



PSC 210-02/REL 280-02: Jews and Muslims in American Politics

Wabash College | Spring 2018 | TTh 1:10-2:25

Professor Shamira Gelbman | gelbmans@wabash.edu | 127 Baxter Hall | Office Hours: M, W, Th 10-11 & by appt.

Together, Jews and Muslims make up less than 5% of the U.S. population. Nevertheless – or perhaps because of this – their experiences shed light on a number of features of the American political system and raise important questions about its democratic promise and practice. In this course, we'll study the Jewish and Muslim American experiences to gain insight into religious minorities' political behavior, influence, and reception within the American political system. We'll consider many questions, including: How have religious outlooks and other factors shaped American Jews and Muslims' political attitudes and participation in American politics? To what extent do members of different denominations and sects within the Jewish and Muslim populations behave differently in American politics? Given their small numbers in the population, how well are Jews and Muslims represented in the policymaking process? What role have interest groups played in enhancing Jews and Muslims' influence in American politics? Is interfaith cooperation – whether with each other or with larger religious groups – a viable way for Jews and Muslims to improve their capacity to shape public policy and other political outcomes? How have anti-Semitism and Islamophobia played into American politics, both historically and in contemporary times? And finally, what does this all suggest about the inner workings and quality of American democracy?

By the end of the semester, you should have gained an understanding of religious minority groups' experiences and capacity for influence in the American political system; appreciation of the extent of religious diversity within the United States and its implications for politics and policymaking; facility with social science research – both as a consumer and a producer; and interfaith engagement and leadership skills.

Requirements and Grades

Your grade for PSC 210 will be based on my holistic assessment of your performance of the following requirements:

1. Preparation and Participation (25%)

You are expected to prepare for and participate actively in all class activities and discussions. Preparation includes completion of required readings and homework assignments, which will generally be due at 8:00 AM on the day for which they are assigned. Regular attendance is necessary (but not sufficient!) for success in this course requirement, and excessive absence (i.e. missing more than 4 class sessions) will result in an F for this portion of your course grade.

2. Midterm Memo and Interview (25%)

This midterm assignment asks you to imagine that you are seeking a position in the election campaign (and, if s/he wins, the staff office) of a 2018 candidate for public office. To make the final cut, the campaign manager has asked all finalists (including you) to draft a memo advising him/her on a strategy for mobilizing support from Jewish and Muslim voters. Shortly after the deadline to submit your memo, you will be invited in for an interview to discuss your memo. The hiring decision (and your grade!) will be based on your demonstrated understanding of relevant course material, your ability to deploy that understanding in a 'real world' context, and the quality of your written and oral communication.

3. Research Project: Jewish and Muslim American Interest Groups in the Social Media Age (25%)

For this collaborative research project, you will work with your classmates to develop a systematic understanding of how Jewish and Muslim American interest groups use social media to influence political outcomes in the United States. We'll talk about how this original research project will work in class, probably early in the second half of the semester.

4. Final Essay (25%)

The final essay prompt will ask you to critically and reflectively discuss your learning experience in PSC 210. You will be expected to draw on a range of course materials and experiences in completing this assignment. Final essay writing will take place during the registrar-mandated 3-hour final exam timeslot for this course.

Policies

- As always, you are expected to comport yourself in accordance with the **Gentleman's Rule**. Inappropriate decorum and academic dishonesty will be handled accordingly.
- Please make sure to check your Wabash **email** regularly for course-related communications. It is expected that you will respond to course emails promptly and professionally. Please also check your **Canvas** notification settings to ensure that you will receive messages (especially submission comments!) I send through that platform. Keep in mind that the Canvas app (vs. the website) has limited functionality. Use it for assignment submission at your own risk. You are also highly encouraged to use some form of **cloud storage** (e.g. Box) to save and back up your course work.
- **Late homework assignments** will not be graded, and habitually late or missed assignments will have a negative impact on your course grade. **Late memos, essays, and research project components** will be penalized one full letter grade per day late. Another full letter grade will be deducted if your late work inconveniences your classmates.
- Regular **attendance** is expected. As noted above, you will earn an F for the preparation and participation component of your grade if you miss more than four class sessions. In addition, it is your responsibility to inform me of absences, regardless of whether they are Dean-excused or not, as far in advance as possible and to let me know what your plan is for making up missed material. Failure to do so will have a negative impact on your grade.
- Students with disabilities (apparent or invisible) are invited to confidentially discuss their situation with the **disability coordinator**, Heather Thrush, Director of Student Engagement and Success. If a student wishes to receive an academic accommodation, his documentation of the disability must be on file with Heather Thrush, who can provide information and guidance. Heather Thrush can be reached in her office (Center Hall 112A), by phone (765-361-6347), or by email (thrushh@wabash.edu).

