

Spring Semester 2018  
T 3:30-6:15 at CURA  
Office Hours Tu 12:30-1:30; Th 12:30-2:00  
or by appointment

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## **Religion and International Relations** **IR/RN 561, PO 589, TX 874**

Religion represents one of the most persistent and powerful facets of human social life. Despite predictions by social scientists from Freud to Marx to Comte of the imminent disappearance of religion from modern societies, religion remains important not only in individual lives but also as a factor in social and political life. Rather than making religion seem irrational and irrelevant, the disruptions of modernity have drawn many people to religion as they seek to make sense out of changing circumstances and attempt to protect their interests. If anything, religion is a more important factor in the modern world than it has ever been, as demonstrated in recent decades by the rise of militant Islam, the emergence of the Religious Right in the United States, the explosion of sectarian conflicts in India, Lebanon, Sudan, the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, and Nigeria, and the involvement of Christian churches in revolutionary movements in Latin America, South Africa, and Eastern Europe.

This course explores religion as a factor in world affairs, focusing in particular on the impact of religion on politics, both domestic and international. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach, introducing works by scholars trained in political science, international relations, anthropology, and religious and theological studies. The readings are organized around major themes in the study of religion and world affairs but are also chosen to expose students to a variety of approaches to the subject, both qualitative and quantitative, including works written using a range of theoretical lenses. We will be reading the assigned texts with a particular interest in the methodologies employed by the authors, thinking critically about the advantages and disadvantages of various approaches to religion and world affairs.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, students should:

- Understand and be able to employ the basic terminology and concepts used to talk about religion in world affairs;
- Understand the main theoretical approaches and methodologies used to study religion in world affairs;
- Have a basic understanding of secularization theory and its limitations, religion in the modern state system, and the relationship of religion to identity politics, conflict and peacemaking, democracy and authoritarianism;
- Have improved capacity to analyze texts critically and improved ability to write about the role of religion in world affairs.

## Course Requirements

Participation – 20% of grade - As with any seminar, students in this course must come to class having carefully read the assigned readings and fully prepared to discuss them. Attendance is required and absences will affect your grade. To help get discussion going each week, each student should post three discussion questions from the week's reading on the class's Blackboard site by 10 p.m. the night before each class. Please take time before class to read the postings by other students, and feel free to respond. Your participation grade will be based on the evidence of your having read and understood the books, chapters, and articles as demonstrated in engagement in both the classroom and on-line discussions.

Presentation – 10% of grade – Each student will be assigned to a two-person group that will give a classroom 10-minute presentation on a current event, group, individual, or organization within the area of religion and world affairs (something not otherwise covered in the class). Presentation dates will be randomly assigned. Topics must be approved by the professor. Presentations will be graded on their relevance to the course, organization, clarity, and ability to engage the class, and the quality of research and accuracy of information.

Essay Reflections – three papers at 15% of grade each – Students are required to write three essays during the course of the semester reflecting on the issues and ideas raised in the course. The professor will provide an essay prompt at least a week in advance of the due date. Papers should directly address the readings during the period covered.

Final Essay Reflection Paper – 25% of grade – Students are required to write a final essay reflecting on the issues and ideas raised in the course. The professor will provide an essay prompt at least a week in advance of the due date. Papers should directly address the readings from throughout the course. Final reflection papers will be due on Friday, May 4, by 5 p.m.

OR

Optional Research Paper – 25% of grade – In lieu of the final reflection paper, students taking this course as TX874 are required to write a 20-25-page research paper on a topic related to religion and world affairs. Other students may opt to write a research paper in lieu of the final paper as well, with approval from the professor. Paper topics must be approved by the professor, and students writing papers must meet with the professor for a progress report during the week of April 2. Research papers will be due on Friday, May 4, by 5 p.m.

An explanation of letter grades can be found at:

<http://www.bu.edu/reg/grades/explanation-of-grades/>

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please schedule an appointment with me early in the semester to discuss any accommodation that may be needed for the course.

