The course attempts to do three things. The first is to provide you with a critical overview of the development of the sociology of religion and to explore key authors and works. This aspect of the course considers how ‘religion’ and the ‘sacred’ raise intellectual issues that are generic to sociology (explanation, understanding, interpretation, rational action, body, practice and so forth). The second is to consider the current debate about secularization and post-secularism, and its antecedents in such notions as civil religion, religious nationalism, popular religion and public religions. Finally the course looks at a range of problems concerning state-religion relations in multicultural, multi-faith, culturally hybrid societies. These issues will require us to consider such developments as fundamentalism, Pentecostalism, revivalism, religious radicalism, piety, conversion and so forth. Where possible, these considerations are pursued within a comparative and historical framework. However special attention is given to Islam and the issues in the West surrounding veiling, diet, and shari’a.

**General Resources**


1 Foundations of the sociology of religion: Emile Durkheim and Max Weber


2. The Idea of World Religions: The Axial Age Debate (Christianity and Islam)


3. The Problem of ‘Asian Religions’


4. The Idea of Secular Society: east and west


5. American Exceptionalism: Tocqueville on democracy


6. Civil religion: Rousseau and Bellah


7. Fundamentalism and Public Religions


8. Neo-liberalism and Religion


**9. Pentecostalism and charismatics**


**10. Pietization: Women and Religion**


**11. Spirituality and Popular Religion**


**12. Liberalism and Plural Societies**


**13. Postsecularism**
Gorski, Phil et al (eds) *The Post-secular Question*, NY: NYU, chs10,12


14. **Globalization and Religion**

