

Sociology of Religion,

Sociology 3440-090

Summer 2014, University of Utah

Dr. Frank J. Page

Office Room 429 Beh. Sci., Office
Hours: Thursday - Friday, Noon – 4:00-pm

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I. Goals:

The primary goal of this class is to give students a sociological understanding of religion as a powerful, important, and influential social institution that is associated with many social processes and phenomena that motivate and influence how people act and see the world around them. The class will rely on a variety of methods that include comparative analysis, theoretical explanations, ethnographic studies, and empirical studies designed to help students better understand religion and its impact upon societies, global-international events, and personal well-being. This overview of the nature, functioning, and diversity of religious institutions should help students make more discerning decisions regarding cultural, political, and moral issues that are often influenced by religion.

II. Topics To Be Covered:

The course is laid out in two parts. The first section begins with a review of conventional and theoretical conceptions of religion and an overview of the importance and centrality of religion to human societies. It emphasizes the diversity and nature of "religious experience" in terms of different denominations, cultures, classes, and individuals. This is followed by overview of sociological assumptions and theories and their application to religion. A variety of theoretical schools including, functionalism, conflict theory, exchange theory, sociology of knowledge, sociobiology, feminist theory, symbolic interactionism, postmodern and critical theory will be addressed and applied to religion.

The second part of the course begins with a comparative analysis of the major religions in terms of beliefs, values, norms, practices, and rituals as seen from different theoretical points of view. The comparative analysis surveys Western, Eastern, New Age, and Native American religions, and unaffiliated groups in terms of their defining beliefs and practices, and concludes with an analysis of the major commonalities and differences between Eastern and Western

Religions, Alternative, Native American religions, and unaffiliated groups that include agnostics, atheists and existentialists. This is followed by a discussion of issues associated with modernity, fundamentalism, terrorism, a critical analysis of religion, and the future of religion. Throughout the course issues associated with the benefits of religion, and issues associated with social change, patriarchy, prejudice, violence, sexism, conflicts between science and religion, modernity, and the separation of church and state will be addressed. The course concludes with a study of master trends in religion in the 21st century.

III. Pedagogy, Exams, and Papers:

This class will utilize a variety of teaching approaches that include lectures, in online responses and discussion, films, and guest speakers representing different religious perspectives. There will be a midterm, a final exam and a paper.

The paper should be from four to six double spaced pages in length. There are four options for the paper. The first option (A) calls upon the student to do participant observer or ethnographic research on a religion or religious practice. The student who chooses this option will spend time throughout the semester in a particular religious institution or group that she is not affiliated with and record her experiences in a journal. The journal will conclude with a summary of her observations in terms of what she has learned and any insights or hypotheses and their relevance for theories and concepts addressed in class. The second option (B) allows the student to write a formal research paper that addresses a particular religion, religious practice, or a political or moral issue associated with religion or influenced by religious views. For this option, the student may also develop a hypothesis regarding religion and carry out an appropriate experiment or survey that will shed light on it. The third option (C) entails writing a comparative analysis of any two religions or religious and philosophical perspectives. For example, this could entail comparing Eastern and Western Religions or comparing western religion to existentialism. This analysis should reflect sociological concepts and theories discussed in class. The fourth option (D) entails writing a sociological analysis or response to one of the books or movies on the suggested readings and movies lists. This paper should summarize the major themes and ideas in the book and conclude with a critical analysis of the book or movie in terms of concepts and research addressed in the class. Plagiarism will result in an E for the assignment, so be sure to do your own work and proper citations, and follow APA or ASA guidelines

Videos are essential to this class. There are three categories of videos, (1) Required, (2) Recommended, and (3) Suggested. Required and Recommended videos can be watched on line on Canvas. There are ten Required videos and they must be watched and will be on exams. Some of these are very short, from 15 to thirty minutes. The Recommended Videos should be watched if you want a more complete and deeper grasp of the materials. Suggested videos are videos or full-length movies that you can watch and write a paper about. They are not online. You can find them at the Marriott Library, online, or at local video stores.

