

SPECIALTY SOCIOLOGY

Master's Program in: Sociology and Anthropology of Religion

Educational Qualification Degree: Master's

Professional Qualification: Master in Sociology and Anthropology of Religion

Duration of Study: 2 years

Form of Study: Full-time

QUALIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS

The Master's program "**Sociology and Anthropology of Religion**" for non-specialists is designed for graduates from all fields of higher education. The program is also suitable for young professionals who are interested in analyzing religious trends as well as designing and analyzing sociological research.

The main goal of the program is to develop sensitivity and skills for comparative analysis, expert conduct, and dialogue in the field of religions through the use of various academic methods and practices.

The program plans to build students' sensitivity and reflective skills for comparative analyses, expert behavior, and more through the application of diverse academic methods. Students acquire knowledge in fundamental sociological disciplines such as: Introduction to Sociology, History of Sociology, Quantitative Methods in Sociology, Public Opinion and Media, Social Statistics, Social Stratification and Inequality, Sociology of Social Regulators, Qualitative Methods, Statistical Methods in Sociology, SPSS; as well as specialized knowledge in: Major World Religions, Qualitative Methods and Research on Religions, Demography, Psychology of Religion, and Religious Denominations in Bulgaria.

Graduates of the Master's program possess:

- A broad spectrum of theoretical and practical knowledge specialized in the respective field, building upon prior education; they understand and are familiar with theories, concepts, principles, and regularities in the development of religions;
- Highly specialized practical and theoretical knowledge that forms the basis for originality in developing and applying new ideas and solutions, demonstrating critical awareness of the knowledge in the field and the connections between different studied disciplines;
- A rich set of practical knowledge and approaches necessary for understanding abstract problems and developing creative solutions and diagnostics, based on contemporary research by integrating knowledge from new or interdisciplinary fields.

Graduates of the Master's program possess the following skills:

- They make adequate judgments in situations characterized by incomplete or limited information and unpredictability; they develop new and diverse skills in response to emerging knowledge and practices; they demonstrate the free application of innovative

methods and tools distinguished by originality in solving complex tasks and unforeseen problems within their specialized field; they find and sustain arguments when addressing interdisciplinary problems;

- They exhibit initiative in work and learning in complex and unpredictable environments that require solving problems with multiple interacting factors; they possess skills to create and lead networks or teams, allocate time, and manage human and financial resources; they solve complex problems through new technological methods and tools;

- They quickly locate, extract, organize, synthesize, and evaluate necessary information from various sources; they have skills to solve and overcome critical problems in research and/or innovation; they rapidly acquire new qualities and skills, and anticipate technological and creative development;

- They possess skills such as entrepreneurship, diligence, adaptability, intellectual flexibility, independence, and responsibility, which are developed during the course of the Master's program and the completion of assigned tasks.

Professional Competencies

- Graduates collect, process, and interpret specialized information necessary for solving complex problems within their field of study; they integrate a broad spectrum of knowledge and information sources in new and relatively unfamiliar contexts; they make well-founded judgments and find solutions in complex environments characterized by diverse interactions.

- They are capable of solving problems by integrating complex knowledge sources under conditions of insufficient available information in new and unfamiliar environments; they possess the ability to initiate change and manage development processes in complex settings; they engage with important scientific, social, and ethical issues that arise during their professional work or academic training.

Graduates of the Master's program can pursue careers in various professional fields, including but not limited to:

- Acting as intermediaries in the interaction between religious and civic institutions and organizations, facilitating communication and cooperation.

- Working as sociologists and researchers involved in projects with foundations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including informal and religious groups.

- Serving as consultants in areas such as management, education, and social services, contributing to the development of educational programs and preparation of teaching materials for secondary schools.

- Holding expert positions within non-governmental organizations, providing specialized knowledge and support in their respective fields.

STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

First year			
First semester	ECTS credits	Second semester	ECTS credits
Introduction to Sociology	5	Sociology of Stratification and Inequalities	6
History of Sociology	10	Sociology of Social Regulators	6
Quantitative Methods in Sociology	5	Qualitative Methods	6
Public Opinion and the Media	5	Statistical Methods in Sociology	6
Social Statistics	5	SPSS	6
	Total 30		Total 30
Second year			
Third semester	ECTS credits	Fourth semester	ECTS credits
Major world religions	8.5	Psychology of religion	6
Qualitative methods and the study of religions	8.5	Religious denominations in Bulgaria	6
Demography	8.5	Optional course	3
Optional course	4.5	State examination/master thesis	15
	Total 30		Total 30
Elective courses /third semester/ <i>Students choose one discipline</i>	ECTS credits	Elective courses /fourth semester/ <i>Students choose one discipline</i>	ECTS credits
Religion and politics	4.5	Non-traditional religious communities	3
Methodology of sociological research	4.5	Religion and modernity	3
TOTAL FOR 2 ACADEMIC YEARS: 120 CREDITS			

ANNOTATIONS OF COURSES

COMPULSORY COURSES

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Iveta Yakova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: yakova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The discipline "Introduction to Sociology" aims to introduce students to the "logic" of the science of sociology, which, through the comparative historical method, studies society as

a totality, and in particular individual social institutions, processes, groups and communities. At the heart of sociological thinking is both the interaction between the individual and society, as well as the causes and consequences of social inequality and the social construction of human life.

The training also emphasizes sociological imagination as a means of understanding the connection between the life events (biography) of members of a given society and the society itself (history). In this way, students are encouraged to think critically, beyond the boundaries of their personal lives, and to interpret social reality/society by subjecting to verification the "taken-for-granted" or "common-sense" understandings of community, society, institutions, problems, and so on.

Content of the course:

The lecture course Introduction to Sociology, linked to other sociological disciplines within the curriculum, aims to lay the foundations of sociological literacy. To this end, the course is divided into two modules: theoretical and empirical sociology:

1) Theoretical Sociology covers the conceptual framework: social action and social relations; social function; social stratification; inequalities and mobility; personality formation; types of societies; power and domination; the concept of a political system.

2) Empirical Sociology addresses the methodology and methods of sociological research, as well as the stages and elements of empirical sociological investigation.

The aim of the course is for students to:

- a) master a set of concepts and categories that form the foundation of sociological science;
- b) develop critical thinking in exploring the cause-and-effect relationships behind various forms of social behavior, events, phenomena, etc., through the contextualization and reconstruction of what is happening in terms of "there and then" and "here and now";
- c) build a general understanding of the theoretical approaches and methods used in empirical sociology.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

Students are given the opportunity to be exempt from the final exam. To qualify, they must actively participate in class discussions and receive a grade of "Very Good" or "Excellent" on their case study and coursework.

HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 10

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Dilyana Keranova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: dkeranova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 3 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The history of sociology is not taught as a standalone discipline, but rather as a means of acquiring knowledge that supports the argumentation of sociological analyses in contemporary society. The constant movement between social constellations and the outlining

of various social strata leads to the development and practice of specific "skills of the mind," which are essential to any modern science of society.

Content of the course:

The course covers fundamental sociological schools, concepts, and circles. Students learn to interpret, understand, and analyze social facts, to compare and organize them. When formulating problematic situations in the "here" and "now," they may be able to find answers in the "there" and "then."

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade reflects the results of ongoing assessment and the written exam.

QUANTITATIVE METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The lecture course focuses on the structural features and specific requirements in the process of creating and using the toolkit for Empirical Sociological Research (ESI). It closely examines the organization of work, content requirements, and research issues at each stage of ESI. The course analyzes the cognitive possibilities of different research methods, the limits of empirical knowledge application, and the validity of ESI, as well as potential errors and abuses of empirical sociological information.

The entire cycle of its implementation is simulated, with students developing their own individual projects, including an ESI program, theoretical model, hypotheses, questionnaire, and data processing plan. Students learn to independently analyze data from univariate and bivariate distributions and to work with basic statistical coefficients.

Content of the course:

- To clarify the structural features and specific requirements in the process of creating and using the toolkit for Empirical Sociological Research (ESI);

- To analyze the cognitive capabilities of various research methods, the limits of application of empirical knowledge, and the validity of ESI;

- To analyze possible errors and abuses of empirical sociological information.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course Quantitative Methods in Sociology is determined at the end of the semester based on students' answers to written questions. The final grade reflects the results of ongoing assessments and the exam score.

