

RALPH E. PYLE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
1995, Sociology
Dissertation: *Persistence and Change in the Establishment: Religion, Education, and Gender Among America's Elite, 1950 and 1992.*

M.A. Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
1989, American Studies

B.A. Villanova University, Villanova, PA
1987, English, Summa cum laude

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

August 1997 - present Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Courses taught:

ISS 335, National Diversity and Change: The United States
Sociology 100, Introduction to Sociology
Sociology 316, Youth and Society
Sociology 488, Sociological Theory
Sociology 499, Social Issues and Change in Society
Sociology 890, Independent Readings: Sociology of Religion

August 1996 - June 1997 Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Courses taught:

Sociology 101, Introduction to Sociology
English 102, Literature and Composition

August 1995 - June 1996 Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Nevada, Reno

Courses taught:

Sociology 100, Introduction to Sociology
Sociology 392, Research Methods
Sociology 719, Graduate Research Methods

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Stratification	Race and Ethnicity
Religion	Research Methods
Theory	Social Problems
Social History	

TEACHING

Since 1997, I have been teaching full time in the Sociology Department at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. I have enjoyed considerable success teaching large introductory sociology and ethnic diversity classes. For 2007, I received the MSU Sociology Department's Excellence in Teaching Award. The award is based on student evaluations. I have been told that my classes are among the first to be filled each semester. The success I have enjoyed as a teacher is due in part to my awareness of the needs and interests of the students and my ability to make a personal connection with those in my classes. I believe that classroom activities should be both informative and interesting for students and that faculty members need to use innovative strategies to maintain student involvement.

I frequently use interactive methods of instruction. I also use a variety of strategies for teaching within a single class period, including lectures, discussions, video presentations, and journal writing. I regularly divide the classes into smaller groups for work on special projects and interactive assignments. In addition, I assign journals, which allow students to respond in a risk-free environment to a variety of topics relating to the concepts we address in class. For example, after presenting an overview of theories of deviance, I'll ask students to write about an example of deviant behavior that they have observed and to indicate which of the theories of deviance is best for explaining the behavior.

Teaching evaluations indicate that students appreciate the enthusiasm I display and my use of personal examples to illustrate various sociological concepts. The evaluations also show that I encourage student discussions and provide straight-forward presentations in the classroom. The highest evaluations are in the area of student-instructor interaction.

I am also involved in mentoring graduate students who serve as assistants in the courses I teach. The graduate teaching assistants need guidance in grading papers, writing test questions, and giving classroom presentations. I have developed good working relationships with undergraduates and graduate students that I have worked with on joint research projects. I have served on the dissertation committees of several graduate students, and an article that I co-authored with a graduate student was published in *Social Compass*. Each summer I informally mentor several graduate students who are teaching for the first time. I also give a presentation each fall on the topic of teaching for the new Sociology graduate students during their orientation session. I have also served as a mentor for recipients of undergraduate scholarships, including the Social Science Dean's Assistantship and the McNair/SROP scholarship.

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

Ralph E. Pyle. 1996. *Persistence and Change in the Protestant Establishment*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Peer-reviewed journals

Ralph E. Pyle. 2006. "Trends in Religious Stratification: Have Religious Group Socioeconomic Distinctions Declined in Recent Decades?" *Sociology of Religion* 67: 61-79.

Henry H. Kim and Ralph E. Pyle. 2004. "An Exception to the Exception: Second-Generation Korean American Church Participation." *Social Compass* 51: 329-341.

Ralph E. Pyle and James D. Davidson. 2003. "The Origins of Religious Stratification in Colonial America." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42:57-75.

Ralph E. Pyle and Jerome R. Koch. 2001. "The Religious Affiliation of American Elites, 1930s to 1990s: A Note on the Pace of Disestablishment." *Sociological Focus* 34:125-137.

James D. Davidson, Ralph E. Pyle, and David Reyes. 1995. "Persistence and Change in the Protestant Establishment, 1930-1992." *Social Forces* 74: 157-175.

