Note: Students will be responsible for all readings in Section I and for readings in four subcategories in Section II.

Overviews and Basic Concepts (optional)


Section I: Classic Social Scientific Approaches to Religion

Durkheim, Emile. 1912 [1995]. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. Translated and with an Introduction by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press. Introduction; Book I, Ch. 1, 4; Book II, Ch. 1-3, 7; Book III, Ch. 1-3; Conclusion.


Section II: Ongoing Theoretical and Research Traditions
A. The Social Organization of Religion


B. Rational Choice and Economic Approaches to Religion


C. Religion and Social Change


D. Religious Movements and Religious-Based Social and Political Activism and Movements


Festinger, Leon. 1956. When Prophecy Fails. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Ch. 1, 7, 8


Ch. 11 & 13


E. American Religion: Institutions and Demography


F. Religion and Culture


G. Individual-Level Religious Effects

There is an enormous literature in the sociology of religion devoted to the basic question of how—and in what ways—people’s religious affiliation, practices, commitments, identities, participation, etc. affect a variety of attitudes and behaviors, such as altruism, civic engagement, deviance, educational attainment, sexual activity, or voluntary organization membership.

Students wishing to examine this subset of the literature should assemble a list of 10-15 articles, books, book chapters, or a combination that (1) contains individual-level analyses in which religion is a key independent variable and (2) coheres around a particular theme of religious effects.

The student’s proposed reading list for this subset must be approved by readers of the religion preliminary examination no later than one month before the scheduled exam. To facilitate this, students choosing this subcategory should submit their reading lists, along with one-paragraph abstracts for each reading, to Kraig Beyerlein or Don Grant no later than six weeks before the scheduled exam. Students wishing to pursue this option are advised to talk with both Kraig and Don at an early stage of their preparation for the exam.