Jay Demerath is currently the Emile Durkheim Distinguished Professor of Sociology Emeritus – or as he likes to put it, the "extinguished Professor..." – at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where he has been a faculty member since 1972, including ten years as Chair. Prior to UMass, he received a 1958 A.B. from Harvard and a 1964 Ph.D from the U. Of California, Berkeley before rising from Instructor to Professor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and serving as Executive Officer of the American Sociological Association. Among his many publications, he is author or editor of fourteen books, including the award-winning Crossing the Gods: World Religions and Worldly Politics (2001) and the recent Sage Handbook for the Sociology of Religion (2008). He past-President of the Eastern Sociological Society, the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, and the Association for the Sociology of Religion.
Committee, where he and his committee members, Elaine Ecklund and Rich Wood, are eager to receive names of possible candidates for our next Chair. Meanwhile, Dan Olson has moved into the Chair-elect seat and begun to take notes and crunch numbers. Wendy Cadge was elected to replace the long-serving Kevin Christiano as Secretary-Treasurer, while Kevin Dougherty and Mary Ellen Konieczny have moved into the Council seats previously occupied by the ascendant Wendy Cadge and the de-terminated Jim Davidson. Besheer Mohamed has replaced Carol Ann MacGregor as Student Representative to the Council. Fortunately Richard Flory has agreed to extend his duties as Newsletter Editor for one more year, though nominations – self-or otherwise – are now in order to succeed him and can be sent directly to me. Much the same is true of our newly maternal but still tireless Webmaster, Trish Snell.

The 2010-2011 Program Committee marks something of a departure with increased size reflecting increased responsibility. Because of the Section’s own increased size, this year we will have 5 sessions – or more accurately four and a half, since one must be shared with a Business Meeting according to ASA regulations – and I have asked four persons to join me on the Program Committee, each chairing a session of their own. First, our overall theme is a riff on President Randall Collins’ theme for the ASA Meetings as a whole; namely, “(Religious) Dimensions and Arenas of Social Conflict,” and I look forward to chairing an invited panel session on that topic. Then there will be three open submission sessions on three themes intended to cover our local waterfront. Sally Gallagher will Chair an open session on “Religion and Gender, Class, and Ethnicity; Prema Kurien will chair a session on “Comparative Religions At Home and Abroad,” and Rob Robinson will chair a session on “Religious Movements and Institutions.” Finally, Doug Marshall will chair our Roundtables Session, using papers either directly submitted or funneled from the three preceding sessions where they have not found a niche. Of course, all of the above chairs will have the assistance of two additional committee members, as noted in our committee rosters below. All abstracts and papers should be submitted to the three committee members of the target session electronically by email. Papers may only be submitted to one session, though they may be shifted from one session to another if the Program Committee finds a better spot.

Finally, we come to the Section’s last major function; namely, bestowing awards. Once again I have been gratified by the willingness of so many good people to serve on such important committees. Basically, three award committees give three awards, as listed below. This year’s Distinguished Book Award Committee will be chaired by Kevin McElmurry. Mark Regnerus will chair our Distinguished Article Award Committee, and Phillip Connor will chair the Student Paper Award Committee. Note that next February 28 is the drop-dead for each of these committees to receive submission. With the exceptions of books, all submissions should be electronic to all members of the appropriate committee by email. All details and committee contact information follow in accordance with the ASA’s own rules on page 3.

Enough – at least for now. I will be back with more messages in the Winter and Spring Newsletters. But I also want to endorse Editor Flory’s requests for materials from you – the members – that might enliven these pages. Meanwhile, have a good Fall, great holidays, and a warm start to a short winter.

Jay Demerath, UMass, Amherst
The ASA Sociology of Religion Section solicits nominations for the 2011 Distinguished Book Award. The award honors a book that makes an outstanding contribution to the sociology of religion. Books published in the previous two years (2009, 2010) are eligible for the 2011 award. Please have publishers send copies of books nominated for the award to each of the three committee members no later than February 28, 2011 to be considered for the Award. Books may be nominated for the Award by authors, publishers, or others.

Kevin McElmurry (Chair), knelms@iun.edu
Indiana University Northwest
212 Lindenwood Hall, 3400 Broadway, Gary IN 46408

John R. Hall, jrhall@ucdavis.edu

Melissa Wilcox, wilcoxmm@whitman.edu

The ASA Sociology of Religion Section solicits nominations for the 2011 Distinguished Article Award. The award honors a peer reviewed journal article or book chapter that makes an outstanding contribution to the sociology of religion. Articles and chapters published in the previous two years (2009, 2010) are eligible for the 2011 award. Papers will be accepted in electronic form only. Please email a copy to each of the committee members below no later than February 28, 2011 to be considered for the award. Articles may be submitted by authors, editors, or others.

