Course objectives and description

Political scientists thought that religion would wane as a result of modernization and economic developments. Yet religion has “returned” and is today more salient than ever. From the West to the Middle East and Asia, religious actors and institutions have become increasingly important participants in public debates, discourse and policy-making. This course is an introduction to the main topics and debates in the literature on religion and politics in developing and developed countries. This is not a course on theology or belief systems. It looks at how we theorize the role of religion in politics and how politics takes into account “religion” and religious actors. The course first looks at the definitions and explanations of broad phenomena like secularization, religious freedoms, fundamentalism, and violence. In the second half, the course looks at the ways in which states engage with religious institutions and actors, play the “religious” card and how, in return, religious actors pressure the state into adopting a religious agenda. The goal of this course is to offer the student theoretical and conceptual tools to make sense of religiously driven current events in a global context.

Format

Classes will mainly have a lecture component, but will also have a discussion component. Students will be asked to draw on the required readings to assess theories and concepts covered during the lectures. Students are thus expected to do the required readings as they will support the discussion and complement the lectures. Student engagement with the required readings will also be evaluated (see below). The lectures will map and discuss the different theories and concepts for each given theme.

Marking scheme

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pop quiz on readings</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Random dates</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Test</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Test</td>
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Pop quiz on readings
There will be 6 short pop quizzes on the readings at the beginning of class on dates of the instructor’s choice. You will have 10 minutes to answer a short question about one of the required readings of the week. Questions will resemble these:
- How does the author define secularism?
- What are the three main components of religious freedoms?
You can use your HANDWRITTEN reading notes (see below), but not the article or your computer to answer the question. If you are late, you will have less time to answer. No exceptions.

Midterm Test, July 19, 2016
The midterm test will cover the first half of the course. It will have two parts. The first will consist of short answer questions. Short answer questions could ask you to define a concept or list the factors associated with a phenomenon in a paragraph. The second part will consist of essay questions. Essay questions will ask you to compare and contrast theories or discuss a specific case in light of a theory. Lectures and readings will be evaluated along with the required readings.

Final Test, August 4, 2016
The final test will cover the second half of the course and will also be made up of short answer and essay questions. The short-answer questions could ask you to define a concept or list the factors associated with a phenomenon in a paragraph. The essay questions will ask you to compare and contrast theories or discuss a specific case in light of a theory. Lectures and readings will be evaluated.

Reading Notes
I strongly encourage you to keep good notes of your reading. The quizzes, midterm test and final exam will, among other, test your understanding of the readings’ argument and key concepts. You are free to bring your notes in class. You CAN use your HANDWRITTEN notes for the quizzes, but NOT for the mid-term or final test. The notes, however, will be extremely useful while studying for both tests. Here is a suggested format for the notes and should hold on a single page (typed):

1. **Thesis**: what main message is the author trying to convey?
2. **Arguments**: what are the main points supporting his/her main argument?
3. **Key concepts**: definition of key term used (e.g. democracy, secularism, fundamentalism, etc.).
4. **Evidence**: cases analyzed by the author and observations used to support the arguments and thesis.

Readings
The required readings will be available on blackboard. Most recommended readings are available at Robarts, but not in the Course Reserve section.
Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information on plagiarism please see Writing at the University of Toronto http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources

Blackboard

Blackboard is used for this course. You will need your UTORid and password. Logon at http://portal.utoronto.ca. For help and information, please contact: blackboard@utoronto.ca.

Do not direct your Blackboard specific questions to the instructor. I am unable to provide support for the web-based software. There are special services that you should consult. It is your responsibility to access the course page regularly to check for announcements, broadcasts, etc.

Course outline

I. Separation of Church and State

Class 1 – June 28, 2016 - Introduction / Modernization and secularization

Objectives: What are the different meanings of secularization? Why is modernization and economic development thought to bring secularization?

Required Reading


Suggested Readings


Class 2 – June 30, 2016 - Secularization and Religious Liberties

Objectives: Is secularization a linear process or is it leading to different outcomes in different countries? What is religious liberty and how do we measure it? Why countries have different types of religious freedom regimes?

Required Reading


Suggested Readings


Fox, Jonathan and Shmuel Sandler. 2005. “Separation of Religion and State in the Twenty-First Century: Comparing the Middle East and Western Democracies”. Comparative Politics. 37(3). pp. 317-335


II. The “Return” of Religion

Class 3 – July 5, 2016 – Religion and Nationalism

Objectives: why has religion made a comeback? Has religion ever disappeared? How does religion contest or (re)articulate notions such as nationalism?

Required Reading


**Suggested Readings**


**Class 4 – July 7, 2016 – Guest Lecture - Professor Aisha Ahmad**

**Required Readings**

TBA

**Class 5 - July 12, 2016 – Religion and Fundamentalism**

Objectives: What is fundamentalism? What explains fundamentalism?

**Required Readings**


**Suggested Readings**


**Class 6 – July 14, 2016 – Midterm Test**

**III. Religion and the State: Threat or Resource?**

**Class 7 – July 19, 2016 – Religion and State Power**

*Objectives:* How do states manage religious groups? Which strategy do states chose – cooperation, co-optation, competition or repression? Why?

*Required Reading*


*Suggested Readings*


**Class 8 – July 21, 2016 – Religion and Opposition Movements**

*Objectives:* When does religion become a social movement? How do religious actors challenge political systems?
Required Reading


Suggested Readings


Class 9 – July 26, 2016 – Religion and Democracy

Objectives: Are religion and democracy compatible? How does democracy alter religious actors’ strategies?

Required Reading


Suggested Readings


IV. Religion and Violence

Class 10 – July 28, 2016 – Religion and Terrorism


Required Readings:


Recommended Readings


Class 11 – August 2, 2016 – Sectarianism

Objective. Why and when does democracy foster communalism? How do non-religious interests politicize religion?
Required Reading


Recommended Readings


Class 12 – August 4, 2016 – Final Test