Bemidji State University

SOC 3250: Religion and Politics: A Sociological Analysis

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Credits: 3
Lecture Hours/Week: 0
Lab Hours/Week: 0
OJT Hours/Week: *.*
Prerequisites: None
Corequisites: None

MnTC Goals: Goal 07 - Human Diversity, Goal 08 - Global Perspective

Religion and Politics—the things we U.S.-Americans are expected not to talk about in polite company. It’s an election year, and the U.S. appears to be deeply divided on a number of issues. But why? The goal of this course is to describe and to explain. This course is not about taking partisan political positions, advocating for specific political interests, or arguing about the truth of religious worldviews. The sociological study of religion and politics involves understanding how religion as a worldviews social phenomenon is related to politics as interests and social phenomena, both in the U.S. and globally. Trends in religious identity and practice shape political behaviors, movements, and changes. They have done so in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. I’m going to examine a lot of controversial stuff in this course, but I’m going to “take a big step back” to do it. Perhaps it will provide you with the tools to have difficult conversations with friends and family, and/or to understand why people disagree on what they disagree on and respond the way they do. [Core Curriculum Goal Area(s) 7 & 8]

B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES: 08/19/2022 - Present

C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

1. Addresses cultural shifts in the US as explanations for current unrest and polarization via religious, demographic, and ideological factors.
2. Considers religion and politics in a global context, examining theories of religious change, secularization, and religious marketplaces, as well as how religion influences political views and decision-making processes.
3. Addresses issues in the sociology of religion that have political content, such as religion and the environment, religion, and science.

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)

1. define sociological concepts as applied to both sociology of religion and political sociology.
2. explain the ways in which religion and politics are connected, both nationally and worldwide.
3. apply sociological concepts related to religion and politics to past and present sociocultural shifts and polarization.
4. compare national and global political shifts across religious groups.
5. explain current social, political, and cultural polarization in a broader sociological context.
6. comprehensively discuss religion and politics as social institutions/phenomena, in terms of both theoretical and empirical research.
E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies

Goal 07 - Human Diversity
1. Understand the development of and the changing meanings of group identities in the United States' history and culture.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the individual and institutional dynamics of unequal power relations between groups in contemporary society.
3. Analyze their own attitudes, behaviors, concepts and beliefs regarding diversity, racism, and bigotry.
4. Demonstrate communication skills necessary for living and working effectively in a society with great population diversity.

Goal 08 - Global Perspective
1. Describe and analyze political, economic, and cultural elements which influence relations of states and societies in their historical and contemporary dimensions.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of cultural, social, religious and linguistic differences.
3. Analyze specific international problems, illustrating the cultural, economic, and political differences that affect their solution.

F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
   As noted on course syllabus

G. SPECIAL INFORMATION
   None noted