

The Ohio State University
PS 590.01: RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS
Summer 2006

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Office Hours: MW, 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., and by appointment

Class Meeting: MW, 3:30 to 5:18 p.m.
Derby Hall 0080

SYLLABUS

This course investigates the relationship between politics and religion in the American arena, considering both the historical context of this relationship as well as the influence of religion on current political culture, electoral coalitions and ordinary citizens' political opinions and voting behavior.

Topics will include: the historical legacy and current portrait of religion in American political culture; the mobilizing effect of religion in the political sphere; interpretation of the U.S. Constitution regarding establishment and free exercise; the effect of religious cleavages on public opinion, voting behavior and the party system; religion, political elites and public policy; the interactions between religion, race and gender in American politics; and the implications of the relationship between religion and politics for American democracy. Throughout the course, debates on contemporary issues closely related to the relationship between religion and politics will be emphasized.

Required Readings

The following required textbook is available at the University bookstore and is on reserve at the Main Library:

Fowler, Robert, Allen Hertzke, Laura Olson and Kevin Den Dulk. 2004. *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture and Strategic Choices*. 3rd ed. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

In addition, selected readings will also be required for most class periods. These readings (denoted below by *) and are available for download on the course's CARMEN web site.

Student Evaluations and Course Expectations

Your grade will be based on your performance in two areas: **tests** (which includes two quizzes and a final exam); and **class participation** (which includes weekly response papers, class attendance and in-class participation):

Tests

Quiz #1	20% (40 points)
Quiz #2	20% (40 points)
Final Exam	30% (60 points)

Class Participation

Weekly Response Papers	20% (40 points; 4 points each)
In-class Participation	5% (10 points)
Attendance	5% (10 points)

Total **100%** (200 points)

The **quizzes** and **final exam** will cover material presented in lectures and/or in the assigned readings and will be comprised of both essay and short-answer questions. The final exam will be cumulative, although the majority of the exam will come from the final portion of the course. The quizzes are scheduled for Mon., July 10 and Wed., July 26. The final exam will be given at the time scheduled by the Registrar's Office. Tests must be taken during the designated class sessions on the dates indicated. If you have an unbelievably good reason to miss a quiz or the final exam, you must get permission from me to miss that exam at least one class session prior to the test date and schedule a time for a make-up test. Make-up tests will consist of essay questions only. If you miss a test without prior permission, ordinarily you will receive a score of zero for that test.

The second component of your grade will be based on class participation. Although some of the class periods will be occupied by lecture, class discussion will play a vital role in our learning environment. Each student should think critically about and be prepared to discuss the required readings thoroughly during each class period. To ensure this process, each student is required to produce a **weekly response paper** (about one single-spaced page) that addresses the assigned discussion topic each week. The goal of these papers is to develop critical thinking skills that probe the assigned topics in depth. In these papers, you should discuss your views about the issue, using empirical evidence primarily from the class readings to advance your argument. Response papers must be turned in by the end of the class session on the assigned due dates.

In addition to the weekly response papers, **class attendance** and **in-class participation** will be a key component of your class participation grade. You are expected to attend and contribute to class discussion during each session.

Sensitive Issues

This class is based upon engaging in fruitful discussion to enable you to: 1) advance your knowledge, think critically and develop your own views about pertinent issues related to religion and American politics; 2) understand alternative views regarding these issues; and 3) defend your views in a rational way when presented with these alternative views. Therefore, this course will explore some topics and questions that many would consider to be sensitive. Remember; there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any of the issues we discuss. However, we should keep in mind that our discussions should reflect a constructive dialogue on issues related to religion and American politics. Comments that are deemed to be blatantly out of decorum will be censored and students reprimanded.

Academic Honesty Policy

I expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct, and they will be handled according to University policy.

Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact me to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment, we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs and explore potential accommodations. I rely on the Office for Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, I encourage you to do so.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week One: The Historical Legacy of Religion in American Political Culture

Mon., June 19: Introduction to the Course (No Readings)

Wed., June 21: Fowler et al. Ch. 1

*Morone, James A. "The Struggle for American Culture." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29(3): 424-430.

Discussion Topic: What aspect of American history best connects religion and politics in our political culture today?

Week Two: A Religious and Political Portrait of the United States

Mon., June 26: Fowler et al. Ch. 2 and 3

Wed., June 28: *Dershowitz, Alan M. 2001. "Bush Starts off by Defying the Constitution." *Los Angeles Times*. January 24: B9.