Plagiarism and cheating will be punished in accordance with BU's Academic Conduct Code: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>. Students are expected to provide citations in papers for all quotations, paraphrases, and ideas taken from any source other than your own original thoughts.

## **Course Materials**

The following texts are available for purchase:

Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lyn Graybill, *Religion, Tradition, and Restorative Justice in Sierra Leone*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.

Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism*, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Karrie Koesel, *Religion and Authoritarianism: Cooperation, Conflict, and the Consequences*, Cambridge, 2014.

Timothy Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Anthony Petro, *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion*, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Other readings (marked with \*) are available on the Blackboard site for the class or can be found through BU's library website.

## **Course Organization**

### **I. Introduction: What Is Religion and How Do We Study It?**

Week 1 – January 23 – Introduction

- Shah, "Introduction," in Shah, Stepan, and Toft.

### **II. Background**

Week 2 – January 30 – Secularization Theory and Its Critics

- Charles T Matthews "An Interview with Peter Berger," *The Hedgehog Review* Spring/Summer, 2006, pp. 152-161.\*
- J Bryan Hehir, "Why Religion? Why Now?" in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 15-24.
- José Casanova, "Rethinking Public Religions," in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 25-35.
- Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "The Politics of Secularism," in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 36-52.
- Ronald Inglehart and Wayne E. Baker, "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values," *American Sociological Review*, 2000.\*

Week 3 – February 6 – Religion and IR: From Westphalia to The “Clash of Civilizations”

- Daniel Philpott, “The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations,” *World Politics* 52:2, 2000, pp. 206–45\*
- Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1993.\*
- Lisa Wedeen, “Beyond the Crusades: Why Huntington, and bin Laden, Are Wrong,” *Middle East Policy Journal*, Summer 2003, pp. 54-61.\*
- Michael Barnett, “Where Is the Religion? Humanitarianism, Faith, and World Affairs,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 165-181.
- Jeremy Menchik, “The Constructivist Approach to Religion and World Politics,” *Comparative Politics*, July 2017, pp. 561-581.\*

**First Essay Reflection due, Friday, February 9, by 5 p.m.**

### **III. Religion, Identity, and Pluralism**

Week 4 – February 13 – Religion and Identity: Pluralism, Conflict, and Tolerance

- Rajeev Bhargava, “How Should States Deal with Deep Religious Diversity?” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 73-84.
- Monica Dufy Toft, “Religion, Terrorism, and Civil Wars,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 127-148.
- Thomas Banchoff, “Interreligious Dialogue and International Relations,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 204-214.
- Saba Mahmood, “Secularism, Sovereignty, and Religious Difference: A Global Genealogy?” *Society and Space*, 2017.\*

**February 20, no meeting – substitute Monday**

Week 5 – February 27 – Religious Conflict and Tolerance: Islam in Nigeria and Senegal

- Andrew Walker, “What Is Boko Haram?” *Special Report*, Washington: United States Institute for Peace, June 2012.\*
- Wisdom Ogosha Iyekekpolo, “Boko Haram: Understanding the Context,” *Third World Quarterly*, 2016, pp. 2211-2228.\*
- Abimbola Adesoji, “The Boko Haram Uprising and Islamic Revivalism in Nigeria,” *Africa Spectrum*, 2010, pp. 95-108.\*
- Mia Bloom and Hilary Matfess, “Women as Symbols and Swords in Boko Haram’s Terror,” *Prism*, March 2016, pp. 104-121.\*
- Alfred Stepan, “Stateness, Democracy, and Respect: Senegal in Comparative Perspective,” in Mamadou Diouf, ed., *Tolerance, Democracy, and Sufis in Senegal*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, pp. 205-238.\*
- Souleymane Bachir Diagne, “Religion and the Public Sphere in Senegal: The Evolution of a Project of Modernity,” in Miguel Vatter, ed., *Crediting God: Sovereignty and Religion in the Age of Global Capitalism*, Fordham University Press, 2011.\*
- Alexander Thurston, “Why Is Militant Islam a Weak Phenomenon in Senegal?” Institute for Islamic Thought in Africa, Working Paper no. 09-005, March 2009.\*

## **Spring Break – March 3-11**

Week 6 – March 13 – Religion, Gender, and Sexuality

- Katherine Marshall, “Faith, Gender, and International Affairs,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 182-192.
- Anthony Petro, *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion*, Oxford, 2014.