PUBLIC OPINION AND MEDIA

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Lecturer: Prof. Dobrinka Peycheva, D.Sc.

E-mail: peichevad@swu.bg

Annotation:

The media serve as an expression of agreement or disagreement with a given governance and, in this sense, represent the public aspect of public opinion. There is a direct connection between the media and public opinion, which is the subject of numerous research inquiries and interpretations, applying both classical and contemporary practices in retrospective and current contexts.

The course Public Opinion and Media includes the study of the role of communications and the media in shaping public opinion across different contexts and temporal frames. It reveals the classical and diverse contemporary models and techniques of mass communication influence and their effects, as well as the various methods and techniques for studying them.

Content of the course:

The course includes the study of the role of communications and the media in shaping public opinion across various contexts and time periods. It reveals the classical as well as the diverse contemporary models and techniques of mass communication influence and their effects, along with the different methods and techniques used to study them.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on students' answers to written questions..

SOCIAL STATISTICS

ECTS credits: 5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vera Veleva, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: veleva_v@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The Social Statistics course provides general theoretical knowledge of the fundamental concepts and categories related to population, as well as the approaches and methods for measuring and analyzing data in socio-demographic research. It identifies the main sources of statistical information and presents statistical data from observations conducted by national statistics authorities. The course discusses the application of international regulations (Eurostat, UN, ILO, etc.) and practices of other countries in the field of demographic and social research.

Content of the course:

The methodology and practical organization and implementation of statistical studies of phenomena and processes (natural and mechanical population movement) are examined. These form the basic structures of the population and its development, economic activity of the population (employment and unemployment), income structures, expenses and consumption of the population (household budgets), as well as the educational and health status of the population.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on ongoing assessments and the results of the final exam.

SOCIOLOGY OF STRATIFICATION AND INEQUALITIES**ECTS credits:** 6**Weekly hours:** 1 l + 1 s**Assessment:** exam**Type of exam:** written**Methodical guide:****Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. Valentina Milenkova, DSc, Department of SociologyE-mail: vmilenkova@swu.bg**Annotation:**

Sociology of Stratification and Inequalities is a contemporary scientific discipline with a broad research scope that encompasses numerous issues related to the development of various social groups and their hierarchical organization. A central focus of the subject is the interpretation of social stratification, with two main analytical approaches: the "nominalist" and the "synthetic."

Content of the course:

The four basic systems of stratification are distinguished: Slavery, Caste, Estate (or social order), Class. Special attention is given to the analysis of the "middle class" and its theoretical interpretations, including contributions by Bulgarian authors. The second part of the course covers "social inequalities" and their presence in societies—both historically and especially in contemporary modern societies. In this context, the topic of poverty is also analyzed, along with related concepts, theories, and explanations arising from the notion.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses during the written exam.

SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL REGULATORS**ECTS credits:** 6**Weekly hours:** 1 l + 1 s**Assessment:** exam**Type of exam:** written**Methodical guide:****Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vladislava Lendzhova, PhD, Department of SociologyE-mail: vlendzhova@swu.bg**Annotation:**

The course "Sociology of Social Regulators" examines the key mechanisms and tools that govern and direct social behavior and social relations. Through theoretical analysis and practical examples, it explores social norms, morality, law, religion, culture, media, education, and politics as primary social regulators. Special attention is given to the role of digitalization, globalization, and environmental responsibility in the transformation of social regulators in contemporary society.

Content of the course:

The course offers an interdisciplinary perspective that connects classical and contemporary sociological theories. Students will learn the specifics of key institutional forms and analyze the principles of their functioning in the context of individual socialization.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is based on ongoing assessments during the semester, coursework, and a written exam.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course introduces students to the methodology and techniques of sociological research based on meaningful models of the social world, grounded in socially valid meanings. This is a specific area of sociological knowledge focused on microsociology, the individual, and socio-cultural processes and contradictions. This branch of sociology studies everyday social practices, natural attitudes, and the practical logic characteristic of different social communities. A key idea behind the course is to overcome the common perception of opposition between qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology.

