

# SOS2700 – Religious fundamentalism, extremism and violence

## Course content

This course provides a theoretical and empirical introduction to religion as a sociological phenomenon, religious fundamentalism, extremism, and violence. We will discuss theoretical perspectives, which will be combined with current debates and research on these issues.

The course provides knowledge and insight into the sociological study of religion and religious extremism and religious violence. Which aspects of all world religions can be used to justify the use of violence? How do extreme groups recruit new participants? Are the participants ideologically convinced before they join or is ideological conviction a result of participation? What do we actually know about radicalization processes? How do sectarian conflicts erupt? What are the similarities and differences in stereotypical portrayals of religious minority groups, and how is race, culture and difference linked to islamophobia and antisemitism? And which role do women typically have in extremist religious groups? These are some of the questions that will be addressed in this course.

In order to understand religious fundamentalism, extremism and violence, we will discuss different perspectives that have been used in empirical studies: social psychology, cultural analysis, and social movements.

This course will provide useful knowledge and skills for people who work in education, research, the media, public administration, the health and social services, business, politics, and international affairs.

## Learning outcomes

### Knowledge

The course will provide:

- Key sociological concepts and theories used in the study of religion and religious extremism
- Analytical perspectives in explanations of fundamentalism, religious extremism and violence
- Empirical knowledge of different extreme religious movements around the world

### Skills

You will develop the skills to:

- Use relevant concepts, theories and empirical knowledge in analyses of religion
- Provide a critical analysis of different theories in the study of extreme religious movements
- Provide a critical analysis of the empirical studies included in the syllabus
- Discuss and write such analyses, following the basic rules of social scientific inquiry

## Competences

- Think analytically about religious phenomena
- The ability to distinguish between academic knowledge based on empirical studies versus personal perceptions
- Respect for ethical considerations involved in scientific work in general and sociological studies of religion in particular

## SOS2700 - Syllabus

\* = copies posted on Fronter

@ = available online

### Introduction

BOOK: Furseth, Inger and Pål Repstad 2006. *An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion. Classical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Aldershot: Ashgate.(ch. 1-2, 5-12) (188 p.)

### Religion in contemporary societies: secularization, post-secularity or religious complexity?

UT: \*Berger, Peter L. 1999. The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview. I *The Desecularization of the World. Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, edited by Peter L. Berger, 1-18. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans. (18 p.)

UT: \*Casanova, José 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3-39 (Introduction, ch. 1) (37 p.)

UT: Furseth, Inger (ed.) 2017. *Religious Complexity in the Public Sphere. Comparing Nordic Countries*. New York: Palgrave (186 p.).

UT: @Habermas, Jurgen 2006. Religion in the Public Sphere. *European Journal of Philosophy* 14(1): 1-25. (26 p.) Available online

### Fundamentalism, radicalism, and extremism

\*Bruce, Steve 2008. *Fundamentalism*. 2 ed. Cambridge: Polity. (Ch. 1) (14 p.)

@Sedgwick, Mark 2010. The concept of Radicalization as a Source of Confusion. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22: 479-494. (13 p.)

### Religious violence

\*Hall, John R. 2003 Religion and violence: Social Processes in Comparative Perspective. In Michele Dillon (ed.) *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, 359-384. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (23 p.)

BOOK: Juergensmeyer, Mark 2017. *Terror in the Mind of God. The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. 4. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press (243 p.).

## Social and religious movement theory

@Blee, Kathleen M. and Kimberly A. Creasap 2010. Conservative and Rightwing Movements. *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 269-286. (18 p.)

\*Furseth, Inger 2011. Why in the City? Explaining Urban Fundamentalism. In Nezar AlSayyad and Mejgan Massoumi (eds.) *The Fundamentalist City? Religiosity and the Remaking of Urban Space*, 27-50. London: Routledge. (24 p.).

NY: @Zald, Mayer N. and Roberta Ash. 1966. Social movement organizations: growth, decay and change. *Social Forces* 44(3): 327-340 (14 p.)