James D. Davidson and Ralph E. Pyle. 1994. "Passing the Plate in Affluent Churches: Why Some Members Give More Than Others." *Review of Religious Research* 36: 181-196.

Ralph E. Pyle. 1993. "Faith and Commitment to the Poor: Theological Orientation and Support for Government Assistance Measures." *Sociology of Religion* 54: 385-401.

Book chapters

James D. Davidson and Ralph E. Pyle. 2005. "Social Class." Pp. 185-205 in *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, edited by Helen Rose Ebaugh. New York: Springer.

James D. Davidson and Ralph E. Pyle. 1999. "Public Religion and Economic Inequality." Pp. 101-114 in *The Power of Religious Publics*, edited by William H. Swatos and James K. Wellman. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Ralph E. Pyle and Roger Finke. 1998. "Forward to the Past: Predictions for the Future of American Religion." Pp. 47-66 in *Religion, Mobilization, and Social Action*, edited by A. Shupe and B. Misztal. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Book Reviews

2007. Review of *Horse-and-Buggy Mennonites*, by Donald R. Kraybill and James P. Hurd. *Rural Sociology* 72: 503-506.

1995. Review of *Church and Denominational Growth*, by David A. Roozen and C. Kirk Hadaway. *Review of Religious Research* 36: 322-323.

Encyclopedia Entries

2008. "WASP." *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity, and Society*. Richard Schaefer, ed. Sage.

1998. "Stratification," "James B. Davidson." *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*. William H. Swatos, ed. AltaMira Press.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

I am interested in the study of social inequality and its relationship to religion and race and ethnicity. Much of my work has been based on a Weberian-conflict approach to the study of social inequality. I have written a book and several articles on the topic of change in America's Protestant establishment from the colonial era until the present. To investigate religious inequality in the colonial era, I collected data on legislation pertaining to religious toleration, voting, and office holding privileges for each of the colonies. I also used comparative-historical methods to analyze the religious affiliations of America's founding fathers. To document patterns of religious stratification in the twentieth century, I tabulated the religious affiliations of business, political, and cultural elites listed in the 1950, 1970, and 1992 editions of *Who's Who in America*. Jim Davidson and I intend to include these chapters and articles in a book on religious stratification. We have also contributed a chapter to Helen Rose Ebaugh's book on religion and social institutions. In a 2006 article I analyzed trends in religious stratification by examining the degree to which religious group socioeconomic differences have declined during the last three decades. I have also conducted a study which looks at the degree to which religious groups differ in their attitudes toward African Americans and immigrants.

Over the years I have investigated other topics relating to American religion. One of my first articles was a study of denominational affiliation and support for social welfare spending. Analyzing General Social Survey data, I found that Evangelical Protestants were *more* likely than Mainline Protestants to support government efforts to equalize income and provide for the needy. These relationships held even after controlling for income, education, occupational prestige, and other factors. I have also analyzed predictors of church contributions in affluent congregations. I developed a path model of church contributions that looked at the independent effects of religious beliefs and personal benefits as determinants of religious giving. Roger Finke and I co-authored an article looking at the future of religion in America. We argued that church adherence rates should remain steady for the foreseeable future. I have also co-authored a paper with a graduate student at Michigan State. This paper discussed the "silent exodus" of second-generation Asian Americans. We examined why only a small minority of second-generation Korean Americans belong to a church, despite high church membership levels for the first generation.

Grants and Recognition

Excellence in Teaching Award, 2007, Michigan State University, Department of Sociology.

Research Grant, September 1993 - June 1994 (\$10,000). Louisville Institute for the Study of Protestantism and American Culture (#93-0022). Selected as a dissertation fellow in a national competition.

Research Grant, Summer 1993 (\$1,500). Purdue Research Foundation.

Papers Presented at Professional Meetings

“Religion and Attitudes Toward African Americans and Immigrants,” read at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Tampa, Florida, November 2007.

“Religious Stratification in Colonial America,” presented with James D. Davidson at the annual meeting of the North Central Sociological Association, Cincinnati, Ohio, March, 2003.

