

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science

JPR 374
Religion and Power in the Post-Colony
Syllabus 2019

Time: Monday, 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Place: Bissel 313

Instructor: Zoe Anthony

Email: zoe.anthony@mail.utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00-4:00pm, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIMS:

In this course, we will explore the primary theoretical and philosophical sources of post-colonial critique and interrogate the relationship of this critique to the sources of post-colonial thought. Over the past two 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. We will examine the relationship between religion and power in post-colonial contexts, with a view to better understanding these recent developments and the histories that have contributed to them.

Drawing on readings from politics, sociology, anthropology, post-colonial studies and history and philosophy, 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 political processes. Students will acquire a critical understanding of the interplay in post-colonial societies between religion and a variety of themes and issues: colonialism, secularization theory, modernization and development theory, nationalism and nation-building, race, gender, ethnicity, identity politics, transnational religious movements, the globalization of capitalism, violence and terror, peace and justice.

Students will be introduced to a variety of religious forms and practices, with an emphasis on Christianity and Islam, but also forms of spiritual practice such as witchcraft and magic.

Students will gain insight into the place of religion in post-colonial societies, as well as a more critical understanding of the role religion plays in contemporary political and social issues in the West.

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.

Depending on course enrolment, the course will be conducted either as a full seminar, or as a lecture with a significant discussion component. It will require thorough preparation for each class and regular contributions from all students.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1. Reading:** Careful and critical reading of the assigned materials before class is essential. You will not be able to complete the weekly assignments or participate in discussions without a good understanding of the required readings. Please bring your reading materials with you on the day they will be discussed.
- 2. Attendance/Discussion:** You will be expected to raise questions, share your knowledge and views with other class members and actively participate in class discussion. In the second hour of the class, discussion will focus on the week's postings, and students will be called on to present their arguments and discuss those of their peers. Students who miss class should expect to have their grade lowered. Punctuality is important.

POSTING ON QUERCUS DISCUSSION FORUM – REQUIREMENTS:

The class will be divided into two groups – check Quercus for your group. Groups will post on alternate weeks a response paper in the Discussion Forum in Quercus. Postings will begin in Week 3, and end in Week 10. See the Syllabus for your group's week to post. You must post in your allotted week and on time. Late postings will not be graded.

- 3. Four Short Response Papers – 500-700 words:** The groups will take turns posting response papers in answer to a question on the week's readings posted by me in the Discussion Forum on Quercus. Be sure to critically engage with the questions, not simply sum up the readings. The questions will require you to reflect on the week's theme and bring the week's readings into conversation. 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.

You may either post your paper as a Word document or paste it directly into the Forum's thread. Please proof-read it carefully. No references are required; if necessary, you can refer to page numbers of readings you are referring to in the body of the text. All responses must be posted by 11:59pm on the Sunday evening before class.

Students must come to class ready to discuss the questions and their responses, and several weeks a smaller group of students selected among those who have posted will lead the discussion.

- 4. Final Research Essay Due Dec. 10:** Your final paper must be between 10-12 pages, double-spaced. It will be 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 or region of interest to you, enabling you to critically extrapolate the cases and issues studied to another context. A paper outline on your topic on is due on Nov.19 (by email). More guidelines will be discussed in class, and I am available to help you chose and develop your topic

EVALUATION:

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|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Attendance and Participation | 15% |
| 2. 4 Response Papers | 40% |
| 3. Final Essay | 45% |

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Essays are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Essays must be submitted in hard copy and in person. Late essays will not be accepted, and late postings will not be graded. The only exceptions will be medical or family emergencies, supported by the appropriate documentation. Students are required to keep both electronic and hard copies of their essays until their marked essays have been returned to them.

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 <http://writing.utoronto.ca> 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. Every student must read and abide by the University's policies on Academic Integrity: www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai

Please read ALL links, especially:

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity/academic-misconduct> and,

<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>

Students are encouraged to discuss with me if they are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

JPR374 has a Quercus website. Please login to the portal to access the link to this course. You will need to access Quercus for the course information, readings, but also to in order to post weekly responses to readings in the Discussion Forum. You MUST ensure that your UTOR email address is registered on Quercus.

