

POLITICS 314 -- Politics and Religion in United States

Fall 2017, Smullin 315, MW 2:30-4:00

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SML 322, X6716

Course Description

This course will focus on the following questions:

How has religion informed movements for social change in the United States?

Is religion necessary for movements for social change to succeed?

In addressing these questions, we will be examining some of the most vital and contentious issues in politics: What is the foundation of political society? How should the obligations of citizens be ordered? What is the relationship between politics, religion, and morality? What is relationship between toleration and freedom? What are the implications of the self-conception of the United States as a “Christian nation” or as a “chosen nation?” What role should religious voices have in shaping public policy in the United States?

To explore these concerns we will begin the semester with a “crash course” in the history of religion and politics in the United States. Our reading in this section of the class will largely consist of primary source documents: sermons, speeches, letters, trial transcriptions, laws, and essays. This first section of the class will provide us with a foundation for our study of religion and politics in the contemporary United States. In this second section of the course, our reading will primarily consist of the latest scholarship in the field. Our study will range from demographic analysis to works of political and cultural theory. Because of the nature of our subject of analysis – and because of our commitment to participating in the analysis of an emerging and ongoing phenomenon – we will be keeping close eye on current events and on new scholarship. Accordingly, our reading list is subject to change – generally by addition rather than subtraction. I have ordered with following books for our class.

Required:

Frances Fitzgerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle To Shape America*, Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Religion and Progressive Activism: New Stories About Faith and Politics, Ed. Braunstein, Fuist, and Williams, New York UP, 2017. RPA

Recommended:

Elizabeth Drescher, *Choosing Our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America’s Nones*, Oxford UP, 2016.

Jonathan Rosenblum, *Beyond \$15: Immigrant Workers, Faith Activists, and the Revival of the Labor Movement*, Beacon, 2017.

All other texts will be available through the course WISE site or through links provided throughout the semester.

Student Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

- think critically and creatively about politics and religion
- examine the relationship between religious identity and political identity
- draw connections between political theory and political practice and behavior
- develop understanding of the intersection of culture and power

Furthermore, as a course designated as fulfilling the MOI “Examining Values,” students in this course will:

- examine values and the roles they play in human life.
- understand the nature and structure of arguments
- recognize that it is possible to reason and draw meaningful conclusions about matters of ethical or aesthetic value.

Course Requirements

Reading and Participation Assignments:

This is a seminar class, not a lecture course. We are going to be talking and listening to one another, engaging in a collective enterprise of exploration. The realms of politics and religion are the sources of meaning in many of our lives. The issues touched by these realms accordingly get to the very heart of how we understand ourselves – and the world we share. Accordingly, we can and should expect that we will not all agree with one another regarding the topics we will be discussing. Indeed, there may well be moments in this course that some people will find deeply upsetting. This course should neither be seen as an opportunity to preach to the choir, nor as a space for proselytizing. Vital to the success of this class is the commitment we make to listening and speaking with one another with respect and thoughtfulness.

The reading assignments for this course are rigorous and challenging. You are required to *thoughtfully* read every assignment. When I say that you are required to read, I do not mean that you should mechanically scan every page, but that you should *grapple with the ideas*. Mark up your text, read with a pen and paper, and write down ideas, questions, quotations, and points of confusion or contention. *Read for comprehension rather than completion, pondering every idea rather than looking at every word.* This means that you may need to read a section, think about it, read it again, write about it, discuss it, and then read it again. So, “do the reading” means “engage yourself with the ideas of the texts.”

The reading load will be quite heavy at times. To stay afloat, plan for a sufficient amount of time to complete the assignment, and read aggressively. Remember to make use of your resources. Come to my office hours and form reading groups with your classmates. Reading in this way will assist you in the second requirement: Your regular attendance, careful preparation, and active participation are essential. **Come prepared to participate by doing the reading, reflecting upon the course material, and bringing to class issues, questions, and passages for discussion.** Moreover, class participation does not simply entail speaking, but also listening in an engaged and respectful manner to the thoughts of your classmates.

If you miss a class, whether excused or unexcused, you must write a 500-word paper analyzing the reading that was assigned for the day you miss. Your participation grade in the course will be lowered by half a grade for every short paper you do not turn in within a week of your return to class. More than two unexcused absences will result in a full grade deduction from your final course grade; each additional absence will result in an additional deduction of one full grade from your final grade. Persistent lateness or failure to prepare adequately for class discussions can also result in deductions from the final grade.

