

# PSCI 4700.001, Religion and Global Politics

Syllabus, Fall 2018  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
3:30-4:50p  
BLB 050

*One of the main methodological problems in writing about religion scientifically is to put aside at once the tone of the village atheist and that of the village preacher, as well as their more sophisticated equivalents, so that the social and psychological implications of particular religious beliefs [and organizations] can emerge in a clear and neutral light. ~ Clifford Geertz*

## Course Description

In spite of predictions that religion would wither away with in the face of modernization, religion remains a factor in contemporary political life. Even casual observation indicates that religion remains interwoven into the fabric of contemporary politics. Our goal is to obtain an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the salience of religion in public life. Using economic, sociological, and psychological approaches, this class explores the relationship between religion and global politics, with a special focus outside the North Atlantic region. Although the study of religion and politics raises a host of deep philosophical questions, the principal aim of the course is to understand how religion affects politics (and *vice versa*), rather than to explore the moral questions raised by the interaction of these two forces.

## Learning Objectives

- Identify and explain the secularization thesis;
- Analyze the relationship between religion and politics in different ethno-national and institutional contexts;
- Assess the relationship between religion and democracy;
- Explain the relationship between religion and political violence; and,
- Communicate effectively about religion and global politics.

## What We'll Do in 4700

*Readiness assurance tests.* This course uses a team-based learning approach that emphasizes your ability to apply course concepts and to solve problems. Course requirements are designed to ensure that individuals are prepared for team work and minimize the likelihood of typical “group work” problems (individuals shirking their responsibilities, other individuals dominating the group, or the division of labor to avoid group interaction). You will be assigned to a team during the first day of class. At the beginning of each course module, you will take an individual Readiness Assurance Test (iRAT). You will then take the same Readiness Assurance Test as a team (tRAT). After the RATs, we will explore the unit’s topic through short lectures and team application exercises. Missed RATs may not be taken late or “made up.” Each team will determine whether absent student may receive credit for missed tRATS.

## Instructor

Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon  
Contact via Canvas  
Office: Wooten Hall 156  
Office hours: T 12.30-  
3.20p, and by appointment

## Required Books

Ayoob, Mohammed. 2008.  
*The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Toft, Monica Duffy, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Samuel Shah. 2011. *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics.* New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Additional materials  
available via Canvas.

*Peer evaluations.* You will complete peer evaluations of your teammates at multiple points during the semester. You will be evaluated on both the quality of feedback you provide about your teammates' performances and on how your teammates evaluate your performance. Differentiation in your allocation of points is required. Evaluations scores will be penalized 10% per day (5% on day one) for those submitting late evaluations.

*Exams.* There will be three exams in the course—two midterms and a cumulative final. The final is optional and can be used as a make-up exam or replacement for a midterm score. Exams will include a mix of objective, short answer, and essay questions.

*Blog posts.* Students will maintain individual blogs on any platform they choose. Blogs must be public, though students do not have to publish under their own names. I will make several prompts over the course of the semester. Some prompts will be required, and some discretionary. Parameters will vary by prompt. On all posts, students should write in their own voice—nonstandard English is permissible.

## Grading

Your grade will be based on the components described above. The class will have a role in determining how these assignments are weighted. I have set the assignment weights for team-related course components and set minimum weights for individual work. The class will choose how to allocate the remaining 30% points across the individual course components during our first class meeting.

	Minimum Weight	Points Allocated	Final Weight
tRATS	15	--	15
Peer Evaluations	10	--	10
iRATS	15		
Blog	15		
Midterm Exams	20		
	<b>75</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Final grades assigned based on the schedule to the right. Scores will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Extra credit will not be available. Please plan accordingly.

Final grade	Weighted average
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	<60%

## Key Dates

Item	Date	Item	Date	Item	Date	Item	Date
No Class	Aug. 30	RAT 4	Oct. 4	RAT 6	Nov. 1	Peer 2	Dec. 3
RAT 1	Sept. 4	Midterm 1	Oct. 18	RAT 7	Nov. 13	Midterm 2	Dec. 6
RAT 2	Sept. 13	Peer 1	Oct. 19	No Class	Nov. 22	Final Exam	Dec. 11
RAT 3	Sept. 25	RAT 5	Oct. 23	RAT 8	Nov. 27		

## Scheduling

Introduction

| August 28

- None

Module 1: Secularization, Modernity, and Religious Revival | September 4, 6, 11

- Toft et al., chapters 1-2
- Norris and Inglehart, Sacred and Secular, chapter 3

Module 2: International Norms and Actors | September 13, 18, 20,

- Toft et al., chapter 3
- Hayes, Transnational Religious Actors and International Politics
- Marshall, Engaging on Global Issues in a UN Setting: Religious Actors

Module 3: Religion and Democracy | September 25, 27, October 2

- Toft et al., chapter 4
- Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations?
- Stepan, Religion, Democracy, and the ‘Twin Tolerations’

Module 4: Church State Relationships | October 4, 9, 11, 16

- Kuru, Passive and Assertive Secularism
- Fox and Flores, Religions, Constitutions, and the State: A Cross-National Study
- Oldmixon and Samaniego, Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State
- Berger, Israel’s hugely controversial “nation-state” law, explained
- Bhargava, Can Anything be Learned from the Indian Model of Secularism?

Module 5: State Atheism and Post-Communist Societies | October 23, 25, 30

- Yang, Evangelization Amid Cooperation, Accommodation, and Resistance: Chinese Christian Response to Persecution in Communist China
- Grzymala-Busse, Historical Roots of Religious Influence on Post-Communist Democratic Politics
- Dunajeva and Koesel, ‘Us versus Them’: The Politics of Religion in Contemporary Russia
- Bennetts, Putin’s Holy War
- Feuer and Higgins, Extremists Turn to a Leader to Protect Western Values: Vladimir Putin

Module 6: Political Islam | November 1, 6, 8

- Ayooob, chapters 1-6

Module 7: Extremism and Political Violence | November 13, 15, 20

- Toft et al., chapters 5 and 6
- Appleyby, Religious Violence: The Strong, the Weak, the Pathological

Module 8: Peace-making and “Good Trouble” | November 27, 29, December 4

- Toft et al., chapter 7
- Nepstad, Popular Religion, Political Protest, and Revolt: The Emergence of Political Insurgency in Nicaragua and Salvadoran Churches of the 1960s-80s
- Borer, Church Leadership, State Repression, and the 'Spiral of Involvement' in the South African Anti-apartheid Movement

## Class Policies

The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus at her discretion.

For course drop information, see schedule at: [essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html](http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html).

*Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:* The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at: <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

*Academic Misconduct:* Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of "F" in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at: <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>.

*Acceptable Student Behavior:* Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

*Sexual Discrimination, Harassment & Assault:* UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear

that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their needs: [http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources\\_0](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0). Renee McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

*Emergency Notification & Procedures:* UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at [www.my.unt.edu](http://www.my.unt.edu). Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.