Content of the course:

The object of qualitative research is individuals as performers of social roles, while the subject of study is the nature of the performance of these roles. Essential sociological concepts introduced include interaction, lifeworld, personal meaning, hermeneutics, formal rationality, practical logic, dramaturgical sociology, and interpretative sociology.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade reflects the results of ongoing assessments and the exam grade.

STATISTICAL METHODS IN SOCIOLOGY

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vera Veleva, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: veleva_v@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course on the application of statistical methods in sociology covers part of the general theory of statistics, clarifying the fundamental theoretical concepts, the cognitive nature of the logic, and the principles of the statistical approach in studying socio-economic processes. Special emphasis is placed on the methodology and techniques of sample surveys,

statistical inference, and hypothesis testing based on data from sociological research. The application of methods in practical sessions is developed through the use of computer technology and problem-oriented software products. Information is provided about the national statistical information system and its harmonization with European statistics (Eurostat).

Content of the course:

The material presentation focuses primarily on the essence and cognitive capabilities of various statistical methods and characteristics (indicators), the conditions for their practical application, accurate interpretation, and formulation of statistical findings and conclusions during the organization and conduct of sample sociological studies.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the term based on the results of a written test and ongoing assessments throughout the semester.

SPSS

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Petrana Stoykova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: petrana_stoikova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 1 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course is focused on mastering the capabilities of modern specialized software tools for statistical processing and analysis of empirical data from sociological research. The need for knowledge and skills in working with specialized software products is driven by the development of applied sociological research and is directly related to the future professional realization of sociology students.

Content of the course:

The use of specialized statistical software enhances the ability to master and apply the apparatus of applied statistics in the analysis of empirical data from sociological studies. During the course, ongoing assessments are made of the students' skills in performing the various elements of sociological data processing.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course concludes with a written exam in which students present an analytical report applying specific statistical procedures (descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing for comparing empirical distributions, parameters, and analysis of dependencies) based on the data from the conducted study.

MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

ECTS credits: 8.5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 3 l + 1 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The lectures outline and problematize key categories, concepts, and principles that help navigate the so-called religious dilemmas of modernity. The course adopts a dynamic, rather than fixed, definition of the religious. It traces real trends in the religiosity of modern society — religious pluralism, religious mobilization, secularization, civil religions, secular and laic religions. Results from empirical sociological research (ESR) as well as from the application of qualitative methods are presented.

Content of the course:

The discipline introduces fundamental categories, concepts, and principles that facilitate orientation within the so-called religious dilemmas of modernity. It examines changes and transformations in the religious sphere through precise delimitation of sociological problem areas. It demonstrates which sociological systems hold particular significance in constructing the discipline.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course Major World Religions is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses to written questions.

QUALITATIVE METHODS AND THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**ECTS credits:** 8.5**Weekly hours:** 2 l + 2 s**Assessment:** exam**Type of exam:** written**Methodical guide:****Department of Sociology**

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of SociologyE-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg**Annotation:**

The course aims to develop in students a theoretical understanding of the foundations and traditions of qualitative research in the study of religions, as well as its relevance to contemporary Bulgarian society, while simultaneously combining this with practical know-how and direct experience in its application. Students are introduced to the debate between proponents of quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of religions and the arguments put forward by each side.

Qualitative research has historically remained an underdeveloped field within sociology, which is why the course draws on the work of both classical and contemporary Western scholars to acquaint students with the heuristic potential of qualitative methods. It also examines the few examples from the pre-war traditions of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the new trends and the reasons behind their revival.

Content of the course:

The course traces the main traditions in qualitative research: the Chicago School, anthropology, Max Weber, phenomenological sociology, symbolic interactionism, the "naturalistic" method, the humanistic method, and ethnomethodology. It introduces students to specific methodologies such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, life histories, content analysis, discourse analysis, focus groups, the analysis of advertisements and photographs, and the use of computers in qualitative research on religion. The course discusses the advantages and limitations of each method in application.

It aims to foster in students a theoretical understanding of the foundations and traditions of qualitative research in the study of religions. Students also practice specific methods in order to gather empirical data that may support their future master's theses.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course Qualitative Methods and the Study of Religions is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses to written questions.

