

University of Waterloo
Department of Sociology and Legal Studies
SOC 402 / RS 462
Religion in the Social and Legal World
Winter 2024

12 January – 8 April 2024: In-person classes on Fridays 2:30-5:20pm EST, PAS building, room PAS 2086

Instructor Information

Instructor Office Hours: Fridays 11am-12pm EST

The professor will have office hours every Friday from 11am-12pm EST during term (12 January – 19 April 2024). These office hours will be a hybrid virtual/in-person format. In this hybrid format, you can either visit the professor's office on campus (PAS 2027) during the office hours in person; or you can visit the Zoom virtual meeting room instead during these hours using the details below:

Zoom web link to join office hours virtually:

<https://uwaterloo.zoom.us/j/94064331359?pwd=TjQ4cFRkMENTTkVROHZISjZMS9VUT09>

Zoom meeting ID to join office hours virtually: 940 6433 1359

Zoom passcode to join office hours virtually: 412033

Course Description

Government employees wearing religious symbols and clothing; youth non-religion; Indigenous spiritualities and environmentalism; reasonable accommodations for religious minorities; Evangelicalism and politics; religious groups' contributions to civil society. These are only a few examples of the many ways religion, spirituality and non-religion play important roles in our societies today. Through the detailed study of sociological works and a series of high-profile media and legal cases, this course examines these phenomena in a sociological perspective.

This term, we focus on how religious diversity, spiritualities and non-religion are defined and managed by the Canadian State and its institutions. We explore and critique key legal cases and documents that have established the various forms of State secularism present in Canada and its regions over the course of their histories. We also examine how these laws and policies impact the fields of education and politics today, along with some of the key controversies and tensions they have caused in recent years.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Understand contemporary social scientific theory and research on religion, spirituality and non-religion.
- B. Criticize contemporary frameworks in the subfield of sociology of religion.
- C. Apply various contemporary researchers' concepts and frameworks to current media and legal cases involving religion, spirituality and non-religion in Canada.

Required Texts

All the required readings and videos (see course outline for weekly materials) are available for free download on the LEARN course webpage (under the weekly modules in “Content”), via web links or through e-copies at the UWaterloo library.

Course Requirements and Assessment

Each week during term, there will be weekly required readings and videos, and in-class discussions and activities tied to these materials (see “Course Requirements” and “Course Outline” below for more details). Students must complete the weekly required readings and videos in a timely manner to grasp the course content, to facilitate class discussions, and to complete the course requirements.

Each 3-hour class will usually unfold as follows: The first 1h20 min will be dedicated to the instructor’s thoughts and feedback on the week’s course materials, along with discussions with students on their impressions of these materials. The class will then break for about 15min. The second 1h15min of class will be dedicated to group work in teams of 3-4 students to answer discussion questions and/or apply the week’s course content to real-world media or legal cases.

If a student has cold- or flu-like symptoms (cough, fatigue, fever, runny or stuffy nose, etc.), or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or has a member in their household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the past 5 days, then they are strongly encouraged to stay home and not come to class for 5 days or until symptoms clear up, and contact the professor by email to make arrangements and accommodations.

How to ask a question and get support for this course:

1. The professor will have hybrid office hours for your questions every Friday from 11am-12pm EST during term (12 January – 19 April 2024). See details above.
2. The professor can be e-mailed anytime at sarah.wilkins-laflamme@uwaterloo.ca
During term, allow 1-2 business days for a response.
3. Students may ask questions any time in class.

Instructions for Assessments

1- Based on the weekly required readings, videos and other course materials, prepare and post on the weekly LEARN discussion boards the answers to one provided discussion question for that week. If other students have already posted their answers for that week, you must build on those answers. Do not simply repeat what they said. Expand on their answers. Provide new information that they did not cover. Give more/different examples. Tie in relevant material from previous weeks. Each weekly discussion post (all answers included) must be between 300-400 words. To be completed during Weeks 2-12. Each of the student’s weekly discussion answers/posts is graded on 10 points, and the average from the student’s top 8 (out of 11) discussion answers/posts will count towards their final grade. To be completed individually. Discussion answers must be posted by the start of the week’s in-person class (so by 2:30pm each Friday, except around Easter and the last two weeks of term; see Course Outline below

for more details). Work not accepted if submitted late. Further guidelines to be given in Week 1. Worth 25% of the final grade.

2 – Weekly in-person group work: between Weeks 2-12, groups of 3-4 students will discuss in class how to apply the theoretical concepts seen each week to a current media or legal case provided by the professor. In Week 12, each student/team gives a short 5-minute presentation on their final research paper work so far, followed by a short 5-minute class discussion. Each group's comments will be graded on 10 points each week, and the average from the student's top 8 comments (out of 11) will count towards their final grade. Further guidelines to be given in Week 1. Worth 25% of the final grade.

