

Hartford Seminary, Fall 2021

**American Religious Realities:
Sociological and Anthropological Approaches (RS-525)**

Scott Thumma
sthumma@hartsem.edu
860-509-9542 or 9553

Timur Yuskaev
yuskaev@hartsem.edu
860-509-9554

Course modality: **14-weeks, weekly 3-hour face-to-face seminars**

Class location: TBD

Office hours: in person, via zoom or phone TBD (to schedule an appointment, email sthumma@hartsem.edu and/or yuskaev@hartsem.edu).

Description

As part of the MAIRS curriculum, this course facilitates an understanding of the scope of America's religious diversity: the nature of its current complexity and factors contributing to its emergence; the mutually influencing interactions between religious communities (their convictions, practices, and structures); and the American contextual trends, such as immigration, political issues, and social drivers like race, ethnicity, or gender. This course is taught with faculty of different traditions and backgrounds, and builds knowledge and skills for study within a multifaith setting.

Among the central themes of the Fall 2021 course are race, gender, religious diversity and transnational religions, young adults, the nones, newer religious forms, and the politics of sound. The course will engage a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches pertinent to the study of North American religious realities.

This course is **a core requirement in the MAIRS program.**

Texts*

- 1) Muna Ali, *Young Muslim America: Faith, Community and Belonging* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)
- 2) Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (Simon and Schuster, 2010)
- 3) Audra Simpson, *Mahawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Duke University Press, 2014)
- 4) Isaac Weiner, *Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism* (NYU Press, 2013)

*Additional readings available in CANVAS.

Please email sthumma@hartsem.edu and yuskaev@hartsem.edu if you are having any difficulty accessing the texts.

Coursework and Assessment

- Class Participation: 10%
- Weekly Reflections posted in CANVAS: 20%
- One presentation: 10%
- Midterm paper (5-6 pages): 25%
- Final paper or project: 35%

Learning Outcomes

- To demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and world views.
- To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity.
- To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion's communities exist.
- Develop an appreciation of living in a pluralistic world and dialogical skills needed to work in multi-faith and diverse settings.
- To demonstrate knowledge of the larger social and cultural dynamics affecting religious life and organizations in the 21st century and their implications for ministry setting.
- To acquire a comprehensive knowledge in Islamic Studies, Christian-Muslim Relations, and Interreligious Engagement/Interfaith Dialogue.
- To develop the competence to produce original research and written works for the benefit of religious communities, academy, and society.

Plagiarism policy – plagiarism is not tolerated, see: <https://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/>

Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning:

- Showing mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
- Engaging in cross-disciplinary content and teaching
- Paying attention to the whole personhood of another – history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank
- Demonstrating how to disagree respectfully and well
- Embodying mutuality – Learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

Schedule: TBD