Students are advised to stay at least one week ahead in the readings and assigned videos. Much of the class discussion will be based on the readings and videos, so please complete them in a timely fashion. Also, while it may appear that there are a lot of readings,

most of the readings in the reader and on E-Reserve are very short, from two to four pages. The key to doing well in this class is doing the readings, watching or listening to the lectures, watching the assigned videos, and reflecting on the materials addressed in class. It is a reading, thinking, writing class.

IV. Exams and Grading

Grading for this class is based on two exams and a paper. There will be an objective midterm worth 75 points, and an objective final worth 75 points. Before each exam there will be an online review and time for the instructor to respond to any emailed questions concerning the exam. The paper is worth 60 points, making a total of 210 points possible.

Students can earn an additional 10 extra credit points. To earn 5 of these extra credit points simply go online to the class web cite and post a comment or question or reply on the discussion site 5 times during the semester. Make sure your responses have to do with class materials. Posting up to set up study groups or find out when the exam is won't count as extra credit, so post up with a comment or response. Students can also receive an additional 5 points by watching one of the recommended online-videos posted on line, and writing and submitting a two page double spaced paper summarizing the video. Extra credit points will raise your overall grade percentage score. the grading scale for the class will be 90-99%=A, 80-89%=B, 70-79%=C, 60-69%=D, 59% & below = E. If no student, or not many students get 100%, I will add points to all the scores, raising them up so that a number of students get 100%. If Given adequate notice the syllabus maybe changed and does not constitute a contract.

V. Texts: There are two texts and some readings on E-Reserve at the Marriott Library. The majority of the E-Reserve Readings are short introductory articles that may be only two or three pages long. Because there are many lectures and some videos to watch, I have limited the amount of reading. The total amount of time spent per week watching lectures, reading, and watching videos should average about four to five hours per week, which is equal to the total time normally spent on a three credit hour class.

Gods in the Global Village. The World's Religions in Sociological Perspective. Second Edition, Pine Forge Press, 2007

God and His Demons. Michael Parenti, Prometheus Books, 2010

Assigned Readings on E. Reserve: These can be accessed through the Marriott Library. To do this, you should go on line to the University of Utah, and under libraries, click on J. Willard Marriott. Then click on Student Course Reserves and a Search Box will appear. Type Frank Page 3440 in the Search Box. Then click the Go button and the list of reserve readings should appear. You can then click on the appropriate reading and read it online or print it out.

VI. Summer Course Special Note.

In order to teach this course during summer semester, I have had to condense sixteen weeks into twelve. Accordingly, the students will cover more material material in a week than they would during other semesters. That being the case I advise students to avoid getting behind, and when possible get ahead in terms of readings and lectures. That will make the course less stressful and more enjoyable.

VII. Course Outline

Week One, (May 12): Defining and Studying Religion / Religious Vocabulary.

Lectures 1-7

- Gods in the Global Village Chapter One: Religious Life in the Global Village.
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction, Wade Clark Roof (1-4)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Classical Sociological Definitions of Religion, Patricia Chang (5-8)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Elementary Forms of the Religious life, Emile Durkheim. (9-14)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: From Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, Karl Marx (15-16)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Religion as a Cultural System, Clifford Geertz (16-22)
- Online Video: The Amish (Required)

Week Two (May 19): Basic Sociological Model and Religion / Institutions and the Social Order / Roles/ Status / Class, Stratification, Authority / Power / Social Change

Lectures 8-14

- God's in the Global Village. Chapter Five. The Religious Ethos.
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Religious Organizations, Institutions, and Authority, Susanne C. Monahan (225-230)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Race, Ethnicity, and Religion, Michael Emerson (78-79)
- E. Reserve: Mountain People. Colin N. Turnbull
- E. Reserve, Jonestown as Perverse Utopia, Rose Laub Coser.
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Social Class and Religion, William Mirola (144-150)
- Online Video: Magic and Religion (Required)

Week Three, (May, 26): Sociological Theory Applied to Religion: Functionalism, Theories of deviance, Free Will & Participant Observe Bias, and Social Change)

Lectures 15-21

- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Belief and Ritual, Susanne Monahan (30-34)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: The Sacred Canopy, Peter L. Berger (23-29)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Religious Experience, William MacDonald Angels, and Kenneth Woodward. (55-57)
- Online Video: The Polygamists (Required)

[Week Four, \(June 2\) Sociological Theory Applied to Religion: Conflict Theory, Exchange Theory, Symbolic Interactionism](#)