*Jacoby, Jeff. 2001. "The Role of Religion in Government: Invoking Jesus at the Inauguration." *Boston Globe*. February 1: A15

Discussion Topic: Is the United States a "Christian Nation?"

Week Three: Religion, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior

Mon., July 3: Fowler et al. Ch. 4

*Layman, Geoffrey. 1997. "Religion and Political Behavior in the United States: The Impact of Beliefs, Affiliation and Commitment from 1980 to 1994." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 61: 288-316.

Wed., July 5: *Wald, Kenneth D. and Corwin E. Smidt. 1993. "Measurement Strategies in the Study of Religion and Politics." In *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt, eds. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe Inc. p. 26-49.

Discussion Topic: How should the impact of religion on voting behavior be measured?

Week Four: Religion and the Evolving Party System

Mon., July 10: **QUIZ #1**

(Week 4 cont'd on next page)

Week Four: Religion and the Evolving Party System

(Cont'd)

- Wed., July 12: *Campbell, David E. 2002. "The Young and the Realignment: A Test of the Socialization Theory of Realignment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 66: 209-234.
- *Carmines, Edward E. and Geoffrey C. Layman. 1997. "Issue Evolution in Postwar American Politics: Old Certainties and Fresh Tensions." In *Present Discontents: American Politics in the Very Late Twentieth Century*. Byron E. Shafer, ed. Chatham, NJ: Chatham House. p. 89-134.

Discussion Topic: Has a religious realignment occurred in the United States?

Week Five: Religious Political Activism (A Case Study of Evangelicals)

Mon., July 17: Fowler et al. Ch. 5 and 7

- Wed., July 19: *Strom, Stephanie. 2006. "Group Seeks IRS Inquiry into 2 Ohio Churches Accused of Improper Campaigning." *New York Times* January 16: A9.
- *Fisher, Mark A. and Dennis M. Mahoney. 2006. "Laws of Man, God Obeyed, World Harvest Church Says." *Columbus Dispatch* January 17: A1.
- *Lampman, Jane. 2002. "Should Churches Convert Drivers of SUVs?" *Christian Science Monitor* 94(252): 2.

Discussion Topic: Should churches lobby?

Week Six: Religion and Political Elites

Mon., July 24: Fowler et al. Ch. 6

- *Wald, Kenneth D. 2003. *Religion and Politics in the United States*. 4th ed. Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. p. 135-142.

Discussion Topic: Should personal religious beliefs affect public officials' public decisions?

Wed., July 26: **QUIZ #2**

Week Seven: Religious Liberty and the Courts

Mon., July 31: Fowler et al. Ch. 8 and 9

- Wed., Aug. 2: *Davis, Richard. 2002. "Should There Be a Strict Separation Between Church and State? Yes." *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Religion*. McGraw-Hill:
- *Staver, Mathew D. "Separation of Church and State." *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Religion*. McGraw-Hill:

Discussion Topic: Should there be a strict separation between church and state?

Week Eight: Religion, Race and Gender

Mon., Aug. 7: Fowler et al. Ch. 10

*Harris, Fredrick C. 1994. "Something Within: Religion as a Mobilizer of African-American Political Activism." *Journal of Politics* 56(1): 42-68.

Wed., Aug 9: Fowler et al. Ch. 11

Discussion Topic: What explains the "partisan paradox?"

Week Nine: Religion and American Democracy

Mon., Aug. 14: *Wald, Kenneth D. 2003. "Religion and American Political Life." In *Religion and Politics in the United States*. 4th ed. Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. p. 294-320.

*Reichley, A. James. 1992. "Religion and American Democracy." In *Morality and Religion in Liberal Democracies*. Gordon L. Anerson and Morton A. Kaplan, eds. New York: Paragon House. p. 201-222.

Wed., Aug. 16 *Judis, John B. 1994. "Crosses to Bear." *The New Republic* 211 (September 12): 21-25.

*Barnes, Fred. "Who Needs the Religious Right? We All Do." *Crisis*

Discussion Topic: Does the Christian Right enhance or threaten American democracy?

Week Ten: Final Thoughts and Review

Mon., Aug. 21: Fowler et al. Ch. 12

Discussion Topic: What theory best describes the current relationship between religion and American politics?

The FINAL EXAM will take place as scheduled by the Registrar's Office. Please check the Registrar Office's web site for details.