Religion and Social Movements

RS-624

Location: Online
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I. Course Description:

Religion and social movements have long had a close connection. Individuals might participate in a movement because they wish to act on their religious convictions. Social movements that do not look overtly religious on the outside may rely heavily on religious networks for mobilization. Overtly, some religious groups have created social movements as a vehicle for advancing their beliefs and causes. Moreover, the organizational dynamics and life cycle of social movements are useful for understanding dynamics of religious organizations that seek to respond to an ever-changing social environment. This course will examine all of these factors, embedded in the history and theories of social movements, to better understand the efficacy of social movements and the unique role religion has played for social movement actors and organizations.

II. Course Objectives:

By the end of this class, learners will be able to:

1. Identify and apply the key features, terminology, history, and theory of social movements.

2. Recognize and analyze the unique role of religion in social movements – as both motivation for and direct actor in social movements.

3. Apply knowledge of social movements to a specific movement of interest for one’s academic study and/or career.
III. Required Texts, Readings, & Technology:

Required Texts:


Additional readings will be available as PDF files.

Required Technology:

- Regular and reliable computer and internet access
- Word processing program, such as Word
  - Written assignments need to be submitted as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf

IV. Course Assignments and Learning Outcome Assessment objective covered:

Master of Arts in Religious Studies: Learning Outcomes

*To demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion’s communities exist.*

This learning outcome is addressed directly by class participation, the final presentation, and the final project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date(s)</th>
<th>Learning Outcome assessed by assignment</th>
<th>% of final course grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Participation</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>MA #5</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments 1-4</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>MA #5</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>MA #5</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
V. Course Expectations and Classroom Policies:

*Participation*

1. All posts and assignments are due by 11:59 PM on Friday of the course week. Every day an assignment is late will result in a 10% reduction in the final grade for the assignment unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor for extenuating circumstances. For example, if an assignment is worth 25 points, submitting it between 12:00 AM-11:59 PM on the Saturday after it was due results in a 2.5 point reduction in the final grade. A maximum of half-credit will be given for assignments more than 5 days late.

2. The course discussions rely on and are enriched by weekly active participation from all of the students in the class. Each week, students are expected to post one substantial post in response to the weekly discussion question and two substantial posts in response to colleagues. Discussion board posts, as all assignments, are due by Friday at midnight. Missing two weekly posts in a row will result in an automatic lowering of the cumulative discussion board grade by 10%. Missing 3 or more weeks in a row of the discussion board will result in failure of the course. “Missing” a week means not posting by the weekly deadline (Friday at midnight) unless the student has made prior arrangements with the instructor due to an emergency or extenuating circumstances.

3. **Extensions:** Extensions for papers will be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor.

*Communication*

1. Assignments will only be accepted through Canvas. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. Written assignments will be submitted through plagiarism-detection software.

2. The instructor will provide feedback as soon as possible to students on grades. Discussion board posts will generally be graded within 1 week; written assignments will generally be graded within 2 weeks.

3. Students will only use their Hartsem account to contact the instructor and the instructor will only use the Hartsem account to contact students.

4. I will respond to student emails as soon as possible; always within 48 hours but generally within 24 and often much sooner.
5. Students are expected to conduct themselves as professionals in the class. Online discussion forums are a wonderful opportunity to learn from one another’s beliefs and experiences; students are expected to always be respectful in language and expression in the discussion forum. Discussion board posts that are deemed to be inappropriate will be removed from the forum and the student will not receive any credit for that week’s post.

6. The syllabus is subject to change over the course of the semester; students will be notified as soon as possible when any changes are made and the instructor will make every effort to ensure students have sufficient time to accommodate for any changes.

7. **Inclusive Language:** Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another’s images of God.

**Written Assignments**

1. The student handbook states: A paper submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course without the prior permission of both instructors. Hartford Seminary strictly adheres to the Plagiarism Policy. Written papers and theses must be typed and should conform to the styles and format for footnotes and acknowledgments announced by the course instructor. For additional information on format, proper footnotes, acknowledgments, etc., students are directed to consult the *Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper*. These guidelines can be picked up in the student forms center or downloaded from our website at: [http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/](http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/). Students may also consult Kate L. Turabian’s, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations* (6th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1996), upon which the guidelines are based.

2. **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students.

Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one’s own previous work used in another course. See “Plagiarism” at [http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/](http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/).