3 – Research proposal for the final research paper (4 pages, double-spaced). Can be completed individually, in teams of two or in teams of three. Further guidelines to be given in Week 4. Due at midnight via the LEARN Dropbox on Friday the 16th of February 2024 (Week 6). 1 point deduction/day late, out of a total of 15 points. Proposals not accepted if submitted more than 7 days late. Worth 15% of the final grade.

4 – Final research paper (15 pages, double-spaced): a sociological analysis on a topic chosen by the student, broadly related to the general theme of the course and applying some of the theoretical concepts and materials seen in class. Can be completed individually, in teams of two or in teams of three (same teams as research proposal). Guidelines to be given in Week 4. Due at midnight via the LEARN Dropbox on Friday the 19th of April 2024. 1 point deduction/day late, out of a total of 35 points. Papers not accepted if submitted more than 7 days late (after the 26th of April 2024). Worth 35% of the final grade.

Students are expected to complete all scheduled discussions and assignments at the dates and times stated above. A make-up assignment/discussion on an alternate date and time will be scheduled by the professor only if the student provides a valid, fully documented reason (e.g. a medical form indicating a serious illness and period of incapacitation signed by a physician) for missing the original. Otherwise, a grade of 0 will be recorded for the missed work/discussion. If an assignment/discussion is missed due to illness or other reason, the student must inform the professor at the earliest opportunity. Students should make every reasonable effort to complete the assignments/discussions at the regularly scheduled dates and times.

Assessments - summary	Submission deadline	Weighting
Weekly discussion posts on LEARN	Each Friday at 2:30pm EST	25%
Weekly in-person class group work	During the second half of each weekly class	25%
Research proposal	End-of-day (midnight) on 16 February 2024	15%
Final research paper	End-of-day (midnight) on 19 April 2024	35%
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Total		100%

Course Outline

Week	Topic and Timeline	Required Readings, Videos, and Discussion Questions
Week 1: 8-12 January 2024	Introduction to the course In person class on Friday the 12th of January 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.	Required reading: 1) Course syllabus (see LEARN)
Week 2: 15-19 January 2024	Conceptualizing religion and spirituality Discussion answers for Week 2 due on Friday 19 January 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 2 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN. In person class on Friday the 19th of January 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.	Required readings: 1) Davie, Grace. 2003. "The Evolution of the Sociology of Religion." Pp. 61-75 in The Handbook of the Sociology of Religion, edited by Michele Dillon. New York: Cambridge University Press. (see LEARN) 2) OHRC's Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Creed. Pp. 1-45. (see LEARN) Discussion question for weekly post: a) How does the OHRC's definition of 'creed' compare with those definitions of religion discussed in the Davie (2003) reading? Compare the elements of definition of the OHRC's concept of 'creed' to one definition of religion of your choosing discussed in the Davie (2003) reading. How are these definitions similar? How are they different from each other?
Week 3: 22-26 January 2024	The Supreme Court of Canada's definition of religion and its critics Discussion answers for Week 3 due on Friday 26 January 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 3 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN. In person class on Friday the 26th of January 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.	Required readings: 1) Dawson, Lorne and Joel Thiessen. 2014. "Chapter 2: Defining Religion." Pp. 22-43 in The Sociology of Religion: A Canadian Perspective. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. (see LEARN) 2) Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem 2004 SCC ruling, pp. 551-563 (see LEARN) Discussion question for weekly post: a) Describe one of the limitations of the Supreme Court of Canada's definition of religion as found in Syndicat Northcrest v, Amselem, according to what Dawson and Thiessen (2014) argue in their chapter.
Week 4: 29 Jan. –	Research projects and proposals	Required readings: 1) "Conceptualizing Your Research," Writing and Communication Centre interactive module. (see LEARN)

