

Religion and Politics – POLS 359
Lewis & Clark College
Spring 2018

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Ben Gaskins

Email: bgaskins@lclark.edu

Office: Howard 328

Office Hours: M 3-4pm; TTH 10am-12pm

Office phone: 503-768-7604

Course Information

Course: POLS 359

Time: MWF 12:40-1:40 pm

Location: Howard 115

Website: Moodle

1. Course Description and Objectives

The United States is often considered an outlier (compared to other nations with similar levels of development) in terms of the amount of religiosity citizens display and the influence of religion on politics. Religion plays a key role all aspects of politics, including how Americans vote, which opinions they hold, and who is considered for public office. This course is designed to examine and critically analyze the nature of the relationship between religion and politics in the United States. In doing so, we will address a number of important questions: how religious are Americans, and how important is the link between religious belief and political behavior? In what ways can the United States be described as a Christian nation? To what extent can and should any one religious group influence politics and policy? Does a “wall of separation” really exist between church and state? What is the proper role of religious groups in a democratic society? Does religion contribute positively or negatively to American democracy?

This course will provide an overview of the wide array of religious groups in American society and delve into various theories of religiosity and the effects of religion on politics. This is a reading and discussion intensive course, so you will be expected to contribute on a daily basis. By the end of the course, I expect you to be able to:

- Identify the names and be able to describe the history and beliefs of important religious groups and figures in American history and in current affairs.
- Provide an account for religious change over time, and how religion has affected politics in the United States.
- Be able to read and discuss theories of religious influence on politics.
- Be able to interpret advanced empirical findings in the literature, to the point where you can identify potential flaws in previous research and identify new directions for future work.
- Write at an advanced level about religion and politics, so that you can interact/engage with the political science research in this area, and eventually contribute to our collective understanding.

2. Reading Material

There are four required books for this course, all of which are available in the university bookstore:

Required:

- Robert Booth Fowler, Allen Hertzke, Laura Olson, and Kevin den Dulk. 2014. *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*. Fifth Edition
- Geoffrey Layman. 2001. *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics*
- Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell. 2010. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*.
- Paul Djupe and Brian Calfano. 2014. *God Talk: Experimenting with the Religious Causes of Public Opinion*.

In addition, there will be a number of articles that will be used to supplement this text. These articles will be posted on Moodle.

Books for Further Reading:

- Mark Noll. 2002. *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*.
- Paul Djupe and Christopher Gilbert. 2009. *The Political Influence of Churches*.
- Paul Djupe, ed. 2015. *Religion and Political Tolerance in America*.
- Robert P. Jones. 2016. *The End of White Christian America*.
- Kevin M. Kruse. 2015. *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America*.
- J. Matthew Wilson, ed. 2007. *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic*
- Pippa Norris and Robert Inglehart. 2004. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*.
- Corwin E. Smidt, Lyman A. Kellstedt, and James I. Guth. 2009. *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Politics*.
- David S. Gutterman and Andrew R. Murphy. 2016. *Political Religion and Religious Politics: Navigating Identities in the United States*.
- Ryan L. Claassen. 2015. *Godless Democrats and Pious Republicans? Party Activists, Party Capture, and the "God Gap."*

Helpful Sources of Data/Info:

- The Association of Religion Data Archives: <http://thearda.com/>
- The General Social Survey: <http://www3.norc.uchicago.edu/GSS+Website/>
- The World Values Survey: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>
- 2006/2011 Faith Matters Survey:
<http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/FTHMAT11.asp>
- Pew Religious Landscape Survey: <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>
- Religion in Public Blog: <https://religioninpublic.blog/>

Journals to peruse:

Politics and Religion

Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion

Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion

Review of Religious Research

Sociology of Religion

Social Compass

3. Grading Policies

Your final grade is a weighted average of the following components:

–Two Exams (50% collectively)

–Participation, Homework/Reflection Papers, and In-class assignments (25%)

–Research Paper (25%)

3.1 Exams

There will be one midterm exam and one partially-cumulative final exam in this course.

