

AU professor co-edits book on religion

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Dr. Arthur L. Greil is co-editor of volume 10 in the Religion and the Social Order series, published by Amsterdam: JAI. Greil, a professor of sociology in the College of Liberal Art & Sciences at Alfred University, is co-editor of *Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between the Sacred and Secular* with David R. Bromley, who is also the series editor. In the introduction to *Defining Religion*, Greil and Bromley argue for "a more critical approach to the definition of religion." The goal of the work is to "inspire a re-orientation in the way students of religion think about the task of defining religion and to encourage an appreciation of the fact that defining religion is fundamentally a social and political process." Religion, they say, is more a "category of discourse" whose precise meaning and implications are continually being negotiated in the course of social interaction, than an entity itself. "It may be useful to view religion not as a characteristic that inheres certain phenomena, but as a cultural resource over which competing interest groups may vie. From this perspective, religion is not an entity by a claim, made by certain groups and contested by others."