One more note about reading and participation: Throughout the semester, I will be distributing additional articles, essays, poems, biblical passages, and other texts for us to read and discuss. I will also be sending out links to websites, screening short videos, and podcasts. These additional readings are not listed on the schedule of events below, but will be designed to complement the major reading assignments, pick up on themes from our class discussions, and keep us in touch with ongoing developments in American political culture. These supplemental texts and resources will contribute to the dynamism of the class, and let me add that *you are each strongly encouraged to suggest texts and resources that we can discuss as a class.*

Grading

Class Participation including regular reading response essays	50%
<u>Research/Engagement Project</u>	<u>50%</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

Writing/Presentation Assignments:

1. I have divided the class into three groups. Throughout the semester, every day we meet, one group will be responsible for writing 1 page single-spaced essays responding to the assigned readings. These response essays will be posted on the course WISE site using the Forum tool. Every class meeting will have a separate Forum Thread and all students will be expected to read and comment on the daily response essays posted by the members of the group assigned for that day. Reading Response Essays must be posted to the Forum site by 9:00 PM prior to the day of the class meeting. I will be keeping track of individual response essays. Rather than grade each essay, I will be offering students regular feedback about these essays and class participation more generally.

2. In addition each student will complete a final project that will culminate in the composition of a major paper and a presentation of your analysis in class. There are two options for completing this final project and each option will be weighed equally.

Option 1: Choose an illustration of political activism in the United States. Topics might include organizations involved in the free speech movement, the abolition of prison, the anti-nuclear movement, organizations promoting trans rights, the anti-capital punishment movement, organizations promoting religious freedom, the immigrant rights movement. Develop a 20+ page research project that examines the roles religious groups or religious tropes have (or pointedly have not) played in the efforts of this effort to transform society.

Over the course of the semester, you will be submitting drafts of your research that will be graded. You will also be sharing the results of your research with other students in class throughout the semester.

Option 2: Develop a Community Social Action project. Choose either an organization that engages in political action and/or a religious group/community. Organizations might include local churches, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Oregon Right to Life, Planned Parenthood, CAUSA, Stand for Children, Basic Rights Oregon, etc. Engage in careful analysis of this organization through interviews, participant observation, archival analysis, etc. Keep a regular (at least bi-weekly) journal that you will be sharing with the class in which you reflect on the work you are doing and the themes we are exploring in class. (I will be giving you guidelines for these journals, which will be a key part of your grade for the project.) Compose an 8+ page “reflective essay” in which you engage in sustained consideration of a particular theme we have addressed in class and how your understanding of this theme was enhanced by your thorough engagement with this organization/group/community.

* A crucial note about writing, editing, and rewriting: I am establishing a new policy this semester designed to encourage all students in advanced classes to become careful and conscientious writers. ***The policy is simple: I can't take your work seriously if you don't. If, in reading your paper, I see multiple instances in which the work seems sloppy, or hasty, lacking evidence of careful review and revision, I will have little incentive to keep reading, and it will be reflected in your grade.*** Like many of you, I have been guilty of not editing, proofreading, and revising my work carefully enough, and as such have submitted work that is sloppy. Falling into bad patterns is all too easy when so much of the writing we do is informal; this policy should make clear that written work for a class should be approached differently than email, texts, or tweets. I also know that editing one's own work can be very difficult – the words on the page can seem so familiar that it is easy to start skipping sentences and paragraphs when reviewing one's own work. Accordingly, I *strongly encourage* you to work with a partner in this editing and proofreading process.

** Note: A penalty of 1/3 grade per day will be imposed on assignments submitted late (one day's lateness would reduce a B+ to a B). I generally do not grant extensions, but if extraordinary circumstances arise, please consult with me as soon as possible -- *and certainly prior to the due date of the paper.*

*** Another note: I fully appreciate that students like fast and thorough comments on their writing assignments. Unfortunately “fast” and “thorough” do not often go together well. I will strive to return your final papers in a timely fashion. *As a general rule, you should receive your papers back within two weeks of turning them in.*

**** Of Special Note: I take plagiarism and cheating very seriously. Willamette's policy on cheating and plagiarism states:

Cheating is any form of intellectual dishonesty or misrepresentation of one's knowledge. Plagiarism, a form of cheating, consists of intentionally or unintentionally representing someone else's work as one's own. All members of the Willamette University community are expected to be aware of the serious breach of principles involved in plagiarism. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism shall not be considered a valid defense. If students are uncertain as to what constitutes plagiarism for a particular assignment, they should consult the instructor for clarification.

Students found guilty of plagiarism will receive a zero for the assignment AND WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN. <http://www.willamette.edu/cla/dean/policies/plagiarism.html>

***** Statement Concerning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term.

*******Willamette's Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time there is an expectation of 2-3 hours work outside of class. Thus, you should anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities. Examples include study time, reading and homework assignments, research projects, and group work. And the reality is that for you to succeed in this course, you should expect to dedicate much more than this required 6-9 hours per week.**

***** Willamette University recognizes the value of religious practice and strives to accommodate students' commitment to their religious traditions whenever possible. When conflicts between holy days or other religious practice and academic scheduling arise, every effort should be made to allow students to adhere to their tradition, including, when possible, excusing class absences and allowing make-up work. A student anticipating the need to miss a class for religious reasons should alert the faculty member within the first two weeks of the semester, and the two of them should determine the next course of action. Any unresolved difficulty should be referred to the Office of the Chaplains.

