

SYLLABUS  
**Religion and International Relations (IR/RN561, PO 589, TX874)**

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Spring 2019: Tue/Thur 12:30-1:45pm, CAS 322  
Office Hours: Tue 2:00-3:30pm, Thur 3-4:30pm, 156 BSR 403

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. And when that is done, overall questions about whether religion is “good” or “bad,” “functional” or “dysfunctional,” “ego-strengthening” or “anxiety-producing,” disappear like the chimeras that they are, and one is left with particular assessments, and diagnoses in particular cases.

– Clifford Geertz, 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 123.

**Course Description:** Despite the predictions of modernization theorists, the heartfelt longings of secularists, and the deliberate neglect of structural realists, religion has not withdrawn from the world’s political stage. To the contrary, religion continues to shape individual values, social organizations, state institutions, and international relations. This has led to a re-evaluation of long-standing research programs that were based on the assumption that religion would either decline or disappear altogether. Scholars of world politics are now struggling to articulate a vision for the role of religion in public life, in the policies of states, and in global politics. This course is part of that process.

**Course Objectives:** By drawing on readings from international relations (IR), comparative politics, sociology, history, and anthropology, this course will begin charting a path toward understanding the place of religion in contemporary world affairs. The outcome of this class will not be a new paradigm, nor will it be a unified theory of the role of religion in politics. Rather, by the end of the course, students should possess:

- A historical understanding of the contingent nature of the Westphalian system and its ideational progeny: sovereignty, nation-states, realism, and liberal internationalism.
- A critical perspective on secularization theory.
- A descriptive understanding of select twentieth century religious-political movements.
- A set of causal hypotheses about the role of religious actors in democratization, social movements, political party formation and development, war, economic development, and psychology.

By the end of the course, students should have the vocabulary and knowledge to discuss the role of religious actors in world politics. This skill will be obtained through writing, critical thinking, and seminar discussions, and should be useful both inside and outside the classroom.

## **Course Requirements:**

Participation (20%): The course will be run as a seminar. This format requires students to attend regularly, read diligently, and participate actively in class discussions. Each week, please come to class prepared with 1-2 discussion questions that pertain to the readings.

Presentation (1 x 10% = 10%): Each student will be assigned to a two-person group, which will be responsible for one 10-minute presentation on current political events regarding a religious organization of their choosing. Students will choose presentation dates in the first week of class. Presentation topics must be approved by the professor and be relevant to course themes. A grading rubric is at the end of the syllabus.

Response Papers (3 x 5% = 15%): Student will write three short (2-3 pages, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) analytical response papers (RP) over the course of the semester. I will provide the paper prompts one week before they are due on **2/7, 3/21, 4/11**, and an optional makeup paper on **4/25**. A grading rubric is at the end of the syllabus.

Midterm Exam (15%): One 4-5 page take-home essay exam will be given at the end of class **2/21** and returned via email by **5pm on 2/23**.

Final Exam (Undergraduate Students: 40%): The final exam is a take-home essay, 7-8 pages in length. The exam will be handed out at the end of class on **5/2** and must be returned via email by **5pm on 5/7**. In lieu of a final exam, students may choose to write a 15-20 page research paper (see below).

Research Paper (Graduate Students: 5% + 35% = 40%): In lieu of a final exam, graduate students will write a 15-20 page research paper. Students must meet with me the week of **March 18** to present an abstract and preliminary list of sources (5%). Papers are due via email by **5pm on 5/7**.

**Late Work:** Late submission of response papers will result in your grade incurring an automatic 1-point deduction per day beginning with the assignment deadline. Late submissions of the midterm paper and final papers will incur an automatic 3-point deduction per day, beginning with the assignment deadline.

## **Explanation of Letter Grades:**

**Special Needs:** If you have any special needs or circumstances, such as a learning disability or health concern, please do not hesitate to speak with me and we can discuss suitable accommodations and assistance. If there is a religious holy day that will require your absence, please notify me no later than the first two weeks of class so that we can make arrangements for your absence. If a student misses class due to an unexcused absence, their absence may be reflected in their participation grade.

**Academic Misconduct:** Plagiarism and cheating will be punished in accordance with BU's Academic Conduct Code: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

**Electronic Communications in Class:** Please close all laptops, tablets, cell phones, homing pigeons, and any other communication devices for the duration of class. These are serious distractions to the instructor and your fellow students.

