

University of Redlands Institutional Review Board
**COURSE ACTIVITY INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
CERTIFICATION FORM**

(Form revision date: September 20, 2017)

Please note that approval for Course Activities does not convey approval for publicly presenting the results of those activities outside the classroom. If such results are intended for public presentation or publication, you must complete the full standard IRB application. If you have questions about this, please contact the IRB chair or consult the IRB manual.

Section A. Identification Information

Current date: 6 October, 2017

Semester(s) course taught: Spring 2019

Course name: SOAN 232: Saints, Sects, and Society

Name of instructor: Jim Spickard

Email of instructor: Jim_spickard@redlands.edu

Instructor phone number: XXXXXXXXXXXX

Department: Sociology & Anthropology

A.1. Has the Instructor completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (i.e., CITI training)?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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If you answered "Yes," attach the certificate of completion to this application.



If you answered "No" to the previous question, stop completing this application until you complete the CITI training. Do not submit the application for IRB review.

A.2. Will the students in this class have completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (i.e., CITI training)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
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If you answered "No," please explain why this training is not needed for this course.

This is not a research course and the project is not a research project. It consists of students visits to local religious congregations that are open to the public. These are public events, at which normal rules of decorum apply but at which participants have no special expectations of not being observed.

Section B. Overview

B.1. In lay language, describe the course activity. Summarize its purpose and instructional rationale.

Students will each visit public worship services of two religious congregations unlike their own. While observing the service, they are to look for insights about the group's worldview, its social organization, the types of people who participate in the group, and the things those people gain from this participation. Their observations may include short post-service conversations with participants, of the type that naturally occur in most religious groups after most services. The idea is to familiarize students with a range of religious groups and develop their ability to apply the concepts we learn in class to everyday life.

See the three attachments:

1. Page from the course website describing the assignment
2. "Observational Guide" showing what students should look for, how they should present themselves, etc. (Item #3 on page 1 and the three items in the "Other Notes" section address self-presentation.)
3. Assignment rubric showing the kinds of things I look for when grading.

B. 2. Describe the possible participants, including potential recruitment strategies.

The participants are anyone who is attending the service, most of whom will be members of the congregation. Every religious service has visitors. Our students will be visitors, and thus filling an established social role with which the participants are familiar. People who do not wish to talk with our students will simply not approach them. In my experience, students are always approached by participants who want to give them information about their group.

I have provided a map of Redlands-area congregations at <http://soan232.coolsociology.net/redlands-area-congregations/>, which I update periodically. Other congregations are possible at student request.

B. 3. Describe the data to be gathered and the methods of gathering it.

It is a stretch to call this "data". Students will learn the same things about the congregation that are learned by ordinary non-student visitors. They will, however, identify themselves as coming for a class assignment. See the "Other Notes" section of the attached Observational Guide, especially item #3.

B. 4. Describe the method for obtaining informed consent, if the interaction goes beyond ordinary daily activities. If it does, attach the consent form template.

This project does not need formal informed consent. These are public events and the students are visiting as members of the general public.

B. 5 Does the instructor certify that this course activity conforms to all of the following requirements:

1. Involves minimal risk to human subjects
2. Does not involve vulnerable populations
3. Results will not be distributed outside the classroom
- 4.

X	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
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If you answered "No" to the previous question, stop completing this form and file the full IRB application.

Section M. Certification for Teaching

I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information provided above is complete and accurate.

I agree to obtain approval from the IRB for any modifications of the above protocol as described.

I accept responsibility for ensuring that the rights, welfare, and dignity of the subjects in this study have been protected and are in accordance with applicable federal/state/local laws and regulations and the University's Institutional Guidelines for the Treatment of Human Subjects in Research.

I will report promptly to the IRB all unanticipated problems or adverse events involving the subjects.

I will follow the IRB approved consent process for all subjects.

I will ensure that all personnel conducting the work of this protocol have or will receive appropriate training in the use of human participants in experimentation.

		
Signature of Instructor		6 October, 2017 Date

For IRB use only. Do not write or type below this line.

IRB Decision

Approved

IRB approval number:	
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Date approval starts:	
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Approved with conditions (i.e., the IRB requires as a condition of approval that the investigator make specified changes to the research protocol or informed consent document(s), confirm specific assumptions or understandings on the part of the IRB regarding how the research will be conducted, or submit additional documents)

Not Approved

Signature of IRB Chair	Current date

SOAN 232: Saints, Sects, and Society

Grading Rubric: “Congregation Visits”

From the Syllabus:

- Visit religious services at TWO different local congregations, one relatively denominational and the other relatively sectarian. While there, use your sociological eye to see what is going on.
- For each congregation, write a short (4-page; 1000-word) summary of your visit, using at least **5** of the concepts presented in your textbook, other course readings, and in class to illuminate what you saw. Do not use these comparisons mechanically. Instead, use them as tools to help your readers understand the congregations better.
- Be ready to present a clear, concise 3-minute summary of your observations to the class. I shall call on some class members to present their observations.

