

Religion and Politics

Eastern Michigan University

Winter 2016

Political Science 379E

TR: 11:00-12:15 p.m.

421 Pray-Harold

Professor: Ebrahim K. Soltani

Office: 602E Pray-Harold

Office Hours: Tue. & Thu. 12:30-2:00 p.m.

Phone: 734-487-6971

Email: ekhalife@emich.edu

Course Description:

Religion and politics have always been intimately interconnected. This course is designed to explore the interconnectedness of religion and politics. It does so by addressing important questions regarding the actual role religions play in politics and, also, the impact of state policies on religion. The main purpose of this course is to acquaint the students of comparative politics and religious studies with the various answers to questions like: How does religion influence political behavior? How do governments engage in support for religion? What are some of the main patterns of interaction between religion and politics? What are the impacts of religious identities on politics? How do religious institutions shape state policies? How can citizens of a democratic polity live and act in concert with their religious beliefs?

Course Requirements:

Attendance (10%): You are expected to attend each class session and arrive on time. I will take attendance each class. **Two unexcused absences throughout the semester will be permitted, but each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by a third of a letter.** Missing class and showing up late to class sessions will have a negative impact on your participation grade as well.

Participation (10%): I intend to devote a significant proportion of class time to discussing the assigned texts, and expect active participation from all students. This includes listening attentively to other students when they are speaking.

Mid-term, Final Exams (20%, 25%): There will be two in-class exams.

Papers (15%, 20%): You will be responsible for writing two papers (1 mid-semester paper 4-6 pages and 1 final paper 6-8 pages long) over the course of the semester. In these papers, you are expected to draw on the course readings to

make an argument. A sample list of possible paper topics can be provided for those who may need help in developing their own research topics.

Your papers should be typed using a standard 12-point font (such as Times New Roman). The body should be double-spaced with 1-inch margins all around. Please don't forget to use page numbers. Late papers will lower your grade by a third of a letter per day late.

Grading Criteria:

Assignment	When	Percentage
Attendance	All the time	10%
Participation	All the time	10%
Midterm Exam	February 18	20%
Midterm Paper	March 1	15%
Final Paper	April 19	20%
Final Exam	April 21	25%

Academic Dishonesty:

The EMU Code of Student Conduct forbids plagiarism. Students should be familiar with the Code: <http://www.emich.edu/policies/policy.php?id=124>. Any assignment that is plagiarized will receive a score of zero, and may be referred to the EMU Office of Student Conduct. Similarly, cheating on exams is forbidden and will also result in a zero score on the exam. For more detailed information on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, see:

<http://www.emich.edu/library/help/integratingsources.php>

Claims of ignorance and academic or personal pressure are unacceptable as excuses for academic dishonesty. Students must learn what constitutes one's own work and how the work of others must be acknowledged.

Required Text:

Jonathan Fox, 2013, *An Introduction to Religion and Politics*; Routledge, ISBN: 978-0-415-67632-8

Week 1 (Jan 7): Introduction

What is Religion? What is Politics?
What is Political Science?

Week 2 (Jan 12 & 14): The Secular, Secularization, & Secularism

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 1-35
- José Casanova, “Rethinking Secularization: A Global Comparative Perspective”:

<http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/AfterSecularization/8.12CCasanova.pdf>

Week 3 (Jan 19 & 21): Religious Identity & Religious Legitimacy

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 36-83
- Nader Hashemi, “Rethinking religion and political legitimacy across the Islam–West divide”:

<http://naderhashemi.com/publications/Philosophy%20and%20Social%20Criticism%20on%20Religion%20and%20Political%20Legitimacy.pdf>

Week 4 (Jan 26 & 28): Religious Institutions & Political Mobilization

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 84-108
- Anthony Gill, “The Political Origins of Religious Liberty”, pp. 26-59:
<http://www.thedivineconspiracy.org/Z5273J.pdf>
- Eric L. McDaniel, “The Political Transformation of Religious Institutions”:

<https://www.press.umich.edu/pdf/9780472070466-ch1.pdf>

Week 5 (Feb 2 & 4): Religion, Fundamentalism, & Terrorism

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 109-121
- James M. Lutz and Brenda J. Lutz, “Religious Justification for Terrorism”, *Global Terrorism*, Routledge, 2013, pp. 73-105.
- Robert Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.”

<https://www.apsanet.org/imgtest/APSRAug03Pape.pdf>

- Juan Cole, “Terrorism and the Other Religions”:

<http://www.juancole.com/2015/11/terrorism-the-other-religions.html>

Week 6 (Feb 9 & 11): Religion & Conflict

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 122-136
- Rogers Brubaker, “Religious Dimensions of Political Conflict and Violence”:

<http://www.asanet.org/journals/ST/Mar15STFeature.pdf>

Week 7 (Feb 16 & 18): Review & Midterm Exam
Review Session (Feb. 16)
Midterm Exam (Feb. 18)

Week 8 (Feb 23 & 25)
Winter Break

Week 9 (Mar 1 & 3): Christian-Majority States
Midterm Paper is due (Mar. 1)

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 141-176
- Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America”:

http://www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.htm

Week 10 (Mar 8 & 10): Christian-Majority States

- J. Christopher Soper and Joel Fetzer, “Religion and Politics in a Secular Europe: Cutting Against the Grain”, *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective*, CUP, 2002, pp. 169-194
- A Clash of Secularisms? The German Historical Experience:

<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2015/11/16/a-clash-of-secularisms-the-german-historical-experience/>

Week 11 (Mar 15 & 17): Muslim-Majority States

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 177-197

Week 12 (Mar 22 & 24):
TBA

Week 13 (Mar 29 & 31): Muslim-Majority States

- Robert D. Lee, “State Shiism in Iran”, *Religion and Politics in the Middle East*, Westview Press, 2014, pp. 169-218

Week 14 (Apr 5 & 7): Muslim-Majority States

- Robert D. Lee, “State Sunnism in Saudi Arabia”, *Religion and Politics in the Middle East*, Westview Press, 2014, pp. 219-258

Week 15 (Apr 12 & 14): Judaism, Hinduism, & Buddhism

- Jonathan Fox, pp. 198-216
- Kenneth D. Wald, “The Religious Dimensions of Israeli Political Life”, *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective*, CUP, 2002, pp. 99-124

Week 16 (Apr 19): Review
Review Session
Final Paper is due

Tuesday, April 26
Final Exam: 9:30-11:00 a.m.