

POU44271. RELIGION AND POLITICS

Lecturer: Dr. Gizem Arikan

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Office Hours: Fridays, 1-3pm, online. Please email to set up an appointment at least a day before.

Seminars: Thursdays, 9-11 am. Online / Llyod LB11

Module description

This module examines the relationship between religion and political outcomes from multiple perspectives. It surveys classical and recent approaches to the study of religion and social and political organization from multiple disciplines including sociology, psychology, economics, and political science to understand and explain the enduring effect of religion on political life at individual, communal, and global levels. Religion is often a double-edged sword: On the one hand, it is associated with pro-social and cooperative outcomes; on the other hand, religion often underlies prejudice, violence, and conflict. The major goal of the module is to explain the social, institutional, and psychological dynamics linking religion to cooperation at certain times and to conflict at others.

Learning aims

Critically evaluate the role of religion in public life using concepts and theories from multiple disciplines; assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of different approaches in the study of religion and politics; explain how and why religion often has contradictory effects on political outcomes.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- identify and explain the major theoretical approaches to the study of religion in multiple fields,
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical approaches to the study of religion and politics,
- discuss the institutional, social, and psychological dynamics linking religion to social and political conflict and cooperation.

Course organization

This is a seminar course, which relies heavily on active student participation. I generally open the class meetings by providing some background on the topic, connecting it to the broader literature, making clarifications about the concepts, theories, and methods and then open up the floor for discussion. It is therefore essential that students attend class having done the week's readings and ready to discuss them.

The module is organized as a face-to-face, but in line with public health advice, we will need to hold some sessions online.

During online weeks, we may have some synchronous sessions (including posting on Blackboard discussion boards, doing peer review activities, etc.) followed by live discussion on zoom/Collaborate Ultra to prevent "zoom fatigue."

The Blackboard will present detailed information of each week's class organization. Please keep in mind the following rules for our sessions.

During online weeks:

- In case there are issues potentially affecting your participation or learning in online environments, please send me an email and let me know. You do not need to explain the details, but just let me know so that I can try to make the necessary arrangements if possible.
- Make sure to turn off your microphone and camera during the instructor's presentation.
- If you have any questions for me, you may post them in the chat box during my presentations.
- Please make sure to turn on your microphone during breakout sessions. You are strongly encouraged but not required to turn on your camera during these sessions.
- If you have interruptions in your internet connection, please send me an email to let me know as soon as you can.
- I will record and post only the parts where I do the presentation for those people who might have had difficulty following the session due to internet problems, but I will never record the participation/discussion sessions.
- ❖ The materials and content presented within the sessions are intended solely for use in a context of teaching and learning at Trinity.
- ❖ Any session recorded for subsequent review is made available solely for the purpose of enhancing student learning.
- ❖ Students should not edit or modify the recordings in any way, nor disseminate them fully or partially for use outside of a context of teaching and learning at Trinity.

During face-to-face weeks:

- If you have permission to attend the classes fully online due to underlying illness, please email and let me know. Sometimes it takes a while for LENS reports to be communicated to instructors, so please do not assume that I am aware of your condition.
- If you need to self-isolate because you are diagnosed, have symptoms, or because you are a close contact of someone, just send me an email to let me know.
- If you feel unwell and/or suspect that you might have Covid-19, please send me an email as soon as you can and do not come to sessions.
- If you feel unsafe due to having to travel in crowded trains or buses, please let me know of your situation.
- I will make the necessary accommodations for students who are unable to come to sessions (including the necessary arrangements for them to get participation points.) Please do not feel pressured to come to face-to-face sessions in case you have health issues or concerns about your health and safety.
- I will either present live or record the sections where I do the presentation, but I will never streamline or record the discussion sessions.
- If you feel like you start showing symptoms during class, please feel free to leave class immediately. Do not feel obliged to make an explanation on the spot. You can send me an email later if you want to.
- ❖ Please make sure that you wear your mask during all times.
- ❖ I intend to wear a mask during face-to-face teaching. In case you have hearing problems and rely on lip-reading, please inform me in advance.

Office hours and contact with students

I will respond to your e-mails within 48 hours on weekdays during the teaching weeks and 24 hours (again, on weekdays) during the exam period. If you send an email during the weekend, do not expect to receive an immediate reply.

In case you have any questions about course content, readings, or class discussions, you can raise them during office hours.

Please note that I will not be able to answer substantive questions concerning course content via e-mail. In case you have such questions, please set up an appointment for office hours or raise them during class meetings. Please bear in mind that I will not cover the lecture material for you during office hours, as office hours are not intended to replace lectures.

Office hours for this term are going to be online, between 1 and 3 pm on Fridays. Please email at least 24 hours in advance to make up an appointment for office hours and I will send you the link.

In case the office hours clash with your other modules or responsibilities, please let me know and we can try to make an appointment for a different day and time.

Assessment details

5% Response papers and seminar participation

35% Mid-term essay

60% Final essay

Response papers and participation. 5% of your final mark comes from response papers and active participation in seminar discussions.

