

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science
Department for the Study of Religion

JPR374
RELIGION AND POWER IN THE POST-COLONY
Syllabus 2024- Fall

Time: Tuesday, 5 – 7 pm.
Location:
Instructor: Ruth Marshall,
Office: 300, Jackman Humanities Building, 170 St. George St.
Email: ruth.marshall@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIMS:

Over the past three decades, many post-colonial societies have experienced a religious effervescence unseen since the colonial period. Religious violence has risen significantly and religious discourses increasingly colonize public spaces. The most visible and successful forms have emerged from within transnational Christianity and Islam, yet this period has also witnessed the dramatic rise of variety of other religious and spiritual forms. The current political resurgence of religion can only be understood in the light of its colonial history. This course will examine the relationship between religion and power in post-colonial contexts, with a view to better understanding these recent developments and the colonial histories that have contributed to them. We will discover the ways in which religion, race, capitalism and empire have and continue to be entangled.

Drawing on readings from politics, sociology, anthropology, post-colonial studies and history, the course will introduce students to central approaches to understanding the relationship between religion and power in post-colonial societies, focusing on a critical and comparative understanding of the various ways in which religion has been crucially embedded in cultural, social and above all, political processes.

This course is offered jointly by the Departments of Political Science and Study of Religion, and seeks to transcend disciplinary boundaries, creating a critical and open learning environment where students will be enriched by a broad range of approaches to the issues, as well as exchanges with their peers from other areas of study.

LEARNING: As this is a 3rd year course, students should be ready to take active responsibility for their own learning. The instructors' pedagogical approach is one of learning facilitation, rather than the imparting of wisdom from on high. The more active a role you take in the course, through reading, discussion, writing, research, reflection and questioning, the more you'll get out of it and the better you do. The instructional team is happy to meet you during office hours to discuss aspects of the course content or themes on which you would like clarification or further discussion.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Course Structure: The course will be comprised of a synchronous lecture and discussion, some of which will be in-person, with a synchronous online stream for those online.

2. Reading: Careful and critical reading of the assigned materials before class is essential. You will not be able to post on the discussion board or participate in class discussions without a good understanding of the required readings. Please have your reading materials with you on the day they will be discussed.

3. Participation: 10%

You will be expected to raise questions, share your knowledge and views with other class members and actively participate in class discussion and respond on the discussion board. Discussion will focus on the week's postings, and students should be ready to ask questions, be involved in group discussions, and engage with the materials. For those unable or uncomfortable with the live participation format, there is a Blog set up on Quercus where you can post your ideas and reflections.

4. Response Papers– 2 per term – 500-750 words/2-3 pages double-spaced. 40%-1 due by TUES. OCT. 22, one due by Dec. 2

Each of you is responsible for submitting two short papers, each of them a critical reflection on the ways in which the reading and the primary material (text, image, video etc.) relate to one another and help us understand the theoretical arguments and their implications. The first paper should select readings/themes from the first 6 weeks of class, the second from the second 6 weeks. You may submit them at any time up during each period. If you want to get extra points, you may also choose your own primary material to relate to the reading. Be sure to critically engage with the material, not simply sum up the reading. As short as they might seem, each paper is meant to be a coherent and elegant piece of writing. They will be graded on the quality of the writing and critical engagement.

5. Final Research Essay Proposal- 10% - Due November 18

A Thesis Statement and Paper Outline of no more than 500 words accompanied by an Annotated Bibliography (3-4 sentences per work) including at least 6 academic articles or books. (The annotations are not included in the 500 word count) These outlines/bibliographies will be group work-shopped in class.

