

POL 3213: Faith and Politics

T/Th 11:30-12:45 (CTH 302)

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CTH 312B
MW 10-11, T 2:30-3:30
479-524-7142

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the relationship between faith and politics with particular attention devoted to understanding the role of Christians in the democratic process. Specific topics discussed include the normative role of faith and politics, religion and political behavior, religion and the Constitution, and the historical and current role of religious individuals and organization in the public square.

COURSE OUTCOMES

This class will introduce the various avenues of study into religion and politics, with specific attention on this relationship in the United States. Students will examine the role of religion in political institutions, voting behavior, interest group activity, and more. While a central textbook will guide the direction of the class, students will become well versed in recent academic research on these topics. Students will also prepare an in-depth review of a book on religion and politics, and will have the opportunity to conduct original research on a topic of interest to them within the domain of religion and American politics.

The goals of this course include understanding how religion affects individual political behavior, accounting for the influence of religion on government and policy, and explaining the reasons for religion's influence on the political realm. Those meeting these goals will leave this course with a solid foundation of how religion intersects with politics across a range of areas in the United States.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- ❖ Fowler, Robert Booth, et al. 2014. *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*. Fifth Edition. Westview Press. ISBN = 9780813348513.

- ❖ Journal articles and book chapters will be available online. Occasional short readings will be posted to the course page via an announcement, no later than a day before class.

ROLE OF COURSE AT JBU

This course introduces students to the study of religion and politics in the United States. In many ways the U.S. is unique among its global peers concerning the relationship between religion, society, and politics. This course begins to explain why. Students will be challenged to think about the ways in which religion intersects with the American political system and system of government, as well as the ways in which it *should* do so.

As part of the political science major, this course emphasizes and critiques the connections between religion, politics, and government in the American context, encouraging students to identify and evaluate their own views on these connections. More broadly, though, this course furthers John Brown University's commitment to a well-rounded, Christian understanding of the world in which we live. The course will also aid in developing the critical thinking and communication skills essential for those called to engage society in a variety of ways.

EVALUATION & GRADING

There are 100 points possible in this course. You will be evaluated on the following components, with their respective point totals in parentheses:

1. **Participation (10 points)** – Since this is an upper-division course, class discussions will be far more common than lectures. As such, student participation is essential to the success of this course. Asking questions, giving answers, or otherwise actively contributing to the course will positively affect your participation grade. This course will rely strictly upon JBU's Academic Catalog in establishing an attendance policy. Students missing more than three class sessions without excuse can earn no higher than a 'C' for the course.
2. **Reading Summaries (20)** – At five points during the semester you will turn in a summary of the week's readings. You can choose which weeks to summarize. These summaries should cover the arguments and contributions of the readings to the course. The length of each summary will vary depending on the amount of

readings to be summarized, but should generally be at least two double-spaced pages. These summaries will be due on Tuesdays throughout the semester, and are worth four points each.

3. **Book Review (15)** – You will write a paper reviewing and critiquing an academic book on religion and politics. This paper should not be a simple review of the book, but should critically assess the perspective and contribution of the book to the study of religion and politics. More information on this review will be handed out as an addendum to this syllabus, including a list of suggested books for you to choose from. This review is worth 15 points.
4. **Research Paper (30)** – You will prepare an original research paper on a topic of your choosing, so long as it is related to the material in the course. You must clear this topic with me early in the semester, and submit an outline for feedback. More information on this paper will be handed out as an addendum to this syllabus. In addition to the paper, you will also present your findings to the class at the end of the semester. This presentation is worth five points, and is part of the larger project worth 30 points.
5. **Examination (25)** – At the end of the semester you will complete a final exam. This exam may include multiple choice questions, term identification, and written responses. This exam is worth 25 points.

Grading Scale:

A=90 or greater B=80-89 C=70-79 D=60-69 F=59 or fewer

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

John Brown University is a selective academic institution that consistently ranks among the top southern baccalaureate universities in the U.S. News and World Reports college rankings. As a student here, you are expected to devote significant time and effort to your academic courses. This course has been designed with the expectation that students will spend *at least* two hours preparing for each class session. Furthermore, an “A” grade in this course signifies exceptional achievement, not merely completion of assignments.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As a Christian institution of higher education, John Brown University seeks to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Violations of these standards

will result in substantial penalties. At a minimum, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and a report submitted to the academic dean. Further infractions will result in failure of the course and possible suspension. For additional information and examples, see the Academic Integrity section in the Student Handbook.