**Required Texts:** The following books are required for the class and may be purchased at the BU bookstore or online. They will also be placed on reserve at Mugar Memorial Library. Article and chapter-length readings can be accessed through the course Blackboard site.

Beth Baron, 2014. *The Orphan Scandal: Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

David M. Engel and Jaruwan S. Engel, 2010. *Tort, Custom, and Karma: Globalization and Legal Consciousness in Thailand* (Stanford: Stanford University Press)

Paul Famer and Gustavo Gutiérrez, 2013. *In the Company of the Poor: Conversations with Dr. Paul Farmer and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez* (New York: Orbis Books).

James Hoesterey, 2015. *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).

Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Ziad W. Munson, 2009. *The Making of Pro-Life Activists: How Social Mobilization Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

### **Recommended:**

Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan and Monica Duffy Toft, eds. 2012. *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs* (New York: Oxford University Press).

## **Dates and Readings**

### **Jan 22 Introduction**

- No reading

### **Jan 24 What is Religion?**

- Christian Smith, 2017. *Religion: What it Is, How it Works, and Why it Matters*, Princeton University Press, chapter 1.

### **Jan 29 Secularization**

- Daniel Philpott, 2009. "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12, 183–202.

### **Jan 31 Secularization**

- Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, 2011, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press. ch. 1 (3-32), ch. 3 (53-79)

**Feb 5            Critiques of Secularization**

- Charles T Matthews, 2006. “An Interview with Peter Berger,” *The Hedgehog Review* Spring/Summer, pp. 152-161.
- Rodney Stark, 1999. “Secularization, R.I.P.,” *Sociology of Religion* 60:3, 249-273.

**Feb 7            Critiques of Secularization [RP1 due]**

- José Casanova, 2006. “Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective,” *The Hedgehog Review* Spring/Summer, 7-22.
- Talal Asad, 2003. “Secularism, Nation-State, Religion,” in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 181-201.

**Feb 12          After Secularization**

- Robert Orsi, 2003 “Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In?” Special Presidential Plenary Address,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 2, pp. 169-174.
- Charles Taylor, 2011. “Western Secularity,” In *Rethinking Secularism* ed. Craig Calhoun et al., Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 31-53.
- Peter van der Veer, 2011. “Smash Temples, Burn Books: Comparing secularist projects in India and China,” In *Rethinking Secularism* ed., Craig Calhoun et al., Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 270-281.

**Feb 14          After Secularization**

- Samuel Huntington, 1993. “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, 22-49.
- Lisa Wedeen, 2003. “Beyond the Crusades: Why Huntington, and bin Laden, Are Wrong,” *Middle East Policy Journal*, Summer, pp. 54-61.
- José Casanova, 2011. “Cosmopolitanism, the clash of civilizations and multiple modernities,” *Current Sociology* 59:2, pp. 252-267.

**\*\*\* Feb 19: BU MONDAY \*\*\***

**Feb 21          After Secularization**

- Daniel Philpott, 2000. “The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations,” *World Politics* 52:2, pp. 206-45.
- Jeremy Menchik, 2017. “The Constructivist Approach to Religion and World Politics,” *Comparative Politics* 49:4, pp. 561-581.

**\*\*\* Midterm exam distributed after class. Due via email by 5pm on Feb 23 \*\*\***

**Feb 26          Religion and the Colonial State**

- Baron, *The Orphan Scandal* [Prologue, ch. 1-4].

**Feb 28          Religion and the Colonial State**

- Baron, *The Orphan Scandal* [ch. 5-Epilogue].

**March 5        Religion and Social Movements**

- Charles Hirschkind, 2001. “Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counter-Public,” *Cultural Anthropology* 16:1, pp. 3-34.

**March 7 Religion and Social Movements**

- Saba Mahmood, 2005. “Topography of the Piety Movement,” *The Politics of Piety: The Islamist Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 40-78.

**March 19 Religion and Political Activism**

- Ziad Munson, *The Making of Pro-Life Activists* [ch. 1-4].

**March 21 Religion and Political Activism [RP2 due]**

- Ziad Munson, *The Making of Pro-Life Activists* [ch. 5-8].

**March 26 Religion and Democracy**

- Alfred Stepan, 2000. “Religion, democracy, and the “twin tolerations,” *Journal of Democracy*, 11:4, 37-56.
- Stathis N. Kalyvas, 1998. “From Pulpit to Party: Party Formation and the Christian Democratic Phenomenon,” *Comparative Politics*, 30:3, 293-312.