Lectures 22-27

- God and His Demons. Part I. All in the Bible.
- God and His Demons Part II. Divine Design
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Ways of Seeing Ecstasy in Modern Society: Experiential-Expressive and Cultural-Linguistic Views., David Yamane, Megan Polzer (70-77)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Salvation on Sand Mountain, Gaines (37-42)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Gender and Religion, Lori Beaman (115-117)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Introduction to Sexual Identity and Religion, William Mirola. (173-175)
- E. Reserve: Sociology of Religion Reader: Negotiating a Religious Identity: The Case of the Gay Evangelical, Scott Thumma (189-195)
- Online Video: Bill Moyers On Faith and Reason. Interview with Salmon Rushdie (Required)

[Week Five, \(June 9\): Social Theory Applied to Religion: Symbolic Interactionism, Sociology of Knowledge, Phenomenology, Feminism, Neo-Marxists, Critical Theorists, Post-modernism, Gods, Devils, Evil, and Faith as Social Cosntructions.](#)

Lectures 28-30

- God and His Demons Part III. When the Ethereal Becomes Material
- God and His Demons Part IV. Hypocrites, Reactionaries and Vipers
- God and His Demons part V. Theocracy, Past, Present and Future
- Online Audio Lecture: The Political Uses of Religion. Michael Parenti (Recommended)
- Online Video: (recommended) Evil in the Modern World, Bill Moyers and Susan Neiman

[Week Six: \(June 16\): Midterm Review and Objective Midterm on all materials from week One through week Five and Lectures 1-31.](#)

Lecture 31: Midterm Review

Online Midterm: June 19-20.

Online Video: Ten Commandments: History Channel (Required) *Not on midterm

Online video: Inside Islam (Required) *Not on midterm, but required for final*

[Week Seven: \(June 23\): Pre-Axial Age, Polytheism, to Monotheism in the West Zoroastrianism / Judaism, Ten Commandments / Separation of Church and State / Christianity and Islam](#)

Lectures 32-39

- Gods in the Global Village Chapter 3. The Tour: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (Judaism, Christianity)
- E-Reserve, The World As I See It. Albert Einstein. Religion & Science.
- Gods in the Global Village Chapter 3, (Islam, Tribal Continuities in Judaism and Islam, The Social Construction of Religious Traditions. The Elementary forms of Religious Life.)
- Online Video: The Twentieth Century, True Believers (Required)
- Online Video: Eastern Religions (Recommended)

[Week Eight: \(June 30\): Eastern Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucius, Daoism, Shintoism.](#)

Lectures 40-44

- Gods In the Global Village: Turning East. Chapter 2
- Gods In the Global Village: Indigenous Religions Chapter 4
- E-Reserve: Think on These Things. Krisnumurti, Education: pp 1-26.
- E-Reserve Spiral Dance, Starhawk, Chapter One
- Online Video: Hopi (Recommended)

[Week Nine. \(July 7\) Alternative, Indigenous Religions, Comparative Analysis of Eastern and Western Religions and New Age Religions, Agnosticism, Atheism, Existentialism](#)

Lectures 45-47

- Gods in the Global Village: Chapter 6, Modernism and Multiculturalism.
- E-Reserve: Emma Goldman, The Philosophy of Atheism., from The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens Editor.
- E-Reserve: Mark Twain, Thoughts of God, From "Fables of Man, Bible Teaching and Religious Practice From Europe and Elsewhere" and "A Pen Warmed Up in Hell," from The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens Editor.
- E-Reserve: Albert Einstein, Selected Writing on Religion, from The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens Editor.
- E-Reserve: Salman Rushdie, "Imagine There's No Heaven", from The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens Editor.