3. **Official Handbooks:** For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook: [http://www.hartsem.edu/current-](http://www.hartsem.edu/current-)
students/student-handbook/ and seminary policies at Academic policies are listed at http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/

V. Grading Policy

Student Evaluations
Students are expected to read the assigned reading material on the week that it is assigned. Online forums and assignments will all be based on the topics covered in the reading. Grades will be based on the following:

1. **Weekly Post (30% of grade)** – response (2-4 paragraphs) to instructor-posted question related to the reading assignment. Students are expected to read and respond to one another’s posts. Students must respond to a minimum of two other students’ posts in order to receive full credit for the discussion board every week. Students are also expected to conduct themselves in a professional, respectful way on discussion boards. Inappropriate comments or language, including profanity, will be removed from the discussion board and will result in a 0 for that week’s comment grade.

2. **Written Assignments (40% of grade)** – students will complete four short written assignments (approximately 2-5 pages) which will include opportunities to synthesize the course reading and discussions as well as assist students in preparing for their final paper; topics for assignment will be posted at least two weeks in advance.

3. **Final Paper (30% of grade)** – There will be a research paper (12-15 pages) focusing on the role of religion in a specific social movement organization of the student’s choosing. Additional details forthcoming.
Seminary Grading Scale

A (95-100)  Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

A- (90-94)  Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+ (87-89)  Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.

B (83-86)  Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B- (80-82)  Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.

C+ (77-79)  Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70-76)  Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.

F (below 70)  Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Doctor of Ministry Grading Scale

90-100  High Pass
83-94  Pass
70-82  Low Pass
Below 70  Fail
VI. Content

January 21-24

1. Introduction to the Course

   Reading:
   • Course Syllabus

   Assignments:
   • Course scavenger hunt due
   • Work on Assignment 1

January 25-31

2. Conceptualizing Social Movements

   Reading:
   • Snow and Soule, Chapter 1
   • Braunstein et. al., Introduction and Chapter 1
     King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1963. "Letter from a Birmingham Jail."

   Assignments:
   • Discussion board post
   • Work on Assignment 1

February 1-7

3. The History of Religion and Social Movements in the U.S.

   Reading:
   • Social Movements and Religion Timeline, The ARDA
   • Braunstein et. al., Chapters 2, 8, and 12

   Assignments:
   • Discussion board post due
   • Assignment 1 due
February 8-14

4. Religious Social Movements

**Reading:**
- Braun, et. al. Chapter 14

**Assignments:**
- Discussion board post due
- Work on assignment 2

February 15-21

5. Religions and Religious Groups as Social Movements

**Reading:**

**Assignments:**
- Discussion board post due
- Assignment 2 due
February 22-28

6. Religion and the Mobilization of Grievances

Reading:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 2
- Braunstein et. al., Chapters 3 and 4

Assignments:
- Discussion board post due
- Work on Assignment 3

February 29-March 6

7. Religion and the Contextual Conditions for Social Movements

Reading:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 3
- Braunstein et. al., Chapter 11

Assignments:
- Discussion board post due
- Assignment 3 due
March 7-13

8. Religion and Social Movement Participation

Reading:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 4
- Braunstein et. al., Chapter 10

Assignments:
- Discussion board post due
- Work on Assignment 4

March 14-20

9. Religion and the Dynamics of Social Movements

Reading:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 5

Assignments:
- Discussion board post due
- Work on Assignment 4
March 21-27

10. Final Paper Focus

Reading:
• Readings TBD: Will be based on final paper projects

Assignments:
• Assignment 4 due

March 28-April 3

11. Social Movement Leadership

Reading:
• Dollhopf, Erica J. “Breaking the Glass Ceiling Early and Often?: Female Leaders of Advocacy Organizations”

Assignments:
• Discussion board post due
• Work on final paper

April 4-10

12. Reading Week – No classes
April 11-17

13. Consequences of Social Movements

Reading:
- Snow and Soule, Chapter 6

Assignments:
- Discussion board post due
- Work on final paper

April 18-24

14. The Future of Religion and Social Movements

Reading:
- Braunstein, et. al. Chapters 7 and 15

Assignments:
- Discussion board post due
- Work on final paper
April 25-May 1

14. Current Research on Religion and Social Movements

   **Reading:**
   - None

   **Assignments:**
   - Discussion board post due

May 6

   - Final papers due