3.2 Participation, Homework/Papers, and In-class assignments

This will count for 25% of your final grade. Your grade will be based upon (1) Participation in in-class discussion, (2) In-class activities, (3) Completion of homework assignments, and (4) Short reflection papers. Since this is an upper-level political science course, I expect you to do all of the readings so that you can comfortably discuss and engage the material. That does not mean you have to fully understand everything in the readings, but that you've made the effort to read and write down the questions you have so that the class may benefit from your insight or confusion.

3.3 Research Paper

You will be responsible for producing a paper of original research for a topic of your choosing within religion and politics. This should be a paper that you might eventually present at an academic conference, turn into a thesis, or at the very least prepare you for long-form research in the future. This paper will require you to come up with a question and an answer (theory), generate hypotheses, and use empirical data to test these predictions.

The paper will be laid out like an academic paper, specifically following this format:

-Question/puzzle

-Introductory discussion

-Literature review

-Theory and hypotheses

-Research Design

-Empirical findings

-Conclusion/Discussion

While the final draft is not due until the end of April, you will have a series of mini-deadlines throughout the semester. Additionally, you will be paired with a partner for the purposes of accountability and research advice.

Schedule:

- Question submitted, partners chosen (Friday, February 16)
- Preliminary Draft submitted to me and your partner (Friday, March 23)
- Comments Returned to Partner (Friday, April 13)
- Final Paper due to me (Friday, April 27)

3.5 Grading Scale

A 93-100	C 73-76
A- 90-92	C- 70-72
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 83-86	D 60-66
B- 80-82	F 59 and below
C+ 77-79	

4. Administrative Policies

4.1 Absences /Tardies/Missed Exams

Absences

I will not require you to stay under a specific number of absences, however in order to get a high participation grade, your physical and mental presences is required. If there are medical, school-related, or any other reasons for missing class on a repeated basis, it is your responsibility to let me know and work out alternative tasks to make sure you are receiving and understanding the material.

Tardies

Please make every effort to make class on time.

Missed Exams

Students who miss scheduled tests and examinations without excusable reasons may not make up such assignments. Authorization to make up tests missed for excusable reasons is obtained from me.

Excused absences includes University activities, significant organizational activities or planned personal business, and unplanned events beyond the student's control such as illness and accidents. Proof of attendance or a doctor's note may be requested to confirm the reason for the absence. Oversleeping is not considered an excused absence, but is at

my discretion depending on the circumstances. A makeup should be scheduled as close as possible to the missed exam.

4.2 Academic Honor Policy

I expect each student and to follow the honor code. Violations of the honor code, such as cheating on tests, unauthorized assistance and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Such behavior will result in a zero on the work in question and may result in an **F** for the course depending on the severity of the offence and the weighted percentage of the assignment or exam. If there are any questions as to what counts as cheating or plagiarism, talk to me *before* you turn something in. After you submit a test or paper, it is entirely up to my discretion as to whether something will be considered problematic.

4.3 Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who anticipate needing an academic accommodation in this course should see me within the first week of class. If you have any questions or concerns, check out the following link:
http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student_support_services/

4.4 Courtesy in the Classroom

Attention to classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distraction. As such, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices during class time (also, no texting or using the internet in class). Please be on time to class and remain in class until you are dismissed. If you must arrive late or leave early, please take the seat nearest an exit, and enter or leave as quietly as possible. Please show respect for others by refraining from talking during lectures, as well as when other students are speaking. Similarly, please respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you disagree with them. All discussion must be conducted with respect and consideration in mind. Repeated disruption of class will result in you being asked to leave class, and you will not be allowed to make up any material missed.

As the instructor, it is my responsibility to give all opinions and interpretations a fair hearing and to not be an advocate for any specific political viewpoint. As students, you have the responsibility to approach all topics with an open and critical mind. You are not required to check your beliefs at the door but you must be willing and able to fairly assess questions of religion in America, whatever your political/religious beliefs or background. It is not the goal of the course to change any of your opinions necessarily, but to increase critical analysis American religion and its role in politics writ large.

4.5 Festival of Scholars

The Festival of Scholars is a campus-wide celebration of student work. It is an opportunity to discuss research, to exhibit, perform, or appreciate art, and to cross

disciplinary boundaries. The Festival will be held on **Friday, April 20, 2018**. Class will be cancelled on that day, but you are still required to participate in the Festival, either by presenting your work or attending presentations by your fellow students. When the final program for the Festival becomes available, I will recommend attendance of specific presentations, and will explain how attendance will contribute to your course grade.

