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The Sociology of Religion of W.E.B. Du Bois

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Abstract

W.E.B. Du Bois (1868–1963) wrote a significant amount on religion from a penetrating sociological perspective. He should be considered the first American sociologist of religion. This article calls attention to Du Bois as a founding sociologist of religion and summarizes his major scholarly

contributions. His work in the sociology of religion is characterized by 1) a reliance upon standard and diverse sociological methods in generating data; 2) a focus on the religious life of African Americans, and 3) pioneering special attention to the this-worldly, communal, specifically social rewards which religious affiliation provides.

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