

**The Ohio State University**  
**PS 590.02: RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS**  
**Winter 2007**

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2018 Derby Hall

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**Office Hours:** MW, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., and by appointment

**Class Meeting:** MW, 1:30 to 3:18 p.m.

Caldwell Lab 0109

Call No. 17256-4

**SYLLABUS**

This course investigates the relationship between politics and religion in the United States, considering both the historical and contemporary context of this relationship. 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 religious establishment and free exercise; the effect of religious cleavages on public opinion, voting behavior and the party system; religion, political elites and public policy; and the implications of the relationship between religion and politics for American democracy. Throughout the course, debates on contemporary issues closely related to the interaction between religion and politics will be emphasized.

**Required Readings**

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

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

Additional selected readings will also be required for most class periods. These readings (denoted below by \*) 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 three areas: exams; weekly response papers; and class participation (which includes both attendance and in-class participation).

**Exams**

Midterm Exam	35% (70 points)
Final Exam	35% (70 points)

<b>Weekly Response Papers</b>	20% (40 points; 5 points each)
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**Class Participation**

In-class Participation	5% (10 points)
Attendance	5% (10 points)

<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (200 points)</b>
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The **exams** will cover material presented in lectures and/or in the assigned readings and will be comprised of both short essay and short-answer identification questions. The mid-term exam is scheduled for Monday, February 5, 2007. The final exam will be given at the time

scheduled by the Registrar's Office; please check the Registrar Office web site for details. Please note that ALL exams must be taken during the designated class sessions on the dates indicated. If you have an unbelievably good reason to miss an 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 exam to be taken within one week of the regularly scheduled exam. Make-up exams will consist of essay questions only. If you miss a test without prior permission, you will generally receive a score of zero for that exam.

The second component of your grade will be based on eight **weekly response papers** (each about one single-spaced page) that address the discussion topic assigned for that 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 (either a hard copy or via e-mail) must be turned in by the end of the class session (3:30 p.m.) on the assigned due dates. Response papers will be docked ½ point for each 24-hour period that they are turned in late.

Finally, your grade will be based on **class attendance** and **in-class participation**. Students are expected to attend each class session and are responsible for knowing the material presented in class. Students who do not attend a class session will not receive attendance points unless they can provide documentation that they missed class for a legitimate academic or medical reason, as determined by the instructor. Although some of the class periods will be occupied primarily by lecture, class discussion will play a vital role in our learning environment to enable you to: 1) think critically about and develop your own views on religion and American politics; 2) understand alternative views regarding these topics; and 3) defend your views in a rational way when presented with alternative views. Therefore, each student should think critically about and be prepared to discuss the required readings thoroughly during each class.

### **Sensitive Issues**

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: Introduction

Wed., Jan. 3: Introduction to the Course (No Readings)

### Week Two: Religion and American Political Culture

Mon., Jan. 8: Fowler et al. Ch. 1

Wed., Jan. 10: \*Bellah, Robert N. 1967. "Civil Religion in America." *Daedalus*. 96(1): 1-21.

\*Morone, James A. 1996. "The Struggle for American Culture." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29(3): 424-430.

*Discussion Topic:* Is it important to maintain a civil religion in American political culture?

### Week Three: A Religious Portrait of the United States

Mon., Jan. 15: DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

[NO CLASS]

Wed., Jan. 17: Fowler et al. Ch. 2, 3 and 11

\*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 Four: Religion, Public Opinion and Voting Behavior

Mon., Jan. 22: Fowler et al. Ch. 4

Wed., Jan. 24: \*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 influence of religion on American political behavior be measured?

### **Week Five: “Culture Wars” and the Evolving Party System**

Mon., Jan. 29: \*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.

Wed., Jan. 31: \*\*“Debating the Issues: Red America, Blue America: Myth or Reality?” 2006. In *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. David Canon et al., eds. New York: W.W. Norton. p. 409-418.

*Discussion Topic:* Is the United States engaged in a “culture war?”

### **Week Six: Religion and Political Elites**

Mon., Feb. 5: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Wed., Feb. 7: Fowler et al. Ch. 6

\*\*“Debating the Issues: The Role of Religion in American Politics.” 2006. In *The Enduring Debate: Classic and Contemporary Readings in American Politics*. David Canon et al., eds. New York: W.W. Norton. p. 27-35.

*Discussion Topic:* Should politicians’ religious views affect their public duties?

### **Week Seven: Religion and the Courts**

Mon., Feb. 12: Fowler et al. Ch. 8 and 9

Wed., Feb. 14: \*\*“Issue 15: Should There Be a Strict Separation Between Church and State?” 2002. In *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Religion*. Daniel Judd, ed. Guilford, Conn.: McGraw-Hill. p. 300-315.

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

### **Week Eight: Religious Political Activism, Part I**

Mon., Feb. 19: Fowler et al. Ch. 5

Wed., Feb. 21: \*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 Nine: Religious Political Activism, Part II (A Comparison of Two Social Movements)**

Mon., Feb. 26: Fowler et al. Ch. 10

\*King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1963. "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Wed., Feb. 28: Fowler et al. Ch. 7

\*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: Religion and American Democracy**

Mon., Mar. 5: \*Wald, Kenneth D. 2003. "Religion and American Political Life." In *Religion and Politics in the United States*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boulder, Colo.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. p. 294-320.

Wed., Mar. 7: Fowler et al. Ch. 12

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