5. Course Schedule

Overview of Religion in America

1. *Introduction* (Wednesday, January 17)

-Course overview, syllabus discussion, and introduction to the class

2. *Overview of the history of religion in America* (Friday, Jan. 19 – Friday, Jan. 26)

-Religious foundations of American politics

-Is America a Christian nation?

READING:

- Fowler et al. Ch. 1

- Russell Shorto. "How Christian Were the Founders?" New York Times, February 11, 2010. Available on Moodle and:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/magazine/14texbooks-t.html?pagewanted=all>

- Noll: America's God Ch. 1 (Moodle)

- SKIM: Alexis de Tocqueville on Religion Volume 1, Part I— Chapter 2 (to pg. 47); Part II— Chapter 9, pp. 287-301; Volume 2, Part I—Chapters 5-7, Part II—Chapters 9 & 15 (Moodle)

3. *Religion in America: Who are we?* (Monday, Jan. 29 – Wednesday, Jan. 31)

-Descriptive data

-Conceptualizing religion in America

READING:

- P&C Chs. 1-2

- Jonathan Haidt. *The Righteous Mind*. Ch. 11 (Moodle)

- Robert P. Jones. *The End of White Christian America*. Ch. 2 (Moodle)

- Gutterman and Murphy Ch. 1 (Moodle)

4. *Backdrop to the Current Religious Scene: How did we get here?* (Friday, February 2 – Monday, Feb. 5)

-The rise of cultural conflict in the 20th Century

-Modern religious-political dynamics

READING:

- Layman Introduction and Ch. 1

- P&C Chs. 3-4

- Claassen Introduction (Moodle)

- <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/06/opinion/06douthat.html?emc=eta1>

5. *Theories and Measurement of Religion and Politics* (Wednesday, Feb. 7 – Friday, Feb. 9)

- Explaining our peculiar mix of religion and politics
- How do we measure this thing?

READING:

Theory:

- Fowler Ch. 12
- P&C Ch. 6
- Iannaccone v. Chaves, 1995 (Moodle)

Measurement:

- Layman Ch. 2, Appendix A
- Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth 2009 (Moodle)
- Djupe and Calfano Intro and Ch. 1
- <https://religioninpublic.blog/2017/03/22/measurement-error-is-sin/>
- <https://religioninpublic.blog/2017/10/03/misclassification-of-religious-traditions-is-systematic/>

Religious Tradition, Gender, and Ethnicity

6. (*White?*) *Christianity in America* (Monday, Feb. 12 – Wednesday, Feb. 14)

- Catholics and Protestants
- Evangelicals
- Changing affiliations

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 2
- P&C Ch. 5
- Noll. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Ch. 1
- <https://religioninpublic.blog/2018/02/06/the-american-religious-landscape-is-volatile/>

7. *Religious Minorities in American Political Life* (Friday, Feb. 16)

- Jews, Muslims, and Mormons

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 3
- Campbell, Green, and Monson. 2012. *The Stained Glass Ceiling: Social Contact and Mitt Romney's "Religion Problem."*
- James Penning. 2009. "Americans' Views of Muslims and Mormons: A Social Identity Theory Approach." (Moodle)
- Farida Jalalzai. 2009. "The Politics of Muslims in America."
- Nicholas Kristof "America's History of Fear"
http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/05/opinion/05kristof.html?_r=0
- Richard Hofstadter: *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (Moodle)
- <http://www.newsweek.com/trump-jews-creepy-history-controversy-775402>

8. *Religion, Race, and Ethnicity* (Monday, Feb. 19 – Friday, Feb. 23)

- Politics of Latino and African American Churches

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 10
- P&C Ch. 9

- Jones Ch. 5 (Moodle)
- Noll. *God and Race in American Politics*. Introduction (Moodle)
- Bob Jones on Segregation: <https://brucegerencser.net/2017/08/is-segregation-scriptural-by-evangelist-bob-jones-the-founder-of-bob-jones-university/>

9. *Religion and Gender* (Monday, Feb. 26 – Wednesday, Feb. 28)

- Women's activity in religion and politics

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 11
- P&C Ch. 7-8
- Deckman et al. 2003. "Clergy and the Politics of Gender." (Moodle)
- Djupe and Calfano. 2011. "Not in His Image: The Moderating Effect of Gender on Religious Appeals." (Moodle)
- Djupe, Sokhey, and Gilbert. 2007. "Present but Not Accounted for? Gender Differences in Civic Resource Acquisition."