**March 28 Religion and Democracy**

- Charles Kurzman and Didem Türkoğlu, 2015. “Do Muslims Vote Islamic Now?” *Journal of Democracy* 26:4, pp. 100-109
- Jeremy Menchik, 2018. “Beyond Secular Democracy: Religion, Politics, and Modernity.” *International Studies Review* 20(4): 704–722.

**April 2 Religion and Conflict**

- Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* [ch. 1-4]

**April 4 Religion and Conflict**

- Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* [ch. 5-10]

**April 9 Religion and Conflict**

- Diana Dumitru and Carter Johnson, 2011. “Constructing Interethnic Conflict and Cooperation: Why Some People Harmed Jews and Others Helped Them during the Holocaust in Romania,” *World Politics* 63:1, 1-42.

**April 11 Religion and Conflict [RP3 due]**

- Giovanni Capocchia, Lawrence Saez and Eline de Rooil, 2012. “When State Responses Fail: Religion and Secessionism in India 1952—2002,” *The Journal of Politics* 74:4, 1010–1022.
- Saumitra Jha, 2013. “Trade, Institutions, and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia” *American Political Science Review* 107: 4, 86-102.

**April 16 Religion and Development**

- Paul Famer and Gustavo Gutiérrez, *In the Company of the Poor* [Introduction – ch. 5]

**April 18 Religion and Development**

- Paul Famer and Gustavo Gutiérrez, *In the Company of the Poor* [ch. 6-7]

- Robert Draper, August 2015. “Will the Pope Change the Vatican or Will the Vatican Change the Pope?” *National Geographic* pp. 30-59.
- Skim one or more of the following statements by Pope Francis: [Papal Encyclical on the Environment](#), [Speech to US Congress](#), [Speech at the Second World Meeting Of Popular Movements](#), [On the Idolatry of Money](#), or one of many other statements [here](#).

**April 23 Religion and Development**

- James Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam* [Introduction – ch. 3]

**April 25 Religion and Development [RPX due]**

- James Hoesterey, *Rebranding Islam* [Ch. 4 -Conclusion]

**April 30 Religion and Law**

- Engle and Engle, *Tort, Custom, and Karma* [Intro – ch. 4]

**May 2 Religion and Law**

- Engle and Engle, *Tort, Custom, and Karma* [ch. 5- Conclusion]

**\*\*Final exam distributed after class\*\***

**\*\*\* MAY 7: Final exams and research papers due via email by 5pm \*\*\***

## Response Papers – Grading Rubric

**5/5** Answers the prompt in a coherent manner. Makes creative *links* between the reading, authors and concepts. Goes *beyond* the assigned content to draw fresh insights and analysis. Demonstrates *mastery* of the material and engages in independent thinking. Avoids making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment, or making fallacious claims including equivocation. Writing is exceptionally lucid.

**4.5/5** Answers the prompt in a coherent way. Makes *links* between the cases, concepts or authors. Demonstrates a *solid* understanding of the material and goes beyond simple regurgitation, even if all claims are not convincingly established. Avoids being vague, making claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is clear and concise.

**4/5** Answers the prompt in a coherent way although lacks creativity and depth. Demonstrates more than cursory understanding of the material. Tends toward vagueness but does not make claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing is good.

**3.5/5** Answers the prompt. Provides examples of cases, concepts or authors but fails to effectively connect evidence to the prompt. Makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is acceptable but needs improvement.

**3/5** Unclear answer to the prompt. Fails to lay out the answer with evidence from the cases concepts, and/or fails effectively connect evidence to the argument. Tends toward vagueness, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is poor.

**2.5 -** States an unclear claim. Fails to lay out the argument with evidence from the texts and fails to demonstrate knowledge of the material itself. Vague, makes claims unsupported by evidence and/or reasonable judgment. Writing itself is unacceptable or incoherent.

## Presentations – Grading Rubric

Each student will be assigned to a two-person group, which will be responsible for one 10-minute presentation on current political events regarding a religious organization of their choosing. Students will choose presentation dates in the first week of class. Presentation topics must be approved by the professor and be relevant to course themes.

**2 pt.** Clear and concise

**2 pt.** Relevant to course material

**2 pt.** Accurate based on scholarly sources

**2 pt.** Well-organized

**2 pt.** Engaging

**10 pt.** Total