Schedule of Events

1. M 8/28: Robert Orsi, "Snakes Alive: Religious Studies Between Heaven and Earth."
Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds and the Scholars Who Study Them. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005, 177-204. (WISE)
2. W 8/30: NO CLASS – I will be attending the American Political Science Association meeting in San Francisco.
3. M 9/4: Labor Day -- No Class.
4. W 9/6: Pew Forum, "'Nones' on the Rise," October 9, 2012. (WISE).
<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>
Pew Forum, Jewish American Survey, 2013. (WISE)

Pew Forum, Muslim American Survey Report, 2012 (WISE)
Pew Forum, Morality of Abortion Survey, 2015 (WISE).
“The Changing Global Religious Landscape,” Pew Forum, April 5, 2017.
<http://www.pewforum.org/2017/04/05/the-changing-global-religious-landscape/>

5. M 9/11: John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity,” (1630),
<http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/charity.html>
Samuel Danforth, “A Brief Recognition of New-England’s Errand into the Wilderness (1670).” American Sermons: The Pilgrims to Martin Luther King, Jr. Ed. Michael Warner. New York: The Library of America, 1999, 151-171.
Jonathan Edwards, “The Latter-Day Glory is Probably to Begin in America.” God’s New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny. Ed. Conrad Cherry. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971, 55-59.
Fitzgerald, 1-47.
GROUP 1

6. W 9/13: The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America.
“The Petition of the Philadelphia Synagogue,” American Religions: A Documentary History. Ed. R. Marie Griffith. New York: Oxford UP, 2008, 148-150.
Thomas Jefferson, “Letter to Danbury Baptists” (1802).
<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>
James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments,” (1785). http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/madison_m&r_1785.html
GROUP 2

7. M 9/18: Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Harvard Divinity Address.”(1838),
<http://www.emersoncentral.com/divaddr.htm>
Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Volume I, Ch. 14. “What Are The Real Advantages Which American Society Derives From A Democratic Government?” (especially the section “Public Spirit In The United States.”) http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/1_ch14.htm
Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Volume II, Ch. 5. “How Religion In The United States Avails Itself Of Democratic Tendencies”
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/ch1_05.htm
Fitzgerald, 49-94.
GROUP 3

8. W 9/20: Frederick Douglass, from Narratives in the Life of an American Slave. American Religions: A Documentary History. Ed. R. Marie Griffith. New York: Oxford UP, 2008, 213-221.
 Angelina Grimke, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South," <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abesaegat.html>
 Lucretia Mott, "Abuses and Uses of the Bible," American Sermons: The Pilgrims to Martin Luther King, Jr. Ed. Michael Warner. New York: The Library of America, 1999, 630-639.
 Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" and "Second Inaugural Address"
 GROUP 1
9. M 9/25: Russell Conwell, "Acres of Diamonds," (ca. 1900-25). Transcription by Michelle Moore. Property of AmericanRhetoric.com ©2010.
 Walter Rauschenbusch, from A Theology for The Social Gospel, American Religions: A Documentary History. Ed. R. Marie Griffith. New York: Oxford UP, 2008, 309-321.
 Dorothy Day, from The Long Loneliness, American Religions: A Documentary History. Ed. R. Marie Griffith. New York: Oxford UP, 2008, 462-486.
 Billy Sunday, "The Booze Sermon," http://www.biblebelievers.com/billy_sunday_booze.html
 Fitzgerald, 95-142.
 GROUP 2
10. W 9/27: Fitzgerald, 143-232.
Final Project Discussion/DEADLINE.
 GROUP 3
11. M 10/2: Reinhold Niebuhr, "The American Future," The Irony of American History. American Religions: A Documentary History. Ed. R. Marie Griffith. New York: Oxford UP, 2008, 424-434. (WISE)
 Martin Luther King, Jr., "Loving Your Enemies," November 17, 1957. (WISE)
 Fitzgerald 233-260.
 GROUP 1
12. W 10/4: James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time (1962). (WISE)
 GROUP 2
13. M 10/9: James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time (1962). (WISE)
 GROUP 3
14. W 10/11: Jerry Falwell, "Organizing the Moral Majority" and "Listen America" excerpts.
 Fitzgerald, 261-336.
 GROUP 1