These assignments are graded on an “A-B-C-D-F” basis. I translate these grades into points, using the scheme noted on the syllabus. Thus even an “F” can earn some points, though not many. Not turning in the assignment or turning in something that bears no relationship to the assignment earns 0. Grades are scored as follows:

- A : A thorough, thoughtful, and well-written observation report that ably describes the congregational visit, while simultaneously using all five sociological concepts to gain deeper insight into what you have seen. A paper written at this level uses these concepts flexibly, communicating to the reader both a sense of what this congregation is like and illuminating its sociological distinctiveness. The paper is well-grounded in the course readings and in the material covered in class.
- B : A reasonably complete, thoughtful, and decently written observation report ably describes your congregational visit, while simultaneously using four or five sociological concepts to gain deeper insight into what you have seen. A paper written at this level uses these concepts somewhat mechanically without mistaking their meaning. It communicates well with the reader, though it does not present as complete a picture of your visit as does a paper written at the level above. The paper makes reference to and shows a reasonable understanding of the course readings and the material covered in class.
- C : A less complete but still somewhat thoughtful observation report that describes aspects of your congregational visit, using at least two sociological concepts to gain deeper insight into what you have seen. A paper written at this level uses these concepts somewhat mechanically and occasionally mistakes their meaning. As a piece of writing, it is halting and/or fails to hold audience interest. It makes reference to some of the course readings and/or the materials covered in class, without showing much understanding of them.
- D : A very incomplete and unclear observation report that fails to communicate major aspects of your congregational visit. It does not use any sociological concepts to gain

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deeper insight into the visit; indeed, it does not contain much depth. Poorly written, with little or no reference to the course readings and/or the materials covered in class.

F : A mostly incoherent observation report. The reader knows you went somewhere, without being able to tell much about where that “somewhere” was, what exactly you saw, and/or what it has to do with the course topic. If the paper uses sociological concepts, the reader cannot tell what they are. Poorly written.

B+, B-, C+, C-, etc indicate presentations that stand somewhere between these major scores.

Observation Guide

A Guide for Sociological Observations of Religious Groups

ASSIGNMENT

1. Attend the worship service of two religious groups other than your own, one relatively denominational and the other relatively sectarian. *Do the denominational visit first.*
 - Choose a relatively unfamiliar religion, so that you can see it with an outsider's eyes.
 - If you wish, you may go with a friend familiar with that religion, who can help you know how to behave and what to expect. Remember, though, that observers often see things that "insiders" miss (and vice versa).
 - If you go with someone – either an insider, a friend, or someone from this class – limit your group to two, to avoid being obtrusive.
 - Make sure that you attend a major worship service, not a youth group meeting, a prayer circle, or some other event that is not central to the group's religious life.
 - The only exception is if the group is itself very small. Then, their "major" service may be small, too.
 - You will probably wish to stay after the service and talk to people, so they can give you a better idea of what you have seen.
2. Each student will submit her or his own description of the worship service, written well enough to paint a clear picture of the event and its significance for its participants.
 - Write up your fieldnotes immediately after you are done observing (including after you have asked participants any questions you need). Use the "Fieldnotes" template at the end of the syllabus.
 - Use these notes to craft a 4-page (1000-word) essay summarizing your observations.
 - See the "What to Observe" section – below – for guidance about what the essay should include.
3. If the religious group is large and its services are public, you do not need advance permission to attend. If you are visiting a smaller group, however, (e.g., a house church or a meditation circle) it's a good idea to phone a few days ahead and ask permission to observe for your college course.
 - You should also ask consent of any group whose worship services may not be fully public.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

You are looking for insights about the group's worldview, its social organization, the types of people who participate in the group, and the things they gain from this participation. Here are some of the questions you should try to answer:

1. What types of people participate in this event?
 - Look for evidence of economic status, educational status, gender, race/ethnicity, age, life stage, life experience, etc.
 - How homogenous or heterogeneous are they?
 - What types of people participate in what types of roles?
2. What is their basic religious worldview?
 - What religious stories are they telling in their service? How do these stories support the plausibility of their worldview?
 - How do the various elements of the worship service support this worldview? Consider the role played by ritual, dress, music, architecture and so on – and by the degree to which participants do or do not have to be insiders know make sense of what is going on.
 - Why might this worldview be plausible for the types of people who attend the event?