Week	Topic and Timeline	Required Readings, Videos, and Discussion Questions
2 Feb. 2024	<p>Discussion answers for Week 4 due on Friday 2 February 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 4 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 2nd of February 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>On LEARN, under the Week 4 Content, click on the "Conceptualizing Your Research" module, and then click on "start course" to complete the 60-minute interactive module.</p> <p>2) Bryman, Alan and Edward Bell. 2016. "Chapter 17: Writing Up Social Research" and "Chapter 18: Conducting a Research Project." Pp. 338-362 in <i>Social Research Methods</i>. Fourth Canadian Edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press. (see LEARN)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) What topic of research would you like to focus your research proposal and final research paper on this term in this course, and why?</p>
Week 5: 5-9 February 2024	<p>State secularism in Canada and abroad</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 5 due on Friday 9 February 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 5 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 9th of February 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required readings: 1) Taylor, Charles. 2010. "The Meaning of Secularism." <i>The Hedgehog Review</i> 12 (3): 23-34. (see LEARN) 2) Casanova, José. 2009. "The Secular and Secularisms." <i>Social Research: An International Quarterly</i> 76(4): 1049-1066. (see UWaterloo e-journals)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) Provide and explain an example of one of Taylor's or Casanova's notions of secularism (of your choosing) being present in the Canadian context. How does one of the aspects of secularism seen in Taylor's or Casanova's texts (of your choosing) apply in Canada?</p>
Week 6: 12-16 February 2024	<p>Religious pluralism and reasonable accommodation in Canada</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 6 due on Friday 16 February 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 6 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 16th of February 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required readings: 1) Beaman, Lori. 2017. "Religious Diversity in the Public Sphere: The Canadian Case." <i>Religions</i> 8, 259. (see UWaterloo e-journals) 2) Martínez-Ariño, Julia. 2018. "Conceptualising the Role of Cities in the Governance of Religious Diversity in Europe." <i>Current Sociology</i> 66(5): 810-827. (see UWaterloo e-journals)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) Discuss one potential implication or challenge of growing religious pluralism for the Canadian State and Canadian social institutions (among the many implications/challenges possible and discussed in the readings).</p>

Week	Topic and Timeline	Required Readings, Videos, and Discussion Questions
	<p>Research proposal due at end-of-day (midnight) on Friday the 16th of February 2024. To be submitted to the designated Dropbox in LEARN.</p>	
19-23 February 2024	Reading week	No required course content.
Week 7: 26 Feb. – 1 Mar. 2024	<p>Québec’s Bill 21</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 7 due on Friday 1 March 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the ‘Week 7 discussion board’ under ‘Connect - Discussions’ in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 1st of March 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required reading:</p> <p>1) <i>Bill 21: An Act Respecting the Laicity of the State</i>, National Assembly of Québec, 2019 (see LEARN)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post:</p> <p>a) Which of the goals of laïcité, as seen in the course materials from Weeks 5 and 6, does Bill 21 make a contribution towards achieving? And which laïcité goals does Bill 21 instead not respect?</p>
Week 8: 4-8 March 2024	<p>Religious diversity and education</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 8 due on Friday 8 March 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the ‘Week 8 discussion board’ under ‘Connect - Discussions’ in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 8th of March 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required readings:</p> <p>1) Bindewald, Benjamin, Elvira Sanatullova-Allison, and Yu-Ling Hsiao. 2017. “Religion and Public Education in Pluralist, Democratic Societies: Some Lessons from the United States and Canada.” <i>Religion & Education</i> 44(2): 180–202. (see UWaterloo e-journals)</p> <p>2) Berger, Benjamin. 2014. “Religious Diversity, Education, and the ‘Crisis’ in State Neutrality.” <i>Canadian Journal of Law and Society</i> 29(1): 103–122. (see UWaterloo e-journals)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post:</p> <p>a) Discuss one of the challenges of teaching about religions in public schools, seen in either the Bindewald et al. (2017) or Berger (2014) readings.</p>
Week 9: 11-15 March 2024	<p>The State and non-religion</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 9 due on Friday 15</p>	<p>Required readings:</p> <p>1) Beaman, Lori G., Cory Steele, and Keelin Pringnitz. 2018. "The Inclusion of Nonreligion in Religion and Human Rights." <i>Social Compass</i> 65(1): 43-61. (see UWaterloo e-</p>

Week	Topic and Timeline	Required Readings, Videos, and Discussion Questions
	<p>March 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 9 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 15th of March 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>journals)</p> <p>2) Beaman, Lori G. and Cory Steele. 2018. "Transcendence/Religion to Immanence/Nonreligion in Assisted Dying." <i>International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare</i>. (see LEARN)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) Discuss the values and approaches that Beaman et al. (2018) and Beaman and Steele (2018) define as nonreligious, that are in tension with religion and that are used by the nonreligious in their legal challenges.</p>
<p>Week 10: 18-22 March 2024</p>	<p>Religion and politics</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 10 due on Friday 22 March 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 10 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 22nd of March 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required readings: 1) Putnam, Robert D. and David E. Campbell. 2010. <i>American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us</i>. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapter 11 "Religion in American Politics" & Chapter 12 "Echo Chambers: Politics within Congregations." Pp. 369-442 (see LEARN).</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) Discuss one dimension of religion and politics in Putnam and Campbell (2010) that you think is also applicable to the Canadian context, and why?</p>
<p>Week 11: 25-28 March 2024</p>	<p>Less conventional spiritualities and the State</p> <p>Our schedule for this week is a bit different, due to the Good Friday holiday on the 29th of March 2024.</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 11 due on Thursday 28 March 2024 at 11:59pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 11 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Friday the 5th of April 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required readings: 1) Richardson, James T. 1996. 'A Critique of "Brainwashing" Claims about New Religious Movements.' Pp. 217-227 in <i>Cults in Context: Readings in the Study of New Religious Movements</i>, edited by Lorne Dawson. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press. (see LEARN)</p> <p>2) Steensland, Brian, Jaime Kucinkas and Anna Sun (2022). <i>Situating Spirituality: Context, Practice, and Power</i>. New York: Oxford University Press. "Introduction: Eminently Social Spirituality." Pp. 3-29. (see LEARN)</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) Provide and discuss one example of a social and/or political aspect of less conventional spiritualities, as seen in one or both of the readings from this week.</p>