6. Final Research Essay: 3,000-3,500 words, or 12-15 pp. 40% - Due December 2

Students will write a research-based paper investigating one of the issues or topics covered during the term, giving you the opportunity for exploring it in more depth, or a related topic. Students are expected to develop their own essay topics. They should take up some question or argument with reference to the intersection of religion and power in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Essays may either be predominantly theoretical or empirical and they may focus on one particular setting (country, region, institution), event or issue or compare two or three – though it is important to keep the topic focused and manageable. More detailed instructions will be posted on Quercus and discussed before Reading Week. Essays will be no more than 3,500 words, or 12-15 pp double-spaced.

LATE WORK: This course has no penalties for late work. Deadlines are negotiable, as you are all grownups who best know how to manage your time. Please reach out to the instructor if you need more time for your assignment for whatever reason. However, out of consideration for the graduate student TAs own time management, and since they will be doing most of the grading, assignments handed in over a week past the deadline without any prior communication won't be graded. We

understand how difficult these times are, and we are all willing to accommodate students as much as possible.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly. Students must read “Tips for Avoiding Academic Misconduct” <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students/avoid-misconduct/tips-for-avoiding-academic-misconduct> and the University’s “How not to Plagiarize” document, <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize> and are encouraged to discuss with the instructors if they are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty. Plagiarism does not only apply to essays, but also more informal forms of writing.

USE OF GENERATIVE AI; The use of Large Language Models such as ChatGPT is strictly forbidden in this class. It constitutes academic dishonesty and will incur serious consequences. Please see the document posted on Quercus that explains why I am so vehement about the use of LLMs in my courses.

SUBMITTING THE FINAL ESSAY: TURNITIN.COM

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Students have the right to refuse to use Turnitin.com. In this case, students will be expected to submit an electronic copy of their essay to the professor by email, accompanied by their outline, thesis statement and annotated bibliography, as well all their notes and rough drafts.

SUBMITTING TERM WORK:

You should ensure that you have a hard copy and an electronic copy of all work submitted, and you are strongly advised to retain the rough work, notes, and draft material that went into the essay or assignment. Again, students have the right to refuse to use Turnitin.com. In this case, students will be expected to submit a copy of their work accompanied by their notes and rough drafts.

Evaluation:

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| Participation | | 10% |
| Reflection Papers (2 papers per term)- | Due Oct. 22 and Dec.2 | 40% |
| Final Essay Outline | Due Nov. 18 | 10% |
| Final Essay | Due Dec. 2 | 40% |

ESSAY WRITING:

Clear, well-organized, and articulate writing is an indispensable feature of the analytical process, and this course assumes that you are prepared to work on improving your capacity to communicate in prose. Please consult the “Writing at U of T” link www.utoronto.ca/writing to access a wide array of university-wide resources. Each college also has a writing workshop, and I will be available during my office hours for consultation on any part of the essay-writing process.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will not be tolerated. Trust your own ability to think and write, and use this course as an opportunity to refine your skills.

REQUIRED READING LIST:

All reading listed under each week is required reading. In addition to the items listed, a secondary primary source item will be posted on Quercus and treated as required for each week. Content is subject to modification. You can find all the course readings posted each week on Quercus.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Sept. 3

Introduction, presentation of course themes, review of requirements.

Week 2: Sept. 9

Sylvia Wynter, "New Seville and the Conversion Experience of Bartolomé de Las Casas, Part One,"

Jamaica Journal 17, no. 2 (1984): 25-32;

Sylvia Wynter, "New Seville and the Conversion Experience of Bartolomé de Las Casas, Part Two,"

Jamaica Journal 17, no. 3 (1984): 46-55;

Week 3: Sept. 16

Achille Mbembe *Critique of Black Reason*. (Duke University Press, 2017) Chapter 3, Difference and Self-Determination. pp. 72-102.

Week 4: Sept. 23

Michael Taussig *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, (University of Chicago Press, 1987) Chapter 1 – Culture of Terror, Space of Death. pp. 1-36

Week 5: Sept. 30

Christopher Bracken. Selections from *The Potlatch Papers: A Colonial Case History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). pp. 1-3, 167-208, 227-23.

Weeks 6-12 TBA