3. How does the group seem to be organized?
 - Do they have specialists? Or does everyone seem to play an equal part?
 - Do they appear to be hierarchical? Or are they seemingly egalitarian?
 - To they run many activities (a school, soup kitchen, missionary outreach, etc.)?
 - What kind of budget must they have, to maintain their activities?
 - *Note: Don't ask this directly. Instead, provide an educated guess based on the sumptuousness of their building, the extent of their activities, and so on.*
4. What other things does the event seem to accomplish for its participants? Here are a few examples of the many questions you may wish to explore:
 - Does there seem to be a clear sense of (internal) community among the participants? What evidence of this do you see?
 - What role might the religion play at various stages in people's life-course?
 - What does the group seem to think about the relationship between insiders and outsiders?
 - What role does the group seem to play in the community at large – either Redlands or the wider world? How does it do so?
5. **You will not be able to cover all of the above questions in any one visit. Choose your focus from among these questions as you see fit.**
 - Remember to use at least five of the concepts you found in the Religion Matters text in your essay. Knowing those concepts well before your visit will deepen your observations.

OTHER NOTES

1. Every religious group has norms about behavior before, during, and after worship services. Established religious groups have somewhat standardized expectations that any visitor ought to try to meet.
 - For guidance, consult How To Be A Perfect Stranger : The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook, edited by Stuart M. Matlins & Arthur J. Magida. There is a copy in the reference section of the Armacost Library (for library use only).
 - It contains a little background about the religion and its worship, recommended clothing (e.g., if head covering is required, whether jewelry is okay, how dressed up one must be), how the sanctuary is arranged, where guests should sit, when not to enter, in which services guests may participate, and which services are for members only.
 - The guide includes Buddhist, Christian Science, Greek Orthodox, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Mormon, Roman Catholic, and Quaker worship as well as several Mainline, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and other Protestant forms of worship.
2. Before attending, think about what you intend to observe, and keep in mind your research objectives (*above*).
3. Also before going, think about the ethical and methodological issues of doing participant observation.
 - Never present yourself to others as something other than who you really are. This is not usually an issue for undergraduates who may attend one or two services as a part of a course assignment. If asked, you may simply say,
 - "I'm a student at the University of Redlands, and my professor assigned us to visit any religious group other than our own, and since I was most interested in learning more about your religion, I came here today."
 - In a previous class, one student who attended an ethnic congregation's service, although he was clearly not of the same ethnic group. He told a curious member: "My professor assigned us to visit some religious group other than my own, and I live near here and noticed what an active church you seem to have, so I wanted to visit this church." All of this explanation was true and provided a perfect opening for the member to then tell the student a lot more about the congregation.

SOAN 232: Saints, Sects, and Society

Spring Semester 2017, University of Redlands

Two Congregational Visits

During the semester, each of you will visit religious services at TWO different local congregations. While there, you should use your sociological eye to see what is going on.

- One of these groups should be relatively **denominational** (we'll learn what this means early in the semester). Your report on that visit is due on the Monday before Spring Break.
- The other should be relatively **sectarian** (we'll learn what this means, too). Your report on that visit is due on the Monday of Week 11.

For either, please check the **Schedule page** of this website for exact dates.

Neither one of these congregations should be of your own religious background. The point is to expand your horizons as well as your observational skills. Ideally, choose something with which you are relatively unfamiliar. Those who were not raised religious will have an easier time of this, but Redlands is home to nearly 60 religious groups; the surrounding communities host many more. You will have plenty of choices, even within walking distance of the Redlands campus. [You can find a map of these congregations HERE.](#) (I welcome suggestions for updating it.)

Please obtain my approval of your chosen congregation before scheduling your visit. I don't want you all to visit the same five groups. That would defeat the point of the exercise. We need to work collectively to expand our horizons, not contract them.

You can find an Observation Guide at the website religionthesocialcontext.com and another on our **Guides and Resources page**. In addition, I can provide handouts and other materials on sociological observation. To find out how to dress, behave, etc., look up your proposed group in [How to be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook](#) (ed. by Matlins & Magida). It's available for library use only in the Armacost Library's reference section.

Here's how you'll report on your two visits:

1. **For each congregation, write a short (4-page; 1000-word) summary of your visit, using at least 5 of the concepts presented in class and in your readings to illuminate what you saw.** Do not use these comparisons mechanically. Instead, use them as tools to help your readers understand the congregations better. **Turn in these papers by noon of the day they are due, at the course Moodle site**, in the appropriate drop box folder.
2. **Also prepare a concise, 3-minute summary of your observations to present orally to the class.** You may use up to 4 slides, unless you wish to use a modified [Mini-PechaKucha format \(details HERE\)](#), in which case you may use 8. In either circumstance, turn in these slides at the course [Moodle site](#) at the same time that you turn in your paper.