

Fall 2018
TTh 11:00-12:15 CAS 237
Office Hours: T 10-11, Th 12:30-2:00
or by appointment

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Religion and Politics **IR337/PO379/RN379**

For over a century, scholarly consensus predicted the decline of religion as a social force – as a result of modernization, scientific and technological advancement, social progress, or Communist revolution. In practice, however, religion has shown little sign of diminishing in public importance. Whether considering the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the rise of the Religious Right in the United States in the 1980s, the explosion of sectarian violence in places like Northern Ireland, India, Lebanon, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the spread of militant Islamic groups like Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS, the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, or the role of religion in supporting democratic movements in parts of Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia, religion has remained a potent factor in social and political life. Social scientists have only recently begun to realize that religion is a force that needs to be better understood.

This course serves as an introduction to the topic of religion and politics. In this course, we look at the social role of religion, focusing specifically on religion as a factor in politics, defined broadly to focus not just on government but on struggles over the exercise of social, political, and economic power. We look at a wide range of issues, from exploring the relationship between modernity, religion, and secularism to the relationship of religion to terrorism, to the role of religion in supporting or opposing democracy and social change. The course explores various religious traditions and includes cases from throughout the world, including the United States.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students should:

- Have an understanding of the main ways in which religious communities and political institutions interact;
- Have an understanding of the diversity of religious organizations and experiences across the globe;
- Understand various concepts of secularism and the primary criticisms secularization theory faces;
- Understand religion as a system of belief, a formal institution, an element of group identity, a part of civil society, and an actor at the local, national, and international level;
- Be able to defend particular political positions on issues such as the appropriate role for religious institutions in society, the relationship between religion and violence, and;
- Have stronger written and verbal communication skills and critical thinking skills.

A Note on Class Conduct

Religion is a topic that is very personal for many people. Students in the class come from diverse religious traditions, with varying levels of religious commitment, while others have never been part of a religious group. Some of the issues that we will discuss in this class are controversial, and the assigned readings will include a wide range of viewpoints. It is important that the classroom remain a space for open and respectful discourse. Students are encouraged to speak freely but also

to be conscious of the feelings of other students and to respect the diversity of opinions, knowledge, and experience within the class.

Students may use computers in the classroom for note-taking, but you are asked to turn off your wifi and close email accounts and instant messaging programs. Please put away cell phones and other communication devices for the duration of class. Texting, messaging, looking at photos on Facebook and other on-line activities distract the professor and fellow students, not to mention limiting your ability to engage fully in the class. Should electronic communication become a distraction, the professor reserves the right to ban their use in class entirely.

Students are encouraged to come speak with the professor at any point in the semester.

Course Assignments

This course will mix lectures with more interactive activities that provide students a chance to engage with the topic and offer their input. Students are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss. Class attendance and participation will account for 10 percent of the grade.

Each student is required to attend at least two events outside of class related to religion and politics and to turn in a short paragraph explaining how the event relates to the class (no more than half a page). The professor will regularly post announcements about lectures, movies, and other events at BU or in the Boston area that could meet this requirement. Students can also propose other events related to the class for approval by the professor.

Students are required to reflect on the readings at least once a week in their journal, located in the Blackboard Journal section. The professor will occasionally provide a specific question to reflect on, but students should offer reactions to the readings and topics in the class on an ongoing basis. The journal counts for 20 percent of the grade.

Midterm and final exams will be a combination of short answers and essay questions. Your essays will be judged on understanding of concepts, thorough reading of course texts, ability to present and defend an argument using available sources, and originality of thought. Each is worth 30 percent of the grade.

10%	Attendance and Participation
10%	Extracurricular Events
20%	Blackboard Journals
30%	Midterm Exam
30%	Final Exam

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/>

Books available for purchase and on both reserve and available electronically at the library:

- Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *The Ambiguous Adventure*, Heineman, 1972.
- Ziad W. Munson, *The Making of Pro-Life Activists: How Social Movement Mobilization Works*, University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Links to all of the other readings are posted on the Blackboard site for the course.

Course Schedule

I. Introduction to the Study of Religion and Politics

Introduction (September 4)

What Is Religion? What is Politics? (September 6)

Introduction to Major Religious Traditions (September 11 and 13)

[Note: The readings in for September 11 and 13 are optional background readings]

- Graham Harvey, "Understanding Indigenous Religions," in Tim Dowley, ed., *Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd ed., Augsburg Press, 2018, pp. 129-136.
- Anna S. King, "[Hindu] Beliefs," in Tim Dowley, ed., *Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd ed., Augsburg Press, 2018, pp. 193-200.
- Elizabeth J. Harris, "[Buddhist] Beliefs," in Tim Dowley, ed., *Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd ed., Augsburg Press, 2018, pp. 233-239.
- I. Howard Marshall, "[Christian] Beliefs," in Tim Dowley, ed., *Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd ed., Augsburg Press, 2018, pp. 409-415.
- Peter G. Riddell, "[Muslim] Beliefs," in Tim Dowley, ed., *Introduction to World Religions*, 3rd ed., Augsburg Press, 2018, pp. 453-458.