- E-Reserve Lower Than Angels: Benjamin Hale, Harper's Magazine 6/11
- Online Video: Colin McGinn Atheist (Required)
- Online Video: Religulous with Bill Maher (Recommended)

[Week Ten: \(July 14\): Philosophical, Biological, Psychological, and Anthropological views on the Origins Religion and Magic \(Zeitlin\)](#)

Lectures 48-52

- Gods in the Global Village. Chapter 8. Religion and Social Conflict.
- E-Reserve. The God Delusion, Richard Dawkins, Chapter Five.
- E-Reserve Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved Frans De Wall, Princeton University Press, 2006, Introduction pp.
- E-Reserve: God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything, Christopher Hitchens, Chapter Seven,
- E-Reserve, The Causes of World War Three, Chapter 21, A Pagan Sermon, C. Wright Mills.
- E-Reserve: The End of Faith, Chapter One, Reason in Exile, Sam Harris
- Online Video: Crisis of Faith (Required)
- Online Video: Jesus Camp (Required)

[Week Eleven: \(July 21\) Modernity, Conflict, Cults, Fundamentalism, Terrorism](#)

Lectures 53-57

- Gods in the Global Village. Chapter 7. Religions Movements for a New Century.
- Sociology of Religion, Lundscow, Chapter 7, Cults.
- E-Reserve: Beyond Fundamentalism: Confronting Religious Extremism in the Age of Globalization, Reza Aslan. Prologue and Introduction
- E-Reserve, The True Believer, Eric Hoffer, Chapter Two: The Desire for Substitutes,
- E-Reserve: Infidel, Ayann Hirisi, Chapter Two. Under the Tala Tree
- E-Reserve: Acts of Faith, The Story of An American Muslim, The Struggle for the Soul of a Generation, Eboo Patel,
- Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber (Required)
- Online Video: the Glory and the Power: Fighting Back (Recommended)

[WeekTwelve: \(July 28\): Critical Interdisciplinary Analysis of Religion. / Trends in Religion, Secularization or New Axial Age, \(Lundscow, Armstrong, Walsh, Krisnumurti\) / Final Exam](#)

Lectures 58 Final Review

- E-Reserve: Does God Have A Future? Karen Armstrong.
- E-Reserve: Tomorrow's God, Neale Donald Walsh, Chapter 1 & 2

- E-Reserve: The Moral Landscape. Sam Harris, pp. 145-152
- E-Reserve: God's Politics. Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It. Jim Wallis . Introduction. pp. xvii-xxviii Why Can't We Talk about Politics.
- Papers Due Monday July 29th.
- Online Final. July 31- August 1

VII. Required Online Video and Audio Content

- The Amish (40 min.)
- Religion and Magic (30 min,)
- Ten Commandments (History Channel) (100 min)
- Inside Islam: Religion in the Modern World (100 min.)
- True Believers: In the Modern Century (100 min.)
- The Polygamists (50 min.)
- Jesus Camp (60 min.)
- Inside the Mind of a Suicide Bomber. (60 min.)
- Crisis of Faith (60 min,)
- Colin McGee (Interview with Bill Moyers) 30 minutes
- Elmer Gantry (clip) (Fundamentalism) 14 minutes.
- Lust for Life (clip) (Liberation Theology) 14 minutes.

VIII. Recommended Online Videos

- The Glory and the Power: Fighting Back (60 min.)
- Evil in the Modern World (Susan Neiman and Bill Moyers)
- Bill Moyers on Faith and Reason: Salmon Rushdie
- Michael Parenti, Part One and Two. (audio only)
- Bill Moyers: Ann Provost (Noah's Arc), and David Grossman (Samson)
- The Glory and the Power: This is Our Land (fundamentalism)
- The Glory and the Power: Remaking the World (fundamentalism)
- The Longest Hatred (Anti-Semitism)
- End of Times, Left Behind (History channel)
- Constantine's Sword (James Carroll)
- The World In Our Eyes (Native American Religion)
- Richard Dawkins: An Atheists call to Arms.
- Prayer In America
- Tao Te Ching (audio only)
- Western Religions (survey)
- Eastern Religions (survey)
- History of God, Karen Armstrong
- The Power of Nightmares (Christian and Muslim neo-conservatives)
- Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land. (Israeli Palestinian conflict and media, Noam Chomsky)
- Inside the Great Silence (life in a monastery)

- Letting Go of God. (Comedians move to atheism)
- Voodoo Rituals (documentary)
- Satan: Prince of Darkness (History Channel)
- The Four Horsemen: Hitchens, Dawkins, Dennett, Harris, (atheist dialogue)
- Missionaries of Hate : (documentary on Evangelicals and anti-gay politics in Uganda)
- Sex in a Cold Climate: (Documentary on Cruel Catholic Work Houses run by Nuns in Ireland)
- The Magdalene Sisters: (Movie based on documentary about cruel catholic work houses run by Nuns. in Ireland)