Texts

You do not need to purchase any books for this course. Required readings will be provided in electronic format on Canvas. You should plan to print required readings and bring them to class.

Schedule (subject to change, especially in the second half of the semester)

Week 1 (January 16/18): Jews and Muslims as Religious Minorities in American Politics

Required reading:

- Steven Windmueller, "The Jewish Contract with America," in *American Politics and the Jewish Community: The Jewish Role in American Life*. Dan Schnur and Bruce Zuckerman, eds. (Purdue University Press, 2013).
- M.A. Muqtedar Khan, "American Exceptionalism and American Muslims," *Review of Faith & International Affairs* 10 (2012): 59-65.

Week 2 (January 23/25): Who are the Jews and Muslims in American Politics?

Skype meeting with Dr. Gregory A. Smith, Associate Director of Research, Pew Research Center on Jan. 25

Required reading:

- "A Portrait of Jewish Americans," Pew Research Center, 2013
- "US Muslims Concerned about Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream," Pew Research Center, 2017.

Week 3 (January 30/February 1): The Political Behavior of American Jews

Required Reading:

- Ira M. Sheshkin, "An Introduction to the American Jewish Voter," in *Minority Voting in the United States*, K.L. Kreider and T.J. Baldino, eds. (Praeger, 2015).
- Kenneth D. Wald, "The Choosing People: Interpreting the Puzzling Politics of American Jewry," *Religion and Politics* 8 (2015): 4-35.
- Nathaniel Deutsch, "Borough Park Was a Red State: Trump and the Haredi Vote," *Jewish Social Studies* 22 (2017): 158-173.
- David Henkin, "The Big Picture: Jews and Trump," November 9, 2017, *Public Books*.

Week 4 (February 6/8): The Political Behavior of American Muslims

Required reading:

- Farid Senzai, "The Political Incorporation and Mobilization of American Muslims," in *Minority Voting in the United States*, K.L. Kreider and T.J. Baldino, eds. (Praeger, 2015).
- Farida Jalalzai, "Anxious and Active: Muslim Perceptions of Discrimination and Treatment and Its Political Consequences in the Post-September 11, 2001 United States," *Politics and Religion* 4 (2011): 71-107.
- Aubrey Westfall et al., "Islamic Headcovering and Political Engagement: The Power of Social Networks," *Politics and Religion* 10 (2017): 3-30.
- Emma Green, "American Muslims Are Young, Politically Liberal, and Scared," *Atlantic*, March 21, 2017.
- Wajahat Ali, "Do Muslims Have to Be Democrats Now?" *New York Times*, May 13, 2017.

Week 5 (February 13/15): Antisemitism and Islamophobia in American Politics

Required reading:

- Jack Wertheimer, "Antisemitism in the United States: A Historical Perspective," in *Antisemitism in America Today: Outspoken Experts Explode the Myths*, Jerome A. Chanes, ed. (Birch Lane Press, 1995).
- "ADL Audit: US Anti-Semitic Incidents Surged in 2016-17," Anti-Defamation League, 2017.
- Jon Kofas, "Trumpist-Populism, Neo-Liberalism, and Anti-Semitism," *CounterCurrents*, May 17, 2017.
- Yaser Ali, "Sharia and Citizenship – How Islamophobia Is Creating a Second-Class Citizenry in America," *California Law Review* 100 (2012): 1027-1068.
- "Legalizing Othering: The United States of Islamophobia," Haas Institute, September 2017.
- Peter Beinart, "Why Is Trump Silent on Islamophobic Attacks?" *The Atlantic*, February 27, 2017.