DEMOGRAPHY

ECTS credits: 8.5

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. Valentina Milenkova, DSc, Department of Sociology

E-mail: vmilenkova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 l + 2 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course in demography provides theoretical knowledge of the fundamental concepts and categories related to population, as well as the approaches and methods used for measuring and analyzing data in socio-demographic research. It covers the methodology and practical organization of statistical studies on phenomena and processes—both natural and migratory—that shape the basic structures and development of the population. Topics include the economic activity of the population (employment and unemployment), the structure of income, expenditure, and consumption (household budgets), and the educational and health status of the population.

The course outlines the main sources of statistical information and presents data from surveys conducted by national statistical authorities. It also explores the application of international regulations (Eurostat, UN, ILO, etc.) and the practices of other countries in the field of demographic and social research.

Content of the course:

Through the lecture course and the practical knowledge acquired, students master fundamental concepts and categories related to population in the field of demographic and social statistics. Key information sources are used, and various methods are applied; core indicators characterizing the size and structure of populations are calculated and analyzed; the level and intensity of demographic processes are tracked and examined.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The final grade for the course Demography is determined at the end of the semester based on the results of a written test, ongoing assessments, and a coursework project developed using real statistical data.

PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Dilyana Keranova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: dkeranova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 l + 2 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

In every human society, religion appears in some form, which naturally calls for its study. The course offered presents just one aspect of the broader issue—an expression of religion's inherent human dimension. This perspective is both valuable and important: on one

hand, it enriches our understanding of religion itself, and on the other, it can only become comprehensive when supplemented by the insights of all religious disciplines.

The psychology of religion, as an academic discipline, is an empirical science that bases its conclusions on data gathered through processes of research, analysis, and interpretation of various established theories. This, in turn, prompts a fundamental question: What is religion, in essence?

Religion, in all its manifestations, rooted in existing psychological processes, reveals a profound search for meaning in life. Addressing this search requires reference not only to ancient classical texts, but also to the Christian patristic tradition and, in particular, to hagiographic literature—from the earliest times to the present day.

Content of the course:

The course Psychology of Religion is aimed at clarifying the fundamental concepts, categories, and theories in the field. Through the training, students achieve a clear understanding of the nature and specific characteristics of the symbiosis between religion and psychology.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on the evaluation of the projects developed by the students and the research reports they have written..

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN BULGARIA

ECTS credits: 6

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Chief Assist. Prof. Vladislava Lendzhova, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: vlendzhova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 l + 2 s

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The lecture course in this discipline emphasizes theoretical knowledge related to the traditional religious denominations in Bulgaria. It traces the transformations within the religious sphere, the demonitizing (demopolization) of religious traditions, and the profound changes in the system of beliefs and values. Students are introduced to the pluralistic situation in modern societies. Individual and collective existence is analyzed through the lens of the dilemma of modernity in so-called secularized societies. Its legitimacy does not depend solely on religious affiliation to the major religious systems.

Content of the course:

The discipline is focused on measuring religious attitudes. It traces the historical aspect of denominations and presents the principles governing the functioning of different denominations in relation to the family environment and the interpersonal aspects of the community in which the individual develops.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on the evaluation of the projects developed by the students and the research reports they have written.

ELECTIVE COURSES

RELIGION AND POLITICS

ECTS credits: 4.5

Weekly hours: 2 l.

Assessment: exam

Type of exam: written

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Prof. DSc. Valentina Milenkova, Department of Sociology

E-mail: vmilenkova@swu.bg

Annotation:

The lecture course traces changes and transformations in the religious sphere by precisely delineating the relevant problematic areas. It outlines sociological systems that hold specific significance in the construction of the discipline. The evolution of major world religions is examined from a sociological perspective. Students receive information about real trends in modern society—such as religious pluralism, secularization, religious mobilization, and others. Through the presentation of European Social Survey (ESS) results, as well as the use of certain in-depth qualitative methods, opportunities for sociological analysis and comparison are provided. Students are introduced to the latest translated literature, which helps form an adequate perspective and sensitivity towards the subject matter, along with the basic categories, concepts, and principles that aid orientation within the so-called religious dilemmas of modernity. The course adopts a dynamic rather than fixed definition of the religious in contemporary societies. It traces real trends in the religiosity of modern society—religious pluralism, religious mobilization, secularization, civil religions, and both lay and secular religions. Results from the ESS and applications of qualitative methods are presented.