IX. Suggested Readings:

- 50 Spiritual Classics, Tom Butler-Bowdon
- God's Politics, Jim Wallis
- The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success, Rodney Stark
- Everything You Know About God is Wrong, Edited by Russ Kick
- The Origins of Totalitarianism. Hannah Arendt
- Why God Won't Go Away, Brain Science & the Biology of Belief, Newberg & Rause
- Why I Am Not A Christian, Bertrand Russell
- Civilization and its Discontents, Sigmund Freud
- Varieties of Religious Experience, William James
- Life is a Miracle, Wendell Berry
- The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Emile Durkheim
- The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Max Weber
- The "God" Part of the Brain, A scientific Interpretation of Human Spirituality and God, Mathew Alper
- Journey to Ixtlan, Carlos Castaneda
- The Places that Scare You.: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times. Pema Chodron
- The Tao of Physics. The Parallel Between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism. Fritjof Capra
- Strong Religion, The Rise of Fundamentalism Around the World, Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan
- The True Believer, Eric Hoffer
- The Voice of the Buddha. The Dhammapada and other key Buddhist Teachings. Manjusura
- The Confessions of Saint Augustine, Saint Augustine
- When Religion Becomes Evil, Charles Kimball
- The Denial of Death or Escape From Evil, Ernest Becker
- Consilience, Edward O. Wilson
- The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion, Peter Berger
- The Sociology of Religion, Max Weber
- The End of Faith, Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason, Sam Harris
- Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran, Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer

- Remember, Be Hear Now. Ram Dos
- The Autobiography of Malcolm X. Alex Haley
- Black Elk Speaks. Diary of a Holy Man. John G Neihardt
- The Anatomy of Peace, The Arbinger Institute
- The Devil, Peter Stanford
- A History of God, Fundamentalism, Karen Armstrong
- The Great Transformation, Karen Armstrong
- Wherever You Go There You Are, Jon Kabat Zinn
- Mountains and More Mountains. Dr. Paul Farmer
- Under the Banner of Heaven, A Story of Violent Faith, John Karkauer
- Galileo's Daughter, A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love, Dava Sobel
- The God Delusion, Richard Dawkins
- American Theocracy, Kevin Phillips
- Beyond Good and Evil, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche
- Think on These Things, Krishnamurti
- Infidel, Ayaan Hirsi Ali
- The Infidel's Guide to the Koran. Robert Spencer
- Acts of Faith, The Story of An American Muslim. Eboo Patel
- The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation, A. L. Mauss
- Mormon America, The Power and the Promise. R. N. Ostling and J. K. Ostling
- Secret Ceremonies, Deborah Laake (Mormon experience with ostracism)
- The Crucible, Arthur Miller (Salem Witch Trials)
- Tomorrow's God: Our Greatest Spiritual Challenge. Neal D. Walsch
- The Portable Atheist, Christopher Hitchens
- God is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything, Christopher Hitchens
- Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, Steven Prothero
- In the Wake of 9/11: The Psychology of Terror, Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg
- Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence, M. Juergensmeyer
- The Razor's Edge, Somerset Maugham
- Siddhartha, Herman Hesse
- Beyond the Chains of Illusion, Eric Fromm
- The Power of Now. Eckhart Tolle
- Long Way Gone, Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, Ishmael Beah
- The Art of War, Sun Tzu (Taoist text)
- God's Battalions, The Case for the Crusades, Rodney Stark
- Primates and Philosophers: How Morality Evolved. Frans De Wall
- The World As I See It. Albert Einstein
- Conversations with God. Neal Walsch
- Road to Mecca, Muhammad Asad
- Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis
- How to Win a Cosmic War, God, Globalization and the End of the War on Terror, Reza Aslan.
- The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of The Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess. Starhawk
- The Way of the Peaceful Warrior. Dan Millman
- The Qur'an. Bruce Lawrence
- The Purpose Driven Life. Rick Warren