REQUIRED READING LIST:

All reading listed under each week is required reading. In addition to the items listed, media reports and other articles may be posted on Blackboard and treated as required reading. Content is subject to modification.

All readings from books will be posted on Blackboard or available for copy from the instructor or on library reserve. Articles from academic journals are available online at the Library.

WEEKLY READINGS:

Week 1: Sept. 09 – Introduction, presentation of course themes

Week 2: Sept. 16 – Orientalism as Object of Knowledge

Edward Said, "Introduction," "Knowing the Oriental," and "Imaginative Geography and Its Representations: *Orientalizing the Oriental*" in *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, (1978) 2003), pp. 1-28, 31-49, 49-73.

Week 3. Sept. 23 – The Time of Postcolonial Critique

Group 1 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The idea of Provincializing Europe," "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts," "Reason and the Critique of Historicism," in *Provincializing Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) pp. 3-23, 97-113, 237-255.

Keya Ganguly, "Temporality and Postcolonial Critique," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 162–80.

Week 4: Sept. 30 – Alternative Modernities

Group 2 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Charles Taylor, "Two Theories of Modernity." *Public Culture* 11(1): 153-174 (1999).

Christopher Houston, "Alternative Modernities: Islamism and Secularism on Charles Taylor." *Critique of Anthropology* 18(2): 234-240 (1998).

Talal Asad, "On religion, modernity and Islamism: Interview with Saba Mahmood," *Stanford Humanities Review* (1996).

Available online on: <https://web.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/asad.html>

Week 5: Oct. 7 – *Ressentiment*, Resistance, and Rebellion

Group 1 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Friedrich Nietzsche, "First Essay: 'Good and Evil,' 'Good and Bad,'" in *On the Genealogy of Morality* (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 24-56.

J. Fields, "Charismatic Religion as Popular Protest: The Ordinary and the Extraordinary in Social Movements" *Theory and Society*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (May 1982), pp. 321-361.

No class – October 14 – Thanksgiving holiday; University Closed

Week 6: Oct. 21 – Predicaments of Secularism

Group 2 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Thomas Blom Hansen, "Predicaments of Secularism: Muslim Identities and Politics in Mumbai" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (June 2000), pp. 255-272.

Peter van der Veer, "Secularity and Religion," "The Moral State: Religion, Nation and Empire," in *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 19-29, 30-54.

Optional: Peter van der Veer, "The Spirits of the Age: Spiritualism and Political Radicalism," in *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 55-82.

Week 7: Oct. 28 – Colonialism, Religion, and the Construction of the Other

Group 1 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Achille Mbembe, "Time on the Move," in *On the Postcolony* (University of California Press, 2001), pp. 1-23.

Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817" *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (1985) pp. 144-165.

Valentin Mudimbe, "Discourse of Power and Knowledge of Otherness" in *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Indiana U. Press, 1988), pp. 1-23.

No class – November 4 – Reading Week

Week 8: Nov. 11 – Colonialism Between Modernism and Terror

Group 2 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Michael Taussig, "Culture of Terror, Space of Death," "Casement to Grey," "The Economy of Terror," in *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*, (University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 1-73.

Week 9: Nov. 18 – Spiritual Materialities/Material Spiritualities

Group 1 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Michael Taussig, "A Case of Fortune and Misfortune," "Magical Realism," "Las Tres Potencias: The Magic of the Races," in *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 139-187.

Week 10: Nov. 25 – Religion, Gender, and Agency

Group 2 posts Response Paper to Discussion Forum

Saba Mahmood, "The Subject of Freedom," "Agency, Gender, and Embodiment" *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). pp. 1-39; 153-88.

Week 11: Dec. 2 – Religion and Globalization

A. Corten, R. Marshall-Fratani, "Introduction," in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). pp. 1-21.

B. Larkin, B. Meyer, "Pentecostalism, Islam and Culture: New Religious Movements in West Africa," in *Themes in West African History*, ed. E. Akyeampong, (Oxford: James Currey, 2006) 286–312.

Final Essay Due in my Inbox, 5 December, 11:59pm