Mark Regnerus (Chair), regnerus@prc.utexas.edu
Department of Sociology
University Of Texas
1 University Station A 1700, Austin TX 78712

Phillip Brenner, pbrenner@SSC.WISC.edu

Erica Wong, eryou@umich.edu

The ASA Sociology of Religion Section solicits nominations for the 2011 Student paper Award. The award honors work that makes an outstanding contribution to the sociology of religion. Either published or unpublished papers are eligible. If the paper has been published, it may not compete for both the Student Paper Award and the Distinguished Article Award. Papers may not be longer than 40 double-spaced manuscript pages, including notes, tables, and references. Authors must be students and members of the Section at the time the paper is submitted, and the papers must have been presented or published in 2009 or 2010 to eligible for the 2011 award. Papers will be accepted in electronic form only. Please email a copy to each of the committee members below no later than February 28, 2011 to be considered for the award. Papers may be submitted by authors or by others. Students may submit only one paper per year.

Phillip Connor (Chair), pconnor@princeton.edu
Princeton University
Princeton, NJ 08542

Shaul Kelner, s.kelner@vanderbilt.edu

Grace Yukich, gyukich@princeton.edu

Jay Demerath (Chair), demerath@soc.umass.edu

Sally Gallagher, sallagher@oregonstate.edu

Prema Kurien, pkurien@syr.edu

Doug Marshall, dougmarshall@jaguar1.usouthal.edu

Rob Robinson robinson@indiana.edu

Fred Kniss, fred.kniss@emu.edu
Member News

People

Louise Cainkar (Marquette University) has received a CAORC grant to study American Muslim youth identity management in Palestine, Jordan, and Yemen this coming Spring. This research is part of a larger study of American Muslim youth living in multiple countries and looking at questions such as "who am I" and "where is home."

Harriet Hartman (Rowan University) has been awarded the Berman Summer Research Fellowship on the topic of "The effect of Jewish identity on family and secular behaviors: a cross community comparison." She also received a Jacquet research award from the Religious Research Association to study "Jewish Identity and its Influence on Secular Pursuits."

Victor Roudometof has been promoted to Associate Professor (with tenure) at the Department of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cyprus.

Publications


Dissertation Defended

A Modern Religion?
The State, The People, and the Remaking of Buddhism in Urban China Today
Alison Denton Jones, Harvard University

Religion is back in Chinese cities. As state repression of religion has eased over the past few decades, religious leaders and regular lay people have been reconstructing religious institutions and building religious lives at an astonishing rate. Yet, little is known about how regular urban people negotiate the lingering restrictions on and critiques of religion to create satisfying religious lives. This dissertation examines the re-making of Buddhism in a single city as the conjunction of overlapping projects of modernity by the Chinese state, Buddhist institutions, and individual lay Buddhists. Jones argues that the place and form of religion in society has been, and continues to be, a central focus of Chinese projects of modernity. Drawing on ten months of participant observation in Nanjing, PRC, and forty-five in-depth interviews with lay Buddhists, the dissertation sketches the contours of Buddhism in Nanjing on both institutional and individuals levels.

Photos by Alison Denton Jones
New Books

Andrea Borella (University of Turin), *Gli Amish* (Xenia, Milan), 2009.

This is the first book about the Amish in Italian, and it is mainly a comprehensive description of the life, culture, religious beliefs and practices of the Amish. The book is based on Borella’s anthropological fieldwork, during which he lived for several months over three years in a community of the Old Order Amish in Lancaster County, PA.


As the nation tried to absorb the shock of the 9/11 attacks, Muslim Americans were caught up in an unprecedented wave of backlash violence. Public discussion revealed that widespread misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islam persisted, despite the striking diversity of the Muslim community. Behind the Backlash seeks to explain why blame and scapegoating occur after a catastrophe. Peek sets the twenty-first century experiences of Muslim Americans, who were vilified and victimized, in the context of larger sociological and psychological processes.


One of the predominantly Orthodox countries that has never experienced communism is Greece, a country uniquely situated to offer insights about contemporary trends and developments in Orthodox Christianity. This volume offers a comprehensive treatment of the role Orthodox Christianity plays at the dawn of twenty-first century Greece from social scientific and cultural-historical perspectives.


The question, “what is a person?,” has been a perennial concern of philosophers and theologians. But, Christian Smith here argues, it also lies at the center of the social scientist’s quest to interpret and explain social life. In this ambitious book, Smith presents a new model for social theory that does justice to the best of our humanistic visions of people, life, and society.