“An Exception to the Exception: Second-Generation Korean American Church Participation,” presented with Henry Kim at the annual meeting of the Religious Research Association, Salt Lake City, Utah, November, 2002.

“The Origins of Religious Stratification in Colonial America,” presented with James D. Davidson at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, California, August, 1998.

“Pictures of Conflict,” presented with James D. Davidson at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Nashville, Tennessee, November, 1996.

“Higher Education and America's Cultural and Power Elite,” read at the annual meeting of the North Central Sociological Association, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April, 1995.

“Religion and Eminence,” read at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Albuquerque, New Mexico, November, 1994.

“Passing the Plate in Affluent Churches,” presented with James D. Davidson at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Washington, D.C., November, 1992.

“Faith and Commitment to the Poor,” read at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November, 1991.

Reviewer (last 5 years)

Scholarly journals

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Review of Religious Research

Sociology of Religion

Academic publishers

McGraw-Hill

Allyn and Bacon

Thompson/Wadsworth

Pine Forge

Broadview

Graduate Thesis Committees:

2008 [ongoing] Nathaniel Colon, "Media Attention and Collegiate Athletic Recruitment: The Effects on African American Males"

2008 [ongoing] Jose Villarreal, "Charismatic Leadership in a Mexican American Church"

2007-2008 [ongoing] Derek Roberts, "Understanding Contemporary American Tattoo Practices"

2005-2008 [ongoing] Ben Gross, "Formation and Change of Political Attitudes"

2005-2008 [ongoing] Vera Bondarstova, "Adjustment Problems for Russian Immigrants"

2006-2008 [ongoing] Elizabeth Waeckerlin, "Political Views of Catholics and Evangelical Protestants"

2001-2007 Ken Harmon, "Church Growth Through Cultural Reproduction" (Second year graduate paper)

2005-2006 Rondrell Taylor, "Diversity Training for Substance Abuse Therapists" (Second year graduate paper)

2001-2003 Henry Kim, "Nexus: Religious Internalization and Church Attendance" (Ph.D. dissertation)

2001 Evangelia Christodolou, "Membership and Commitment in a Greek Orthodox Church," (Second year graduate paper)

Mentor for Recipients of Undergraduate Scholarships

2008 [ongoing] Cona Marshall (McNair/SROP Scholars Program) “Divisions within the Black Church”

2007-2008 Lindsay Bryan (College of Social Science Dean’s Assistantship) “Times Have Changed; Have Evangelicals? A Look at American Evangelicals’ Support for the Republican Party, 2004-2008” (sole mentor)

2005-2006 Wendy Hawkins (McNair/SROP Scholars Program) “Black Women in Corporate America” (sole mentor)

2001-2002 Pooja Adhikary (McNair/SROP Scholars Program) “1.5-Generation South Asian Immigrants: Issues of Adjustment, Assimilation, and Sense of Belonging in American Society” (sole mentor)

Professional Affiliations

North Central Sociological Association
Religious Research Association

University Activities

Welcome Week Presentation: “How to Succeed in Social Science Courses” (presented every August, 1998-2007)

Member of the faculty panel for the Department of Sociology’s Annual Teaching Assistant Workshop (2003, 2004, 2007)

Member of the Search Committee for the Director of the Center for Integrative Studies in Social Sciences (CIS) (2007)

Member of the Sociology teaching conversations group (2007-2008)

Co-author (with Steve Gold) of the Assessment Report for the Department of Sociology at Michigan State University (2005) The assessment plan indicated strengths and weaknesses of the undergraduate program in Sociology and made recommendations for change in response to general program goals. The plan identified basic principles of the undergraduate program, and student learning outcomes were evaluated in the context of these basic principles. The assessment included an analysis of senior papers in capstone courses.

Faculty advisor:

MSU Meditation Club (2006-2008)
The Buddhist Study Group (2004-2008)
Quan Am Buddhist Association (2007-2008)

REFERENCES

James D. Davidson
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Purdue University
W. Lafayette, IN 47907
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Department of Sociology
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East Lansing, MI 48824
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Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work
Texas Tech University
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