POLITICAL SCIENCE 526
Winter 2011
DRAFT SYLLABUS

The New Religious Politics: Politics and Religion in the Contemporary World

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Off Hrs.: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will examine the relationship between religion and politics in a variety of countries around the world. Despite the predicted decline of religiosity and the significance of religion in public life, religion appears to play an increasingly important and contentious role in the political life of democratic and non-democratic and advanced and developing countries alike. How might this be explained? Why, for example, is the United States one of the most religious societies in the advanced democratic world and why are religious issues so prominent on the American political agenda? How do religious beliefs and practices affect political behavior in various countries? A second set of questions concerns variation in the nature of “church-state” relations around the world. What accounts for such differences and how do varying church-state relations affect the politicization of religiously-based social divisions? A final set of issues to be addressed focuses on the relationship between democracy and religion, particularly the compatibility or incompatibility of particular religious traditions or of heightened religiosity on the emergence and sustainability of democratic politics.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING
You have several responsibilities in the course. You should do a thorough reading of the assigned materials before we discuss them in class, be sure to attend class regularly, and be prepared to participate in class discussions. It is also important for you to carry out all assignments for the course appropriately and on time. Most of all, to do well in the course you should think carefully about the issues discussed in the readings and in class sessions, and apply your learning and thinking to class discussions and written assignments.

My main responsibility is to do everything I can to help you to understand, given the limitations of time, the complexity of the relationship between religion and politics. This means that you should let me know any time that you need help, especially if you are having difficulty with course material or an assignment. And you should also let me know when something is not working as well as it should – for instance, if I do not present material clearly in class. You are always welcome to see me during my office hours. If those scheduled hours are not a good time for you, we can arrange another time to meet. You should also feel free to send me an email message at any time if you have a
question (Shabad.1@osu.edu). I check e-mail regularly and typically respond very quickly (except during weekends). **DO NOT USE THE PAGER ON THE CARMEN WEBSITE FOR THIS COURSE. I RARELY LOOK AT IT.** Finally, if for some valid reason beyond your control, you will not be able to take the exams at their scheduled times or turn in the written assignment on its due date, I need to know as soon as possible and together we can try to resolve the matter. If I determine that you have a valid reason (medical problem, family emergency, etc.), make up exams can be arranged and the submission date of written assignments rescheduled.

The overall grade for the course will be determined by the following:

(a) **Two written assignments.** More will be said about these in class.

   1. A report of 4-5 double-spaced pages (longer if you enclose tables) that focuses on a question of your choosing having to do with the relationship between religiosity and/or religious denomination and political opinion or behavior. The report may focus on one country or compare two or more. The report must be based upon your own (simple) analyses of survey data (frequencies and cross-tabulations) that can be found on the websites listed below (under required readings). The report will be due on ***in class.*** It will be worth **25%** of your final grade.

   2. An essay of about 4 double-spaced pages that focuses on a controversy over the role of religion in public life: examples might include the controversy over the banning of the head scarf and other religious garb in France, the allowance of wearing the head scarf in Turkey, the building of mosques in cities in the US or Western Europe, etc. The paper must rely on some research based on newspaper or scholarly journal articles, and should describe and evaluate the controversy. The paper will be due on ***in class.*** It will be worth **15%** of your final grade.

(b) **Midterm exam (essay format) 30%**

(c) **Final exam (essay format) 30%**

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp).
DISABILITY
Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disabilities Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS

All other readings and handouts have been prepared as PDF or Word files that you can access via this course’s Carmen website, http://www.Carmen.osu.edu, where you should sign in using your usual OSU login and password. I may add a few additional materials to the required readings, but will let you know if I’ve done so both in class and via email. Please contact me immediately if you are unable to access and print from the course website. I STRONGLY suggest that you download each reading so that you can highlight important points.

Finally, there are three websites that provide a rich source of reports and survey data on individual-level attitudes toward religion and other topics around the globe (including the United States). One of your two written assignments requires that you make use of the data available on these websites.

The first is the website of the Association of Religion Data Archives: http://www.thearda.com/

The second is the website of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: http://pewforum.org/

The third is the website of the World Values Survey which includes data from many countries around the world pertaining to religious beliefs, and the relationship between politics and religion, among other topics: http://www.wvsevsdb.com/wvs/WVSAnalize.jsp
COURSE TOPICS AND READINGS

Introduction: Questions to be addressed

PART I  Secularization: Theory and Evidence

The Theory of Secularization: Modernization and Religion – having it both ways?

Readings:

Secularization: A Panoramic View of the Evidence

Readings:
[1] Norris and Inglehart, Sacred and Secular, Pp. 58, 60, 72, 90, 91.

PART II  Religion and Politics in Advanced Democracies

Outlier among Advanced Democracies? Religion and Politics in the United States

Readings:

The Cases that Fit? Religion and Politics in Western Europe

Readings:
PART III  The Politicization of Religious Divisions

Church-State Relations
Readings:

Motive, Means, and Opportunity
Readings:

PART IV  Religion and Democracy

How Might Religion and Democracy Can Be Reconciled
Readings:

Can Religion and Democracy be Reconciled?
Readings:

*******FINAL EXAM**********