INSTRUCTOR
Rev Rebecca Wieringa MA MEd MDiv, Adjunct Instructor

As this is an online course and I do not have an on-campus office, I will not hold physical office hours. However, I am available via phone and email.

Email: wieringa@pdx.edu  Email is the best way to reach me. M-F I will check my emails frequently and respond to your email within 24 hours. It might take me a little longer to respond to emails on the weekend, but I will be as timely as possible.

Phone: 971-347-8249 (Please call only between the hours of 9am and 8pm. Leave a message with your name, the course number, your phone number, and I will return your call within 24 hours, M-S)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The study of religion from a sociological perspective is the study of religious practices, customs, beliefs, and rituals in the context of social structures such as religious institutions, politics, education, community, and family. In this class students will learn about how religion affects societies and societies affect religion by addressing the following three questions: 1) How do social scientists approach the study of religion? 2) What can religion tell us about a particular group or society? 3) Why is it important to study religion within the socio-historical context in which it is produced, reproduced, and reconfigured? Much of the course will be self-directed through analyzing readings, interacting with the instructor and other students through discussion posts, and doing a self-led field trip of a religious institution or organization.

COURSE MATERIALS (Required)

(2) Film: The Shack (available for rent or purchase on Amazon.com, or wherever you buy or rent DVDs)
(3) Film: Miracle from Heaven (available for rent or purchase on Amazon.com, or wherever you buy or rent DVDs)

COURSE WEBSITE

This is a completely on-line course. In order to succeed, you must have reliable internet access that will allow you to navigate/search the web, stream videos, use email, attach and upload documents, and download and save files. You must be logged in as a PSU student to access scholarly articles through persistent links provided on D2L and in the syllabus.

- All course materials and grades will be available on D2L (https://d2l.pdx.edu). I will also use D2L to communicate with the class, usually through “News” on D2L.
- If you are having trouble accessing your D2L account or do not have an ODIN account please contact the OIT help desk (Smith Memorial Student Union (SMSU) 18) at 503-725-HELP (4357) or help@pdx.edu.
- It is your responsibility to check D2L regularly for important announcements.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The week runs Monday through Sunday. Assignments will be posted by 8am each Monday and assignments will be due by 11:59 pm each Sunday. Specific dates are listed below.
Each week you will read a series of articles from the text book and respond to questions posted by the instructor.
You will also engage each other by posting responses to other students’ discussion posts (at least three responses to different posts are required each week.)
You will watch two films and write two short papers based on the film during the course. Papers are due at the end of weeks 3 (5pm January 27) and 6 (5pm February 17). Instructions will be provided two weeks before the due date, but you might want to watch the film more than once, so starting early is advised. Papers will be turned in via dropbox on D2L.
You will choose one unfamiliar religious group or organization to visit and observe on a self-guided, field trip during the term, and write a 3-page reflection report on the experience. You should choose a religion with which you are not familiar. Specific details and topics to guide your essay will be provided on D2L. The paper is due by 5 pm on March 19, via dropbox on D2L.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS** *(Total Possible Points: 1000)*

- **Participation. 500 points** Participation will be measured by logging in weekly, weekly posts in response to the readings, and responses to each other’s posts. There will be 2-4 readings each week, with an 8-10 sentence post required for each reading. There will also be occasional reflective posts that, while required, allow you to post your opinions or own experiences and are not necessarily tied to readings. You will find all discussions under “discussions” on D2L.
- **Short papers. 300 points** You will write two short papers based on the viewing of two films. Each paper is worth 150 points.
- **Field trip & reflection essay. 200 points** You will write a reflective essay based on a first-hand experience with a religious organization or institution of your choice (from a list of possible choices).

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION**

**Discussion posts:** To receive full credit, each post must provide evidence that you read each article, and must answer the specific questions provided by the instructor. Spelling and grammar are important. Re-read your work to ensure you are posting college-level work.

**Short film-review papers:**
- Clearly demonstrate that you have watched the film.
- Succinct thesis engaging the topic provided by the instructor.
- Specific examples from the movie to support your argument and referencing gleanings from the course readings.
- Must include an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.
- Good grammar, spelling and mechanics.
- APA format with in-text citations.

**Field trip & reflection essay:**
- Clear description of the field trip experience with evidence that the trip was completed as assigned.
- Thoughtful reflection on how the student experienced the trip, while engaging topics from the weekly readings.
- Must include an introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion.
- Good grammar, spelling and mechanics.
- APA format with in-text citations.
Option to rewrite a paper: You may rewrite either (or both) film paper(s) if you score a B or below one time for a possible increase of one full letter grade. The redo must be submitted within one week of receiving corrections. Final grade is at the instructor’s discretion. (The reflective essay may not be rewritten).

Extra Credit: Throughout the term, the instructor may post optional discussion topics. Students who choose to participate in these optional assignments will receive extra credit.

**GRADING SCALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 100%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93%</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86 – 89%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>62-65% (Inferior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82 - 85% (Good)</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 81%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>≤ 59 (Failure, no credit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76 – 79%</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>≥ 70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72 – 75% (Satisfactory)</td>
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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Net Etiquette:** In all of your course communications, whether formal or informal, you are required to observe the rules of netiquette. They include the following:

**General Rules from PSU D2L help:**
- Avoid using all CAPS as it can give the impression that you are shouting. If you want to emphasize a point, use *asterisks* around a word.
- Avoid personal attacks, otherwise known as "flaming." If you read a message that you suspect might be a personal attack, resist the temptation to fire off a response. Instead, let your response sit before sending or request that your instructor resolve the situation.
- If you disagree with a fellow student, describe your perspective clearly and politely rather than primarily criticizing her/his comments. Avoid any personal criticism or potentially offensive language.