Content of the course:

The discipline includes the study of fundamental categories, concepts, and principles that help orient students within the so-called religious dilemmas of modernity. It presents the changes and transformations in the religious sphere through the precise delineation of sociological problem areas. The course examines which sociological systems hold specific significance in the construction of the discipline.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on the evaluation of the projects developed by the students and the research reports they have written.

METHODOLOGY OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

ECTS credits: 4.5

Weekly hours: 2 l.

Assessment: exam

Type of exam: written

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Annotation:

The discipline aims to develop skills in preparing research projects and to guide students toward their professional development.

Students are placed in an interactive, simulated market environment where they independently formulate individual and group projects, prepare all written components of a real research project, and justify its necessity. Full freedom is given in choosing the topics and formats of the projects. For consultations on specific content areas, students are directed to instructors and experts in the respective fields.

Interactive scenarios are conducted involving the creation of group research projects, the clash of opinions and reaching consensus, public presentations of competing projects, and expert committee meetings to evaluate the projects.

Content of the course:

The discipline is aimed at developing skills in the analysis and interpretation of data from sociological research, as well as mastering the conceptual frameworks necessary for their professional application.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

The course grade is determined at the end of the semester based on the evaluation of the projects developed by the students and the research reports they have written.

NON-TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

ECTS credits: 3

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Mario Marinov, PhD, Department of Sociology

E-mail: mario_marinov@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 l.

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course introduces students to the issues surrounding non-traditional spiritual communities, their main representatives, and their spread in Bulgaria. The aim is to develop in students a sociological sensitivity to the relationship between the individual and the social group: how various non-traditional religious communities, as social formations with different cultures, interact internally, among themselves, and with the broader society. The goal is to "feel" the relationship between empirical observation, data analysis, and sociological theory. It is expected that once students have acquired this perspective and understanding of non-traditional religious communities, they will be able to apply the same approach of observation, analysis, and theorizing to other aspects of life, as well as broaden their understanding of religious communities and their role in contemporary society. Examples are provided of the main representatives of new religious movements, their social aspects, and family-related issues within these movements. Attention is given to the contradictions and conflicts associated with non-traditional religious communities, as well as to the research methods specific to their study. Special focus is placed on the social constructions of reality concerning new religious movements and the particular viewpoint of the sociologist in studying them.

Content of the course:

The course develops in students a sociological sensitivity to the relationship between the individual and the social group. It is aimed at creating an understanding of the connection between empirical observation, data analysis, and sociological theory. Students learn to apply the same approach of observation, analysis, and theorizing to other aspects of life.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

Assessment of the course "Non-Traditional Religious Communities":

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses to written essay questions.

RELIGION AND MODERNITY

ECTS credits: 3

Assessment: exam

Methodical guide:

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Philosophy

Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Antoaneta Nikolova-Georgieva, PhD, Department of Philosophy and Political Science

E-mail: anikolova@swu.bg

Weekly hours: 2 l.

Type of exam: written

Annotation:

The course aims to develop knowledge and skills for the sociological analysis of issues related to the role of religion, religious institutions, religious faith, values, rituals, and traditions associated with it in modern societies. Students become familiar with the fundamental principles, structural dependencies, and trends of the modernization process and the role of the religious factor within it. Emphasis is placed on the current issues of cross-cultural and interfaith relations in post-industrial and information societies, as well as the impact of globalization on the behavior of religious communities.

Content of the course:

Definition of the concept of modernity. Fundamental concepts. Unveiling the essence of rationalism as an ideal type and life strategy. The genesis and evolution of the modern. The place of religious consciousness, religious institutions, and communities within the modern project. Clarifying the role of religious culture in enabling the sociocultural transformation of modernity. Defining the religious factors that contribute to radical transformations in society.

Teaching and Assessment Method:

Assessment of the course "Religion and Modernity":

The final grade for the course is determined at the end of the semester based on students' responses to written essay questions