Week	Topic and Timeline	Required Readings, Videos, and Discussion Questions
Week 12: 1-8 April 2024	<p>Islamophobia and the Canadian State</p> <p>Our schedule for this week is a bit different, due to the Good Friday holiday on the 29th of March 2024.</p> <p>Discussion answers for Week 12 due on Monday 8 April 2024 at 2:30pm, to be submitted on the 'Week 12 discussion board' under 'Connect - Discussions' in LEARN.</p> <p>In person class on Monday the 8th of April 2024 at 2:30pm in room PAS 2086.</p>	<p>Required video: 1) Under Siege: Islamophobia and the 9/11 Generation. Webinar with author Jasmin Zine, 2022. Available for free viewing at: https://youtu.be/Mx-5v7e4Yzo</p> <p>Discussion question for weekly post: a) According to what we saw in the course materials and in class this term as well as in the webinar with Jasmin Zine this week, discuss one dimension (of your choosing) of the Canadian State's approach to Islam.</p>
<p>Final research papers due at midnight (end of day) on Friday the 19th of April 2024, to be submitted via the designated Dropbox in LEARN.</p>		

Late Work

Weekly discussion posts and in-class group work not accepted if submitted late. For the research proposal and final paper: 1 point penalty for each day submitted late. Work not accepted if submitted more than 7 days late.

Accommodations for Illness or Extenuating Circumstances

If you are suffering from a short-term illness, below are your options to request an academic accommodation (extension for an assignment, etc.). All information for accommodations for illness or extenuating circumstances can be found at: <https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances>

The proper UWaterloo Arts procedures have been updated and are as follows (and the only ones the professor will grant an academic accommodation for this term):

1. If you have or can get documentation for your illness (signed Verification of Illness Form (VIF)): At the start of 2023, UWaterloo Arts implemented [VIF.uwaterloo.ca](https://uwaterloo.ca). This system provides a central portal for students to upload their Verification of Illness documentation. Students are to upload their completed VIF forms through the Arts [Accommodations and Illness page](#). This new system has several advantages:
 - For each self-declaration or VIF, the system sends an email to each of the student's instructors, with the student's ID and the length of incapacitation.
 - VIF.uwaterloo.ca retains a record of all of a student's absences for use in petitions, and conforms to document retention and privacy requirements.

- The VIFs will be reviewed in the Arts Undergraduate Office for appropriate dates and signatures before being accepted.
2. If you do not have or cannot get documentation for your illness (signed Verification of Illness Form (VIF)), then once a term you can self-declare a 48h absence for which you can request an academic accommodation. You self-declare your once-a-term 48h absence via Quest (see instructions at <https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-absence-undergraduate-students>).
 3. For a longer-term illness or disability that may require multiple academic accommodations, please instead register with Access Ability and ask your designated accommodation consultant there to email your course instructors about any accommodations needed: <https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/students/applying-academic-accommodations>

The professor will only grant academic accommodations (extensions, etc.) once she receives an email from the VIF.uwaterloo.ca, Quest or Access Ability systems, so please register with one of these according to the instructions above (depending on your situation) instead of emailing the professor directly.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Cross-listed Course

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a SOC/RS cross-list (like SOC 402/RS 462) will count in a Sociology major average, even if the course was taken under the Religious Studies rubric (and vice-versa).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism, in all its forms, is taken very seriously by the University.

- If you are copying sentences or parts of sentences word for word, or almost word for word, from an existing text written by someone else (and/or by AI), without following citation guidelines;
- If you present certain ideas found in other articles or books as your own without referring to the original authors by means of citation guidelines;
- If you copy the work or part of the work of someone else (and/or of AI) and present it as if it were your own, or you allow someone else to copy your own work (even if you are working in a group);
- Included in the definition of plagiarism: all copying, fraud and cheating, whether it be for work prepared at home or exams in class.
- Even one single copied sentence constitutes plagiarism.