**Additional Rules for the Class:**
- Be respectful when making a comment or responding to others’ comments. This rule is the same as for face-to-face classroom behavior. However, as there is no body language or tone of voice in our online communications, please use formal English appropriately.
- Be extra polite, careful, and kind about how you express yourself while posting to a discussion board, and emailing the instructor.
- Avoid the twitter and text message abbreviations. Not everyone knows them.
- Finally, if you run into any netiquette-related problems—if something has offended or hurt your feelings, for instance—please e-mail me directly about it. I would like to be aware of any problems.

**Deadlines and Make-ups.** No late work will be accepted without a university approved excuse.

**Requirements for Papers.** Papers should be typed using 12-pt font, double-spacing, and 1-inch margins, using Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri font. All papers should include your name and the name of the assignment (e.g., Film Review 1) at the top of the page. All papers should be checked and corrected for spelling and grammar errors. You may be marked down if you have multiple spelling and/or grammar errors.

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is a serious offense than can result in a failing grade and other serious consequences, including expulsion. Plagiarism occurs when you utilize the ideas, expressions, phrases or words of another
person without correctly citing that person or source. Make sure you understand how to correctly cite sources, including when and how to paraphrase and quote. Cite all sources used in all assignments assigned for this course using correct APA format. There are many on-line sources (like the OWL at Purdue) that document proper citation format. In the context of this course, the first incident of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the task. Any further incidents will result in an F for the course.

**Academic Accommodations:** If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and arrange appropriate academic accommodations that you may require. The DRC is located in 435 Smith and can be contacted at 725-4150 or by email at drc@pdx.edu. Visit their site at [http://www.drc.pdx.edu/](http://www.drc.pdx.edu/).

**Recommended Materials for Writing Help**
Here are some helpful online grammar and writing resources:

**The OWL at Purdue University**
[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/)

**The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Writing Center**
[http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/](http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/)

**PSU Writing Center** ([http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu))
One-on-one help with writing, on a drop-in or appointment basis
188F Cramer Hall, 725.3570

**Other Resources to Help You Succeed at PSU**

**PSU Library** ([library.pdx.edu/](http://library.pdx.edu/))
2nd floor Reference desk, phone, IM, email, 24/7 chat.

**Advising and Career Services** ([http://www.pdx.edu/advising/home](http://www.pdx.edu/advising/home))
Drop-in advising hours are Monday-Friday, 10:30-11:30 and 1-2:30 (subject to change) OR call/email to schedule an appointment: 402 University Services Building, 725.4005, askACS@pdx.edu

**Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC)** ([http://www.pdx.edu/shac/](http://www.pdx.edu/shac/))
Counseling, psychological evaluation and intervention, testing services, and all health-related concerns
1880 SW 6th Ave., Health and Counseling: 503.725.2800; Dental: 503.725.2611; Testing: 503.725.5301

**Women’s Resource Center (WRC)**
The Portland State University Women's Resource Center advocates for the best educational and campus experience for all members of our community. The WRC seeks to advance social justice, personal empowerment for all self-identified women, and a safe and healthy campus. The WRC is open Monday through Friday from 9:00-5:00pm, and is located in the basement of the Montgomery Housing Building. The main entrance is located in the Montgomery Courtyard. You can contact the WRC by phone (503-725-5672) or email wrc@pdx.edu.

**Creating a Safe Campus**
Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and on-housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Information about PSU’s support services on campus, including
confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU’s Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: [http://www.pdx.edu/sexualassault/get-help](http://www.pdx.edu/sexualassault/get-help) or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672. You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to either the Office of Equity and Compliance or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors are required to report information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University’s Title IX Coordinator, or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Articles to read (from Sociology Reader Text, listed by the article NUMBER, not the page number. You can find the number of the article in the table of contents, either in the hardback or the kindle version.)</th>
<th>Other assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January 8-14</td>
<td>1: Subject of the Study: Religious Sociology and the Theory of Knowledge. 2. The Sacred Canopy 3. From Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law</td>
<td>You will also make a discussion post that will be an introduction of yourself, and a summary of your own religious experiences, either lived or perceived, due by the end of the week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>January 22-28</td>
<td>8. Immigration and Religion 11. Affinity, Identity, and Transcendence</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>February 5-11</td>
<td>17: At Ease with our Own Kind 20: Culture Wars 23: We are God’s Children, Y’All</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>February 12-18</td>
<td>24: Secularization and Its Discontents 26: Secularization and Sacralization Deconstructed and Reconstructed</td>
<td>Second Film Review paper due, by 5pm February 17th</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>February 19-25</td>
<td>28: Selections from Sociological Writings 29: Transformations in New Immigrant Religions</td>
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<td>30: All creatures Great and Small</td>
<td>31: The public Perception of cults and new religious Movements 32: Apocalypse at Waco 34: They Must Be Crazy</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>February 26-Mar 4</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>March 5-11</td>
<td>35: Correcting a Curious Neglect 36: Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community 37: Public Opinion on Church-State Issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finals</td>
<td>March 19-24</td>
<td>Field Trip Reflective Essay due by 5pm on March 19th.</td>
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