II. Modernity, Secularization, and the Persistence of Religion

The Clash Between Religion and Modernity (September 18 and 20)

- Kane, *The Ambiguous Adventure*, entire novel.

Bringing Religion Back In: Secularization Theory and Its Critics – (September 25)

- Anthony Gill, "Religion and Comparative Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science*, June 2001, pp. 117–38.
- Charles T. Mathewes, "An Interview with Peter Berger," *The Hedgehog Review* Spring/Summer, 2006, pp. 152-161.

Rethinking Secularization (September 27)

- Rajeev Bhargava, "Can Secularism Be Rehabilitated?" in Bruce J. Berman, Rajeev Bhargava, and Andre Laliberte, eds., *Secular States and Religious Diversity*, UBC Press, 2013, pp. 69-93.

Professor will do an initial review of journal entries beginning after class September 27.

III. Religion, Violence, and the "Clash of Civilizations"

The "Clash of Civilizations" (October 2)

- Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs*, 1993.

Responses to the "Class of Civilizations" (October 4)

- Edward W. Said, "The Clash of Ignorance," *The Nation*, October 22, 2001.

- Alfred Stepan, “Religion, Democracy, and the ‘Twin Tolerations,’” *Journal of Democracy*, 2000.

No Class Tuesday, October 9 (Substitute Monday)

Religion and Violence (October 11)

- James Turner Johnson, “The Tradition on Jihad of the Sword, Counter-Narratives, and Policy,” *Soundings*, 2015.
- Mark Juergensmeyer, “Terror in the Name of God,” *Current History*, November 2001.

Religion and Peacemaking (October 16)

- Sharon Erickson Nepstad, “Religion, Violence, and Peacemaking,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, September 2004.
- Patrick Grant, “Northern Ireland: Religion and the Peace Process,” in Harold Coward and Gordon S. Smith, eds., *Religion and Peacebuilding*, SUNY Press, 2004.

Midterm Exam in class October 18.

IV. The Politics of Church and State

Religion and the State (October 23)

- Daniel Philpott, “Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion,” *American Political Science Review*, 2007.

Religion and Democracy (October 25)

- Daniela Angi, “Three Instances of Church and Anti-Communist Opposition: Hungary, Poland, and Romania,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 2011.
- Robert Hefner, “Rethinking Islam and Democracy,” in Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Monica Duffy Toft, eds., *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

Religion and Social Engagement: The South African Case (October 30)

- Kiran Laloo, “The Church and State in Apartheid South Africa,” *Contemporary Politics*, 1998.
- Raymond Simangaliso Kumalo, “Facts and Factions: The Development of Church State Relations in Democratic South Africa, 1994-2012,” *Journal of Church and State*, 2013.

Contrasting Approaches to Religious Social and Political Action (November 1)

- Amy S. Patterson and Tracy Kuperus, “Mobilizing the Faithful: Organizational Autonomy, Visionary Pastors, and Citizenship in South Africa and Zambia,” *African Affairs*, 2016.
- Gwyneth McClendon and Rachel Riedl, “Religion as a Stimulant of Political Participation: Experimental Evidence from Nairobi, Kenya,” *Journal of Politics*, 2015.

Religion and Individual Political Activism (November 6 and 8)

- Munson, *The Making of Pro-Life Activists*, entire book.

V. Religion and Identity Politics

Religion, Identity, and Conflict (November 13)

- Kate E. Temoney, "Religion and Genocide Nexuses: Bosnia as Case Study," *Religions*, 2017.
- Timothy Longman, "Church Politics and the Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 2001.

Religion and Tolerance (November 15)

- 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.

Religion and Gender: The Hijab Controversy in the West (November 20)

- Sylvie Tissot, "Excluding Muslim Women: From *Hijab* to *Niqab*, from School to Public Space," *Public Culture*, 2011.
- Anderson Beckman Al Wazni, "Muslim Women in America and the Hijab: A Study of Empowerment, Feminist Identity, and Body Image," *Social Work*, 2015.

Religion and Gender in the Global South (November 27)

- Zoya Hassan, "Gender, Religion, and Democratic Politics in India," *Third World Quarterly*, 2010.
- Ousseinna Alidou, "Muslim Women Leaders and Legal Reform in Post-Colonial Kenya," *Hawwa*, 2016.

No class November 29.

Religion and Identity in the United States: Exceptional or Typical? (December 4 and 6)

- Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapters 3, 4, and 11.
- Andrew L. Whitehead, Samuel L. Perry, and Joseph O. Baker, "Make American Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election," *Sociology of Religion*, May 2018.

Wrap Up (December 11)

Journals entries must be completed for final review by December 6.

Final Exam scheduled by registrar's office