Week 6 (February 20/22): Jews and Muslims in the American Political Mind

Required reading:

- "Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings toward Religious Groups," Pew Research Center (2017).
- Carly M. Jacobs and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, "Belonging in a 'Christian Nation': The Explicit and Implicit Associations between Religion and National Group Membership," *Politics and Religion* 6 (2013): 373-401.
- Allyson F. Shortle and Ronald Keith Gaddie, "Religious Nationalism and Perceptions of Muslims and Islam," *Politics and Religion* 8 (2015): 435-457.
- Brian Calfano et al., "Muslim Mistrust: The Resilience of Negative Public Attitudes after Complimentary Information," *Journal of Media and Religion* 15 (2016): 29-42.
- Tara Isabella Burton, "Study Suggests Trump's 'Muslim Ban' Actually Improved Attitudes toward Muslims," *Vox*, January 10, 2018.

Week 7 (February 27/March 1): Midterm Memos and Interviews

Spring Break!

Week 8 (March 13/15): Jewish and Muslim Representation in American Legislatures

Required Reading:

- "Faith on the Hill: The Religious Composition of the 115th Congress," *Pew Research Center*, January 3, 2017
- L. Sandy Maisel, "Jewish Elected Officials for National Office, 1945-2013: From Representing Fellow Jews to Assimilated American Politicians," in *American Politics and the Jewish Community: The Jewish Role in American Life*, D. Schnur et al., eds. (Purdue University Press, 2013).
- Shane Martin, "The Congressional Representation of Muslim American Constituents," *Politics and Religion* 2 (2009): 230-246.
- Eileen Braman and Abdulkader H. Sinno, "An Experimental Investigation of Causal Attributions for the Political Behavior of Muslim Candidates: Can a Muslim Represent You?" *Politics and Religion* 2 (2009): 247-276.
- Abdulkader H. Sinno and Eren Tatari, "Toward Electability: Public Office and the Arab Vote," in *Target of Opportunity: Arab Detroit in the Terror Decade*, S. Howell et al., eds. (Wayne State University Press, 2011).

Weeks 9-11 (March 20/22; 27/29; and April 3/5): Jewish and Muslim Organizations in American Politics

We'll introduce, train for and begin work on the research project during these weeks; details TBA.

Required Reading:

- Jerome A. Chanes, "Who Does What? Jewish Advocacy and Jewish 'Interest,'" in *Jews in American Politics*, L.S. Maisel and I.N. Forman, eds. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2001).
- Rachel Kraus, "Laity, Institution, Theology, or Politics? Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish Washington Offices' Agenda Setting," *Sociology of Religion* 68 (2007): 67-81.
- Kathleen M. Moore, "Muslim Advocacy in America," in *Islam in the Modern World*, J.T. Kenney and E. Moosa, eds. (Routledge, 2017).
- Emily Cury, "Muslim American Integration and Interest Group Formation: A Historical Narrative," *Diaspora Studies* 10 (2017): 81-96.

Week 12 (April 10/12): Jewish and Muslim American Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Documentary screening and discussion with PSC 240: "Is There Room at the Inn? Muslims, Jews, and the Holy Land"

Required Reading:

- Theodore Sasson, "Mass Mobilization to Direct Engagement: American Jews' Changing Relationship to Israel," *Israel Studies* 15 (2010): 173-195.
- Emily Cury, "Muslim American Policy Advocacy and the Palestinian Israeli Conflict: Claims Making and the Pursuit of Group Rights," *Politics and Religion* 10 (2017): 417-439.
- Adrienne Dessel, Noor Ali, and Alice Mishkin, "Learning about Palestinian Narratives: What Are the Barriers for Jewish College Students?" *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 20 (2014): 365-384.

Week 13 (April 17/19): Interfaith Cooperation in Jewish and Muslim-American Politics

Meeting with Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Pill, Founding Director of Institute for Jewish Muslim Action on April 19

Required Reading:

- Katherine Knutson, "Interfaith Advocacy Groups in American Politics," in *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Identities, Places, Practices and Politics*, S.D. Brunn, ed. (Springer, 2015).

Week 14 (April 24/26): Research Project Wrap-Up

Research Project deadlines and presentations TBA.

Monday, April 30 at 1:30-4:30 PM (Finals Week): Final Essay