Finding much current thinking on personhood to be confusing or misleading, Smith finds inspiration in critical realism and personalism. Drawing on these ideas, he constructs a theory of personhood that forges a middle path between the extremes of positivist science and relativism. Smith critically engages the strong social constructionism, network structuralism, and variables paradigm in sociology. Smith then builds on and beyond the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, William Sewell, and Douglas Porpora to demonstrate the importance of personhood to our understanding of social structures. From there he broadens his scope to consider how we can know what is good in personal and social life and what a critical-realist sociology can tell us about human rights and dignity.

Social Sciences and Missions

Current Issue:

- "Dynamics of missions / Dynamique missionnaires" (23:2, 2010)

Forthcoming Issues:

- "Missions et pluralité au Mexique / Missions and plurality in Mexico" (24:1, 2011)
- "Historiography: the current state of play" (24:2, 2011)

These and past issues available online: [http://brill.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/brill/ssm](http://brill.publisher.ingentaconnect.com/content/brill/ssm)
New Book Series

A new book series will be published by Springer Verlag, “Studies of Jews in Society,” under the auspices of the Association for the Social Scientific Study of Jewry (ASSJ). The series will publish works that highlight contrasts and diversity between different manifestations of Jewry and the ways in which Jews and Jewry bridge between these diversities and to the wider contexts in which Jews and Jewry are found. Of interest are manuscripts that address different national or religious orientations, religious and secular divides, denominational differences, historical changes, urban-suburban-rural divides, immigrant vs. native (in terms of internal and international migration) and even bridges between different modes of research and analysis (e.g. quantitative vs. qualitative studies of Jews; local vs. national vs. global studies of Jews).

Inquiries and abstracts (including timeline, if possible) may be submitted to Professor Harriet Hartman, Series editor, Rowan University and President, ASSJ, hartman@rowan.edu.

Call for Chapter Proposals

In 2004 and 2008, the SSSP and the Justice 21 Committee published the first two volumes of the Agenda for Social Justice. Those reports contained chapters on a variety of social problems, among them poverty, educational inequality, unemployment, environmental health risks, global economic change, capital punishment, post-Katrina disaster response, gender inequality in the criminal justice system, the vulnerability of ESL students in public schools, surveillance technologies, civil unions, domestic violence.

We are now beginning our work on the third publication, Agenda for Social Justice-2012. This publication is designed to inform the public-at-large about the nation’s most pressing social problems and to propose a public policy response to those problems. This project affirms the commitment of SSSP to social justice, and enables the members of the association to speak on public issues with the sponsorship of the corporate body. This report will be an “agenda for social justice,” in that it will contain recommendations for action by elected officials, policy makers, and the public at large. The report will be distributed as widely as possible to policy makers, those in progressive media, and academics.

The quadrennial report will be a product of the most valid and reliable knowledge we have about social problems and it will be a joint effort of the members and Divisions of SSSP. We invite you to consider preparing a chapter for the 2012 publication. We ask you, individually or with colleagues, to consider submitting a brief proposal (1-2 pp) identifying a social problem of concern to members of SSSP, and respond to the questions:

- What do we know?
- How do we know it?
- What is to be done?

As the coordinating committee for Justice 21, we invite members to prepare a draft statement for a proposed contribution to the 2012 publication, tentatively to be produced and distributed by the Edwin Mellen Press (http://www.mellenpress.com/). For the 2012 edition, confirmed contributors include the following well-known sociologists: Frances Fox Piven, Alejandro Portes, and Amatai Etzioni. Please submit a copy of your 1-2 page proposals to each of the members of the committee by March 1, 2011, and contact us if you have questions or would like additional information. Final manuscripts will be due near the end of 2011, and will appear in print prior to the 2012 SSSP annual meetings in August 2012.

Glenn Muschert (chair), Miami University, muschegw@muohio.edu
Kathleen Ferraro, Northern Arizona University, kathleen.ferraro@nau.edu
Brian Klocke, SUNY Plattsburgh, bkloc001@plattsburgh.edu
JoAnn Miller, Purdue University, jtmiller@purdue.edu
Robert Perrucci, Purdue University, perruccir@purdue.edu
Jon Shefner, University of Tennessee, jshefner@utk.edu

For an expanded discussion of Justice 21, see the May 2001 issue of Social Problems (“Inventing Social Justice”). To see the 2004 and 2008 publications, see the SSSP website at the following address: http://sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/323
ASSOCIATION FOR THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION
2011 Annual Meeting
August 12-14, 2011
Chicago, Illinois