10. *Religious Nonconformity* (Friday, March 2 – Wednesday, March 7)

- Atheists, agnostics, seculars, and the "nones"
- The Religious Left

READING:

- D&C Ch. 3
- Laura Olson. 2010. <https://tif.ssrc.org/2010/08/04/who-are-the-spiritual/>
- Clifford & Gaskins 2016; Beard et al. 2013; Hout & Fischer 2014 (Moodle)
- <http://religionnews.com/2017/01/24/the-changing-nature-of-americas-irreligious-explained/>
- <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113889251&sc=emaf>
- Laura Olson. 2011. "The religious left in contemporary American politics." (Moodle)

Midterm Exam: Friday, March 9

Religion and Political Beliefs/Activities

11. *Religion, political attitudes, and voting behavior* (Monday, March 12 – Friday, March 16)

- Voting patterns over time
- Economic attitudes
- Social attitudes

READING:

Voting

- Fowler Ch. 4
- D&C Ch. 2
- P&C Chs. 10-12 (skim)
- Andrew Gelman. *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State*. Ch. 6

Economic Attitudes

- Barker & Carman 2000; Scheve & Stasavage 2006 (Moodle)

- <https://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21722172-secret-lies-prosperity-gospel-why-evangelicals-love-donald-trump>
- <https://www.yahoo.com/news/donald-trump-apos-spiritual-adviser-135804056.html>

Social and Security Attitudes

- D&C Chs. 4, 7, & 8
- Barker & Bearce 2012
- <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/16/us/16religion.html?emc=eta1>

12. Religion and Partisanship (Monday, March 19 – Friday, March 23)

- Republicans and Evangelicals
- Democrats and Secular Americans

READING:

- Layman Chs. 3-8
- Patrikios 2014
- Margolis 2016 & 2017a
- <https://religioninpublic.blog/2018/01/23/how-partisanship-and-the-political-environment-shape-religious-identity-an-interview-with-author-michele-margolis/>
- Conger 2010

Spring Break: March 26-30

13. *Religion and political participation/culture* (Monday, April 2 – Friday, April 6)

- Religion and political culture
- Is religion good for democratic citizenship?

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 7
- D&C Ch. 8
- P&C Ch. 13
- Djupe & Grant 2001; Scheufele, Dietram, Nisbet, & Brossard 2003; Beyerlein & Chaves 2003; Gaskins 2017 (Moodle)

14. *Religion and cultural-political elites* (Monday, April 9 – Friday, April 13)

- Religion and the Presidency
- Religion and Congress

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 6
- D&C Ch. 5
- Albertson 2006 (Moodle)
- <https://www.christiantoday.com/amp/what-barack-obamas-christianity-can-teach-white-evangelicals/124881.htm>

MOVIE: *With God on our side: George W. Bush & the Rise of the Religious Right in America.*

15. *Religion and the legal system* (Monday, April 16 – Wednesday, April 18)

- Establishment clause

-Separation of Church and State
 -Judicial Activism?
 READING: Fowler Chs. 8-9

Friday, April 20: Festival of Scholars

16. *Organized Religious Interests and Movements and Summary* (Monday, April 23 – Wednesday, April 25)

-The politics of religious groups

READING:

- Fowler Ch. 5

- D&C Chs. 6, 9, & Conclusion

- P&C Chs. 14-15, Epilogue

- <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/evangelicalpulpit/2017/01/evangelical-vote-donald-trump/>

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/opinion/trump-scaramucci-evangelical-christian.html>

<http://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/370698-the-christian-rights-problematic-rights-claims#.Wmtng-p8SAg.twitter>

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 2 at 8:30 am

Course schedule is flexible and may be adjusted as the semester goes along. List of reading is not meant to be exhaustive, and I may add or subtract from the list of readings as the semester progresses. Above all, pay attention to where we are and be flexible! I promise to give you plenty of time to read and will keep you informed about any and all changes to the syllabus.