The sociology of religion concentration at Rice University is helping to shape our understanding of the role of religion in public life today. The concentration takes a perspective on the study of religion that is institutional, cultural, international, and intersectional. Faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students do work that cuts across a number of subjects (including race, immigration, gender, science, and urban studies) and explores how faith commitments shape individual identities, social institutions, business, science, and the arts—leading to new theoretical contributions to the sociology of religion.

This concentration is led by Michael Emerson, the Allyn R. and Gladys M. Cline Professor of Sociology, and Elaine Howard Ecklund, the Herbert S. Autrey Professor of Sociology.

Emerson, who earned his doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1991, is the co-director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research. He studies urban issues, religion, race, and ethnicity, and has won several teaching awards at Rice. He has written 10 books, including the award-winning *Divided by Faith* (Oxford University Press), *People of the Dream* (Princeton University Press), *Transcending Racial Barriers* (Oxford University Press), and *Religion Implicated* (Allyn & Bacon).

Emerson currently is directing the Panel Study of American Religion and Ethnicity (PS-ARE). Funded by the Lilly Endowment, the study is following 2,600 people over the course of their lives. The first round of interviews was completed in 2006, and the second wave was conducted in 2012. With oversamples of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos, and more than 200 questions on religion, this study provides one of the nation's richest data sets for understanding religious life within racial and ethnic communities. Emerson has served as the elected Chair of the Religion Section of the American Sociological Association.

Elaine Howard Ecklund earned her doctorate from Cornell University in 2004, and joined the Rice University sociology department in the fall of 2008. She is now the director of the Religion and Public Life Program in the Social Sciences Research Institute, and a Rice Scholar at the Baker Institute for Public Policy. Her research addresses how changes in approaches to immigration, gender, and science are bringing changes to U.S. and international religious institutions. She is the author of two books with Oxford University Press, and her latest—*Science vs. Religion: What Scientists Really Think*—was chosen by Times Higher Education as an international book of the week and named a book of the year on religion by The Huffington Post. She has also authored more than 30 peer-reviewed research articles, written numerous op-eds, and received $4 million in grants and awards. In 2011, she was named among the top 5 percent of junior faculty teachers at Rice University, and she is the 2013 recipient of the Rice University Duncan award, given to the most outstanding young researcher on the Rice faculty.

Ecklund’s latest research will examine how scientists in eight different nations understand religion and ethics. In addition, through a cooperative project with the American Association for the Advancement of Science Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion program, she will study how four different U.S. religious groups understand science. Ecklund will serve as the elected Chair of the Religion Section of the American Sociological Association during 2014-2015.

**Related Faculty, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Graduate Studies**

Elizabeth Long  
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