**Second Essay Reflection due Friday, March 16, by 5 p.m.**

### **IV. Religion, Violence, and Peacemaking**

Week 7 – March 20 – Religion and Violence: The Rwanda Case

- Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Week 8 – March 27 – Religion and Peacemaking: The Sierra Leonean Case

- Lyn Graybill, *Religion, Tradition, and Restorative Justice in Sierra Leone*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2017.

### **V. Religion and Politics**

Week 9 – April 3 – Religion, Democracy, and Human Rights

- Alfred Stepan, “Religion, Democracy, and the ‘Twin Tolerations,’” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 55-72.
- Amy S. Patterson and Tracy Kuperus, “Mobilizing the Faithful: Organizational Autonomy, Visionary Pastors, and Citizenship in South Africa and Zambia,” *African Affairs*, 2016.\*
- Gregory Deacon, “Driving the Devil Out: Kenya’s Born Again Elections,” *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 2015.\*
- Gwyneth H. McClendon and Rachel Beatty Riedl, “Individualism and Empowerment in Pentecostal Sermons: New Evidence from Nairobi, Kenya,” *African Affairs*, 2015, pp. 119-144.\*
- Robert W. Hefner, “Rethinking Islam and Democracy,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 85-103.
- John Witte Jr. and M. Christian Green, “Religious Freedom, Democracy, and International Human Rights,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 104-124.
- Daniel Philpott, “What Religion Offers for the Politics of Transitional Justice,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 149-161

Week 10 – April 10 – Religion and Democracy: The Indonesian Case

- Jeremy Menchik, *Islam and Democracy in Indonesia: Tolerance Without Liberalism*, Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Week 11 – April 17 – Religion and Authoritarianism

- Karrie Koesel, *Religion and Authoritarianism: Cooperation, Conflict, and the Consequences*, Cambridge, 2014.

**Third Essay Reflection due Friday, April 20, by 5 p.m.**

Week 12 – April 24 – Religion and Politics in the United States

- Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, Simon and Schuster, 2010, selected pages.\*
- Paul Christopher Manuel, “Of Cultural Backlash and Economic Anxiety: Insecurity in the 2016 General Election,” *Politica & Sociedade*, pp. 212-227.\*
- Darius Hills, “Back to a White Future: White Religious Loss, Donald Trump, and the Problem of Belonging,” *Black Theology*, 2017, pp. 1-15.\*
- Amaney A. Jamal, “Trump(ing) on Muslim Women: The Gendered Side of Islamophobia,” *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies*, November 2017, pp. 472-475.\*
- Elizabeth Levy Paluck and Michael Suk-Young Chwe, “Confronting Hate Collectively,” *PS*, October 2017, pp. 990-992.\*
- Nancy J. Duff, “Orlando, Political Rhetoric, and the Church,” *Theology Today*, 2016, pp. 193-197.\*

## **VI. Religion in Foreign Affairs: The US Case**

Week 13 – May 1 – Religion and Foreign Policy

- Walter Russell Mead, “God’s Country?” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 247-261.
- Thomas E. Farr, “America’s International Religious Freedom Policy,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 262-278.
- Frederick D. Barton, Shannon Hayden, and Karin von Hippel, “Navigating the Fog: Improving U.S. Government Engagement with Religion,” in Shah, Stepan, and Toft, pp. 279-290.

**Final Essay or Research Paper due at my office on Friday, May 4 by 5 p.m.**