@Wiktorowicz, Quintan 2002. Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory: A New Direction for Research. *Mediterranean Politics* 7(3): 187-211. (25 p.)

## Ideology, recruitment and sectarianism

NY: @Dalgaard-Nielsen, A. (2010). Violent Radicalization in Europe: What We Know and What We Do Not Know. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 33 (9): 797-814. (18 p.)

@Gardell, Mattias. 2014. Crusader Dreams: Oslo 22/7, Islamophobia, and the Quest for a Monocultural Europe. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26(1): 129-155 (27 p.)

NY: @Haddad, F. 2017. 'Sectarianism' and Its Discontents in the Study of the Middle East. *The Middle East Journal* 71 (3): 363-382. (20 p.)

NY: @Hashmi Nader and Danny Postel. 2017. Sectarianization: Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East. *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 15(3): 1-13. (13 p.)

@Hegghammer, Thomas 2012. The recruiter's dilemma: Signalling and rebel recruitment tactics. *Journal of Peace Research* 50(1): 3-16. (14 p.)

@Kirby, Aidan 2007. The London Bombers as "Self-Starters": A Case Study in Indigenous Radicalization and the Emergence of Autonomous Cliques". *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30: 415-428. (14 p.)

@Klausen, Jytte 2015. Tweeting the Jihad: Social Media Networks of Western Foreign Fighters in Syria and Iraq. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38(1): 1-22. (22 p.)

NY: @Leonard, Madeleine. 2006. Teenagers Telling Sectarian Stories. *Sociology* 40(6): 1117-1133. (17 p.)

UT: @Minkenberg, Michael 2006. Repression and reaction: militant democracy and the radical right in Germany and France. *Patterns of Prejudice* 40(1): 25-44.(20 p.)

NY: Minkenberg, Michael. 2017. Religion and the Radical Right. In *Oxford Handbook of the Radical Right*, edited by Jens Rydgren, 366-393. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (27 p.) Ebok

NY: @ Nasr, Vali R .2000. International Politics, Domestic Imperatives, and Identity Mobilization: Sectarianism in Pakistan, 1979-1998, *Comparative Politics* 32(2): 171-190. (19 p.)

@ Røislien, Hanne Eggen 2007. Living with Contradiction: Examining the Worldview of the Jewish Settlers in Hebron. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence* 1(2): 169-184. (15 p.)

NY: @Snow, David A., Louis A. Zurcher, Jr. and Sheldon Ekland-Olsen. 1980. Social Networks and Social Movements: A Microstructural Approach to Differential Recruitment. *American Sociological Review* 45(5): 787-801. (15 p.)

NY: @Snow, David A., E. Bruke Rochford, Jr., Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford. 1986. Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement participation. *American Sociological Review* 51(4): 464-481. (18 p.)

## Islamophobia and antisemitism

NY: @Døving, Cora Alexa. 2010. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: A Comparison of Imposed Group Identities. *Tidsskrift for Islamforskning* 4(2): 52-76. (25 p.)

NY: @Meer, Nasar. 2013. Racialization and religion: race, culture and difference in the study of antisemitism and Islamophobia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36 (3): 385-398. (14 p.)

NY: @Werbner, P. 2013. Folk devils and racist imaginaries in a global prism: Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in the twenty-first century. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36 (3): 450-467. (18 p.)

## Women in extremist movements

NY: @Jacques, Karen and Paul J. Taylor. 2009. Female Terrorism: A Review. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 21(3): 499-515. (17 p.)

@Parashar, Swati 2010. The Sacred and the Sacrilegious: Exploring Women's 'Politics' and 'Agency' in Radical Religious Movements in South Asia. *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 11(3-4): 435-455. (20 p.)

@Spencer, Amanda N. 2016. The Hidden Face of Terrorism: An Analysis of the Women in Islamic State. *Journal of Strategic Security* 9(3): 74-98 (24 p.)

NY: @Von Knop, Katharina. 2007. The Female Jihad: Al Qaeda's Women. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 30(5): 397-414. (18 p.)