FINAL EXAM & LATE WORK

Students must sit for the final exam at the specified time. The only exceptions are death or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family, or illness of the student as documented by a medical professional. Any exception to the final exam policy must be approved by Dr. Rebecca Lambert, Associate Dean of Academic Services and Registrar. Additionally, late submissions – including reading summaries, book reviews, and final papers – will not be accepted without required documentation. Please plan accordingly.

OFFICE HOURS & EMAIL POLICY

I encourage you to take advantage of my office hours to ask further questions, clarify the reading, and generally become more comfortable with the course. You do not need to schedule appointments during my office hours – simply show up, and I'll be happy to speak with you. If you would like meet but are unable to visit during my office hours, I will make every effort to accommodate another time with you. Additionally, I check my emails fairly regularly. I will respond to emails within 24 hours – sooner, if the question is time-sensitive.

POLICY ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with documented disabilities who need academic accommodations should make an appointment with Kyle Ireland, Director of Student Support Services, to begin the accommodation process. They are also encouraged to make an appointment with their instructors as soon as possible. Students without documented disabilities who feel they may have difficulty with their courses are also encouraged to make an appointment with their instructor to discuss what steps need to be taken to be successful. Contact information for the Director of Disability Services: Mr. Kyle Ireland, 2000 W. University St., Siloam Springs, AR 72761,

location - LRC 148, phone - 479-524-7400, fax - 479-238-8750, email - kireland@jbu.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

- September 6 (paper topic due)
- October 13 (book review due)
- October 20 (paper outline due)
- November 10 (paper draft due)
- December 1 (paper due)
- December 6-8 (presentations)
- December 13 (final exam)

❖ Fall Break (October 17-18) and Thanksgiving Break (November 23-25)

Friday, October 14 and Monday-Tuesday, November 21-22, are regular class days. Students should not make travel plans for these dates until after their regularly-scheduled classes have ended.

| Week | Topic | Readings |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1 | Course Introduction | Kettell 2016 |
| 2 | A Brief History of Religion in the United States | RPA Ch. 1 Dreisbach 2011 Jacobs and Theiss-Morse 2013 |
| 3/4 | Christianity and Politics | RPA Ch. 2 Steensland et al. 2000 Hofstetter et al. 2008 Friesen and Wagner 2012 |
| 4/5 | Religious Pluralism in the United States | RPA Ch. 3 Penning 2009 Schoettmer 2013 Wald 2015 |
| 6 | Religion and Voting | RPA Ch. 4 Driskell et al. 2008 Habel and Grant 2013 Hawley 2015 |

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| 7/8 | Religious Interest Groups | RPA Ch. 5 Beyerlein and Chaves 2003 Djupe and Niles 2010 Grant et al. 2014 |
| 9 | Religious Political and Cultural Elites | RPA Ch. 6 Adkins et al. 2013 Jacobsmeier 2013 |
| 10 | Religion, Civil Society, and Political Culture | RPA Ch. 7 Sokhey and Mockabee 2012 Burge 2013 Shortle and Gaddie 2015 |
| 11 | Religion, Politics, and the Law | RPA Ch. 8 Bennett 2014 Lewis 2014 |
| 12 | Church-State Disputes in the Courts | RPA Ch. 9 Hays 2012 Audette and Weaver 2015 |
| 13 | Minorities, Religion, and Politics | RPA Ch. 10 Wong 2015 Wright et al. 2015 Gershon et al. 2016 |
| 14 | Gender, Religion, and Politics | RPA Ch. 11 Calfano and Djupe 2011 Setzler and Yanus 2015 |
| 15 | Theoretical Perspectives | Ch. 12 Iannaccone 1994 Beard et al. 2014 Conger 2014 |
| 16 | Research Presentations | n/a |

17 Final Exam (Tuesday, December 13, 10:30am)

Please note: The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments are subject to change at the instructor's discretion, with written and verbal notice to students.