

# SOS2700 Exam autumn 2018

Fall 2018

Information regarding the exam

The exam consists of three pages, including this page.

You must answer both question 1 and question 2 to receive a passing grade on your exam. Remember to read the question carefully.

Question 1 counts for one third of the final grade, and question 2 counts for two thirds of the final grade.

Good luck!

1) Define three of the four following concepts:

- Dimensions of religion
- Religious radicalization
- Religious terrorism
- Fundamentalism

2) Choose one of the two questions:

a) Describe Mark Juergensmeyer's theory of religious violence. Discuss the different ways in which violence is justified among Jewish settlers and the Radical Right.

b) The approaches primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism are often used to analyze sectarianism. Describe these approaches and discuss their strengths and weaknesses in understanding sectarianism. Use examples from the curriculum in the discussion.

# Assessment guidelines SOS2700 Autumn 2018

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## The students

The committee members should be aware of the fact that the students taking SOS2700 have a very varied background. About half are international students. Most of them have good English skills, while others face linguistic challenges and struggle with the terminology. Many students do not have a background in sociology or any of the other social sciences. Some of these students are also struggling with the sociological terminology.

1) Define three of the four following concepts:

- Dimensions of religion – The reference here is to Glock and Stark’s five dimensions of religion (belief, practice, experience, knowledge and the consequences of religion).
- Religious radicalization - the students should be able to use Mark Sedgwick’s (2010) critique of the concept of radicalization to argue that there is a continuum between “moderate” and “radical,” and that radicalization is not an absolute concept but has a relative nature.
- Religious terrorism - the students should be able to use Juergensmeyer to reflect on the usage of term terrorism (as a way to create fear, of course), and how it depends on the speaker’s standpoint (“one person’s terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter”). They should also reflect on the term religious – is the terror legitimized by references to religion, politics, or both?
- Fundamentalism – the students should describe Steve Bruce’s five features of fundamentalism:
  1. The claims that some source of ideas, often a text, is complete and without error
  2. The existence of some perfect social embodiment of the true religion in the past
  3. Arise in traditional cultures, but are not traditional
  4. Recruitment among marginalized groups of people
  5. Combine a selective image of the past with modern technology

2) Choose one of the two questions:

- a) Describe Mark Juergensmeyer’s theory of religious violence. Discuss the different ways in which violence is justified among Jewish settlers and the Radical Right.

Juergensmeyer’s approach is based on cultural analysis, and he views religious violence as a theatre of horror, based on perceptions of cosmic warfare, where martyrs and demons are defined. Information about Jewish settlers is found in Juergensmeyer’s book and in Røislien’s article, and information about the Radical Right is found in his book, in Blee’s article, Gardell’s article on Breivik, and Deeyah Khan’s movie “Meeting the Enemy,” which we showed during the seminars. The students are not explicitly asked to compare the groups, but often the best papers use comparison as a strategy in order to discuss them.

b) The approaches primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism are often used to analyze sectarianism. Describe these approaches and discuss their strengths and weaknesses in understanding sectarianism. Use examples from the curriculum in the discussion.

Arguably, due to functional similarities between ethnic and religious mobilization the politics of sectarianism is often explained through the literature on ethnic political mobilization. Three schools of thought are central here, namely, primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism. Primordialists view "ethno-religiosity" as a group identity rooted in biology, history, and tradition, and group mobilization is understood as a form of, emotional and irrational, group solidarity. Contradicting this view, the instrumentalists argue that ethno-religiosity is part of a political process, and can be influenced and manipulated by ethno-religious leaders who can stimulate identity mobilization. Recognizing and criticizing both these views the constructivists adopt a middle ground. "Constructivists do not believe that ethnicity/religion is inherently conflictual, but rather that conflict flows from "pathological social systems" and "political opportunity structures" that breed conflict from multiple social cleavages beyond the control of the individual". All three approaches are discussed and exemplified in Nasr's article and the article by Hashemi and Postel. Information about the concept of sectarianism and examples of it is found in Haddad's article. Illustration of another approach adopted in the study of sectarian identities is found in the article, by Leonard (2006).