

# Religion and Classical Sociology

## Consensus views of Religion

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Name and date begun:

**Time allocation:**

3 lessons

**Learning objectives:**

- Students should understand that consensus sociologists view religion as central to social experience.
- Students should be able to evaluate consensual sociology with relation to religion and recognise the strengths and the weaknesses of the perspective.
- Students should recognise religion as a source of morality and culture.

**Key Concepts and vocabulary**

See your lesson notes in addition to the following:

- Consensus
- Functionalism
- Culture
- Morality
- Magic
- Superstition
- Totemism
- Sacred
- Profane

**Additional reading and references**

Selfe and Starbuck (1998) *Access to Sociology: Religion* p 25 - 31

Haralambos and Holbourn (1995) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* p 446 - 450

Taylor *et al.* (1996) *Sociology in Focus* p 495 - 500

O'Donnell (1997) *Sociology* 4<sup>th</sup> edition p 530

**Make a note of any additional sources that you have used below**

### **Personal Development ideas**

- Consider what the purpose of religion is and question people for their own ideas on this question.
- Develop your notes on Durkheim, Parsons and Malinowski.
- Think about how you could set out to test some of the consensus views in a piece of research.

### **Overview of the debate**

- Why do we need religious belief?
- Why does society need religion?
- What is the difference between magic, superstition and religion?
- How could a person define the nature of a religious belief?

### **Revision tips**

- Be sure that you fully understand the importance of functionalism to sociology and to the sociology of religion.
- Consider what problems Malinowski must have experienced in his study of the beliefs of the Trobriand Islanders.
- Consider why society needs religion. What purpose does it serve for society?

### **What you should have in your folder when this work has been completed correctly:**

- A clear explanation of each of the glossary terms
- Acceptable lesson notes.
- Evidence that you have looked at least two textbooks and made notes on the functions of religious belief.
- Evidence that you have evaluated functionalist views of religion and have rough notes of some of your ideas and discussions.
- Preparation notes and an essay plan which can be used for an essay to the following title:

‘The function of religion is to create social harmony’. Discuss.