- Seven Theories of Religion. Daniel L. Pals
- The Moral Landscape: Sam Harris
- American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon, Stephen Prothero
- The Glorious Qu'ran, Marmaduke William Pickthall
- Upanishads (Hindu philosophical meditations)
- Rig-Veda (Hindu hymns to Pantheon of gods)
- Quran (Koran)
- Old or New Testament, Bible
- Torah (First five books of the Bible)
- The Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith
- Wu Ching, (Confucianism, five classic works)
- Sutra Pitka (Discourse of the Buddha)
- Tao Te Ching, Lao Tse (Taoism)
- The Art of Loving, Erich Fromm
- The Art of Being, Erich Fromm
- Escape From Freedom, Erich Fromm
- The Happiness Hypothesis, Jonathan Haidt (Social Psychological analysis of Philosophical and Religious views of happiness and morality)
- The Lucifer Effect:How Good People Become Evil, Philip C.Zimbardo (Social Psychology of Evil)
- Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief, Lawrence Wright
- Inside Scientology. Janet Reitman

X. Suggested Videos (full length movies) (documentaries)

- Moloki, The Story of Father Damien, (Christianity in practice with lepers)
- The Ten Commandments, Charlton Heston (conventional view Old Testament)
- For The Bible Tells Me So. (Critical documentary about gays religious experience.)
- A Light in the Jungle, (Albert Schweitzer, a Christian life)
- The Rapture, (fictional drama about evangelical beliefs regarding end times)
- Everyman for Himself, and God Against All, (socialization without God)
- When Nietzsche Wept, (bio on Nietzsche & Freud) Armand Assante, Ben Cross)
- Religulous, Bill Maher (atheist criticism of religion)
- Elmer Gantry, Burt Lancaster (fundamentalist hegemony)
- The Black Robe, (religious / cultural imperialism)
- Gulliver's Travels, Jonathan Swift (social criticism of religion and government)
- Galileo's Daughter, (Knowledge and the conflict between religion and science)
- What the Blib Do I Know? (human nature, epistemology, spirituality)
- Jesus Camp, (documentary on aggressive evangelicals)
- 8:The Mormon Proposition. (Mormon politics)
- Mind Walk, (existential and religious views on modernity)
- TheRazor's Edge, (existentialism) Bill Murray
- The Mission, (religion and colonial exploitation), Robert De Niro
- Jonestown, The Life and Death of the Peoples Temple, (Documentary)
- The Last Temptation of Christ, (Radical dramatization of the crucifixion of Christ)
- The Mormons PBS

- God in America. PBS
- Friendly Persuasion, Gary Cooper (colonial American, Puritans, Syncretism)
- The Crucible, Arthur Miller (Salem Witch Trials)
- September Dawn, John Voight (Mountain Meadow Massacre)
- Inherit the Wind, George C. Scott, (Scopes Trial)
- Resurrection, Ellen Burstyn (Gift of Healing)
- A Serious Man. Cohen Brothers (anomie and religious culture)
- Lust for Life, Kirk Douglas (Biography of Vincent Van Gogh)
- Sons of Perdition, (ex Mormon Polygamists)
- The Examined Life. (Morality, Existentialism, Modernity)
- Martin Luther (Stacy Keach) bio-drama
- The Four Horsemen: Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Daniel C. Dennett, Sam Harris, (atheist dialogue)
- The Scarlet Letter. Colonial Puritan America
- Sex in a Cold Climate (Documentary on Cruel Catholic Work Houses in Ireland)
- The Magdalene Sisters (Movie based on documentary about cruel catholic work houses run by Nuns. in Ireland)
- The Bible, In the Beginning, George C. Scott, (Old Testament, Hollywood style)
- Missionaries of Hate, (Evangelical persecution of Gays in Uganda) (documentary)
- Peaceful Warrior. (drama, fiction, Buddhism applied in modern America)
- Rabbit Proof Fence. (Religion and modernity)
- My American Uncle (modernity and alienation)
- Breaking the Waves (Religion, guilt, modernity)

We all have things that we want to achieve in our lives. Usually, the path to those things starts by setting goals. Instead, we should focus on systems. This article is an excerpt from Atomic Habits, my New York Times bestselling book. Prevailing wisdom claims that the best way to achieve what we want in life—getting into better shape, building a successful business, relaxing more and worrying less, spending more time with friends and family—is to set specific, actionable goals.