Socially Engaged Religion in Global Context

Benevolence, generosity, kindness, compassion, love, healing, hope, reconciliation, peace; but also social service, education, political struggle, economic reform or violence and war. Religions motivate people to act in socially meaningful ways whether that be through ritual, personal prayer, a small group, a local congregation, an inner city mission, a national political movement, a transnational social justice or revolutionary movement, or numerous other forms concerned with social change. Religions are often the source of prosocial and oppositional behavior that motivates participants to engage the world. Religious traditions embody cultural resources that claim to seek the welfare of others and the betterment of the world in which they are embedded. To what extent are religions concerned with these qualities and how do they operate in the local and global worlds that we all inhabit? What theoretical resources and empirical strategies are we developing to gauge and understand this performance dimension of religion and religious movements?

Papers and discussion sessions on all themes in the sociology of religion are welcome, but especially those relating to the meeting theme including, but not limited to, the following:

- Contemporary and historical religio-political and religio-national movements
- Violence and religion
- Altruism and religion
- “Faith-based” social initiatives
- Engaged Buddhism, Pentecostal social engagement, and the like
- Religious liberationist movements
- Religious environmental activism
- Religion and volunteerism
- Theorizing religion in the “public sphere”
- Religion and post-war/violence reconciliation
- Religious NGOs and INGOs
- Religion, health, and healing
- Religious dimensions of secular ethical discourses
- Religion and civil society
- Cultural, spiritual, and social capital in relation to religious social action

DEADLINES:
- Session Proposals are due by January 31, 2011
- Paper Proposals and Abstracts are due by February 28, 2011

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
- Submit your proposal by email as a Word attachment to ASR2011@augustana.edu. Place the title of your proposal first, then names, affiliations, and email addresses of all authors, then your abstract/proposal, all on one sheet of paper.
- Limit paper abstracts to a maximum of 100 words.
- 2011 membership in ASR is required for program consideration (one author, for multi-authored papers see http://www.sociologyofreligion.com/).
- Do not submit proposals prior to 1 January 2011.

PROGRAM CHAIR:
Michael Wilkinson, Department of Sociology, Trinity Western University, Langley, BC, Canada V2Y 1Y1.
Research on religion from social scientific perspectives takes many different forms. It varies by discipline, theoretical orientation, research questions, methodological strategy, available funding, and so on. This year’s meeting will focus on the question of how the processes of research take place at levels ranging from the local to the cross-national.

Following the emphasis in last year’s call for papers on religion in global perspective, the aim will be to examine the challenges that face researchers working at the local, national, international, and cross-national levels. This will involve discussion of the material, academic, political, legal and intellectual conditions that help to frame religion as an object for research at these levels. With these themes in mind, a special plenary session will examine two large-scale programs of research in the UK and Canada. Other sessions will explore the variety of approaches to research in the scientific study of religion in different regions of the world.

Proposals for sessions and papers on any topic in the scientific study of religion are welcome. We particularly invite proposals that shed light on the opportunities and challenges of researching religion. This year’s meeting will showcase the diversity of scholarly debates about the concepts, theories, and methods that inform research. It will also highlight the opportunities for collaborative work, the training of researchers, and the limitations imposed on their investigations. As usual, presentations on the findings of research on any aspect of religion are strongly encouraged.

All session and paper proposals must be submitted via the on-line submission system that will be available on the SSSR’s website, www.sssrweb.org, beginning January 15, 2011. In addition to the session proposers full contact information, a session proposal requires a session title and an abstract of not more than 150 words describing the goal of the session and how the proposer expects the session to contribute to scientific knowledge about religion. Paper proposals require the name(s) of the author(s), first author’s full contact information, an abstract of not more than 150 words that succinctly describes the question(s) motivating the research, the data and methods used, and what the paper contributes or expects to contribute to the knowledge or understanding of religion. The submission deadline is March 1, 2011.

Important Dates

Submissions Open: January 15, 2011
Submissions Close: March 1, 2011
Decision Notification: April 5, 2011

Please direct questions to:
Stephen McMullin, Program Chair
Acadia University, Nova Scotia, Canada
stephen.mcmullin@acadia.edu

---

From the Editor

Better late than never, as they say. Here, finally, is the Fall 2010 ASA Sociology of Religion Section Newsletter. This always takes a bit of time to put together, and unfortunately, what with an unusually busy schedule this fall, I also decided to redesign the newsletter for this, my last year as editor. Hopefully you like the new look and can find the usual items you’re looking for, as well as a couple of new sections. If you don’t like this look, you’ll only have to put up with it for two more issues!

The next issue of the newsletter will be out in Late February, and I’ll be asking for contributions in mid-January.

Richard Flory, University of Southern California