in particular

SOS2700 - Cyllabus

* = in compendium

@ = available online

Introduction

BOOK: Furseth, Inger and Pål Repstad 2006. *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion. Classical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Aldershot: Ashgate.(ch. 1-2, 5-12) (188 p.)

Religion in contemporary societies: secularization, post- secularity or religious complexity?

*Berger, Peter L. 1999. The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview. I *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, edited by Peter L. Berger, 1-18. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans. (18 p.)

*Casanova, José 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3-39 (Introduction, ch. 1) (37 p.)

UT: BOOK: Furseth, Inger (ed.) 2015. *Religionens tilbakekomst i offentligheten? Religion, politikk, stat og sivilsamfunn i Norge siden 1980-tallet*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. (186 p.)

NY: Furseth, Inger (ed.) 2017. *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere. Comparing Nordic Countries*. New York: Palgrave (186 p.).

@Habermas, Jurgen 2006. Religion in the Public Sphere. *European Journal of Philosophy* 14(1): 1-25. (26 p.) Available online

Fundamentalism and radicalization

@Blee, Kathleen M. and Kimberly A. Creasap 2010. Conservative and Rightwing Movements. *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 269-286. (18 p.)

*Bruce, Steve 2008. *Fundamentalism*. 2 ed. Cambridge: Polity. (Ch. 1) (14 p.)

*Furseth, Inger 2011. Why in the City? Explaining Urban Fundamentalism. In Nezar AlSayyad and Meigan Massoumi (eds.) *The Fundamentalist City? Religiosity and the Remaking of Urban Space*, 27-50. London: Routledge. (24 p.).

@Gardell, Mattias. 2014. Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26(1): 129-155 (27 p.)

UT: @Gupta, Dpankar 2007. Citizens versus People: The Politics of Majoritarianism and Marginalization in Democratic India. *Sociology of Religion* 68(1): 27-44.(18 p.)

@Hegghammer, Thomas 2012. The recruiter's dilemma: Signalling and rebel recruitment tactics. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(1): 3-16. (14 p.)

@Kirby, Aidan 2007. The London Bombers as "Self-Starters": A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30: 415-428. (14 p.)

@Klausen, Jytte 2015. Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38(1): 1-22. (22 p.)

@Minkenberg, Michael 2006. Repression and reaction: militant democracy and the radical right in Germany and France. *Patterns of Prejudice* 40(1): 25-44.(20 p.)

NY: @Parashar, Swati 2010. The Sacred and the Sacrilegious: Exploring Women's 'Politics' and 'Agency' in Radical Religious Movements in South Asia. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 11(3-4): 435-455. (20 p.)

@ Røislien, Hanne Eggen 2007. Living with Contradiction: Examining the Worldview of the Jewish Settlers in Hebron. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 1(2): 169-184.(15p.)

NY: @Sedgwick, Mark 2010. The concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22: 479-494. (13 p.)

NY: @Spencer, Amanda N. 2016. The Hidden Face of Terrorism: An Analysis of the Women in Islamic State. *Journal of Strategic Security* 9(3): 74-98 (24 p.)

@Wiktorowicz, Quintan 2002. Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory: A New Direction for Research. *Mediterranean Politics* 7(3): 187-211. (25 p.)

Religious violence

*Hall, John R. 2003 Religion and violence: Social Processes in Comparative Perspective. In Michele Dillon (ed.) *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, 359-384. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (23 p.)

BOK: Juergensmeyer, Mark 2003. *Terror in the Mind of God. The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. 3. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press (243 p.).

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