15. M 10/16: Leo Ribuffo, "Family Policy Past As Prologue: Jimmy Carter, the White House Conference on Families, and the Mobilization of the New Christian Right," *Review of Policy Research*, Volume 23, Number 2 (2006). (WISE)
Paul Weyrich, "A Moral Minority," 1999 (WISE).
Paul Hill, "Defending the Defenseless," 2002 (WISE).
GROUP 2
16. W 10/18: Bill McKibben, "[The Christian Paradox](#)", *Harper's Magazine*, August, 2005. (WISE)
George Weigel, "Evangelical Catholicism," *First Things*, March 2013. (WISE)
Neil J. Young, "'The ERA is a Moral Issue': The Mormon Church, LDS Women, and the Defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment," *Religion and Politics in the Contemporary United States*. Ed. R. Marie Griffith and Melani McAlister, The Johns Hopkins UP, 2008. Fitzgerald, 337-432. (WISE)
GROUP 3
17. M 10/23: Fitzgerald, 433-534.
Brad R. Fulton and Richard L. Wood, "Achieving and Leveraging Diversity through Faith-Based Organizing," RPA.
Rebecca Sager, "Progressive Religious Activists and Democratic Party Politics," RPA.
GROUP 1
18. W 10/25: Paul Harvey, "'A Servant of Servants He Shall Be': The Construction of Race in American Religious Mythologies," *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*, Ed. Craig R. Prentiss, New York University Press, 2003. (WISE)
Eddie Glaude, "Myth and African American Self-Identity," *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*, Ed. Craig R. Prentiss, New York University Press, 2003. (WISE)
Douglas E. Cowan, "Theologizing Race: The Construction of 'Christian Identity,'" *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*, Ed. Craig R. Prentiss, New York University Press, 2003. (WISE)
GROUP 2
19. M 10/30: Todd Nicholas Fuist, "How Moral Talk Connects Faith and Social Justice," RPA.
Ruth Braunstein, "Strategic Storytelling by Nuns on the Bus," RPA.
Nimachia Hernandez, "Indigenous Identity and Story: The Telling of Our Part in the Sacred Homeland," *Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity*, Ed. Craig R. Prentiss, New York University Press, 2003. (WISE)
GROUP 3
20. W 11/1: Sarah Allen Gershon, Adrian D. Pantoja, and J. Benjamin Taylor, "God in the Barrio?: The Determinants of Religiosity and Civic Engagement among Latinos in the United States," *Politics and Religion*, 9 (2016), 84–110. (WISE)

Juan R. Martinez, "Religious Culture and Immigrant Civic Participation," RPA.
Roberto S. Goizueta, "Our Lady of Guadalupe: The Heart of Mexican Identity,"
Religion and the Creation of Race and Ethnicity, Ed. Craig R. Prentiss, New
York University Press, 2003. (WISE)
Tony Tian-Ren Lin, The Gospel of the American Dream, *Hedgehog Review*,
Summer 2013. (WISE)

GROUP 1

21. M 11/6: "U.S. Muslims Concerned about the Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream: Findings from the Pew Research Center's 2017 Survey of U.S. Muslims." Pew Research Center, July 26, 2017. (WISE).
Rosemary Hancock, "Is There a Paradox of Liberation and Religion? Muslim Environmentalists, Activism, and Religious Practice." *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*. 2015, Vol. 28 Issue 1, 42-60. (WISE)
Jen'nan Ghazal Read, "Gender, Religious Identity, and Civic Engagement among Arab Muslims in the United States," *Sociology of Religion* 2015, 76:1 30-48. (WISE)
Salwa Ismail, "Being Muslim: Islam, Islamism and Identity Politics," *Politics of Identity -- VI, Government and Opposition Ltd* 2004. (WISE)

GROUP 2

22. W 11/8: Grace Yukich, "Progressive Activism among Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims in the U.S." RPA.
Joshua Z. Gahr and Michael P. Young, "Religious Roots of New Left Radicalism," RPA.
Laura R. Olson, "Collective Identity and Movement Solidarity among Religious Left Activists in the U.S." RPA.
Philip S. Gorski, "Reviving the Civil Religious Tradition," RPA.
Paul Lichterman and Rhys H. Williams, "Cultural Challenges for Mainline Protestant Political Progressives," RPA.

GROUP 3

23. M 11/13: Rhys Williams, "What Progressive Efforts Tell Us about Faith and Politics," RPA.

24. W 11/15: Fitzgerald, 535-635.

25. M 11/20: *Thanksgiving, No Class*

26. W 11/22: *Thanksgiving, No Class*

27. M 11/27: Presentations, Day 1

28. W 11/29: Presentations, Day 2

29. M 12/4: Presentations, Day 3

30. W 12/6: Presentations, Day 4