Response papers will be submitted through the Blackboard system; under the assignment tab of the corresponding week. The due dates and times for the response papers are:

- Tuesdays, 6pm of each week

Each week (with the exception of weeks 1, 7, and 12) I will post a discussion question for the response paper. These questions generally ask you to critically evaluate the required readings assigned for the week. You do not need to incorporate material from optional readings. Unless otherwise noted, response papers must be around 400 words (plus/minus 10%) and must respond to the prompt that is provided. Response papers should not be mere summaries of the material but should be critical assessment of the readings. Response papers will be graded on a P/F basis (1 points=Pass, 0 points=Fail). However to be able to get the 1 point for the Pass grade, student must also attend the corresponding seminar. In case you are unable to attend the seminar for the week that you wrote a response paper for, you have to make sure that you come to the next one. In total, you must submit 4 response papers and attend at least 4 seminars per term.

I will assign the P/F grade based on whether the response paper responds to the discussion question directly and whether it engages in a critical discussion of the assigned material. Needless to say, all response papers submitted must be student's own work, and they must abide by the plagiarism policy of our university (please see below).

For the participation component, I will take note of your attendance in discussion sessions. At the end of each session, I will also ask all students to submit a short summary of the discussion points.

In line with the Department of Political Science policy, the maximum grade you can receive for response papers and participation is capped at 80. Below is the grading table for response papers and participation points.

4 response papers and 4 participation (all P): 80 / 100

3 response papers and 3 participation (all P): 60 / 100

2 response papers and 2 participation (all P): 40 / 100

1 response paper and 1 participation (all P): 20 / 100

Note that it is not possible to get more than 80 points for the response paper and the participation component per term by submitting more papers or attending more classes. However, students can submit an additional response paper in case they received an F for a response paper.

Please note that late submissions for response papers will not be accepted. In case you are unable to submit your response paper on time, you will need to make sure you submit another one in the upcoming weeks. As stated above, in case you are unable to attend a seminar, you should contact me as soon as possible. Each student is responsible for keeping track of their participation and response paper grades.

Mid-term essay (blog post). I will ask you to write a blog post (Min: 1,700/Max: 2,000 words), which will count towards 35% of your final mark. The deadline for this assignment is:

- 17 November 2020, 6pm

Blog posts are popular tools that enable scientists to communicate their research, ideas, and arguments to a public audience in an accessible manner. Blog posts present an argument and/or analyze an event or topic critically with a less formal language and a more flexible structure and in a more personal manner, if you choose to do so. You will of course be asked to build your arguments on scientific evidence and findings, include citations and analysis of evidence.

Blogs will encourage you to work on your digital communication skills by integrating visual content to support your arguments.

You will choose your own topic for the blog post, and submit it for review by me. I will provide further guidelines and specific instructions later, but here are some examples that could help you get a sense of the expected output:

- [Is religion bad for democracy?](#)
- [Evangelicals in Brazil see abuse of God's earth as a sin – but will they fight to save the Amazon?](#)

Some practical guidelines from the author of the post, Dr. Amy Erica Smith [on writing blog posts](#) (ignore #3).

- [Rising religiosity as a global response to Covid-19 fear](#)

Final essay. You will pick and write an essay on one of the following topics. The final essay will be 3,000 words and will be submitted on:

- 8 January 2021, 6pm

The essay should have a clearly stated argument (a highly original one for a first class grade), discuss the evidence that supports your argument and discuss and refute the counter-arguments and counter-evidence. It is also essential that your essay is well-organized, efficiently structured, and shows evidence of a good and accurate grasp of the material. I will provide a grading rubric along with more detailed instructions throughout the semester. These will also be posted on Blackboard.

- Discuss the following statement: “Some people say the only cure for prejudice is more religion; some say the only cure is to abolish religion.” (Theodor Adorno)
- Is the social/group aspect of religion a curse or a blessing for peace and stability?
- Discuss the following statement: “Religion is like a knife: you can either use it to cut bread, or stick in someone's back.” (Desmond Tutu)
- When analyzing religion’s influence on intolerance and conflict, should we focus on a particular religious tradition’s worldviews and values or on the incentives or strategic interests of religious actors and elites?

Before submitting any works, please read the [department’s undergraduate handbook](#), which contains a lot of useful information about submission of written assignments and guidelines on writing essays.

Also please read the University’s [plagiarism policy](#) to make sure that you are familiar with different types of plagiarism and avoid such situations in your submissions. Also see the links under Academic Integrity below for more resources.

Late work for essay submissions. All late work, unless excused in advance by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate or tutor’s note, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of the second lecture term.

Make sure to save and back-up your work. Computer crashes or failure to back up your work will count as acceptable excuses for late work!

Course materials

All reading materials indicated in the syllabus will be available on Blackboard. I will also post additional materials on Blackboard.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. Academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating on an exam or assignment, plagiarizing, representing someone else's work as your own, submitting work previously used without the informing and taking the consent of the instructor, fabricating of information or citations, etc. will not be tolerated. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure and the matter will be reported to the student's tutor and the dean of the faculty; severe penalties are likely to ensue, including possible exclusion from the exam or even the College, in accordance with College policy.

- Please read pp. 45-47 of the [College Calendar](#) for University's plagiarism policy.
- General guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism could be found in the [Library's online tutorial](#).
- The Library also has a [web page](#) with extensive resources about avoiding plagiarism and best practices about citations and referencing.

Disability policy

Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the [Disability Service](#) to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

Seminar Schedule and Readings

The first set of readings is the required readings of the week. There are also optional/further reading for each week for students who would like to read more about the topic. You are not required to incorporate material from optional readings to your response papers although you are welcome to do so.

Week 1: Religion and politics – the state of the discipline

Kettel, Steven. 2016. Do We Need a “Political Science of Religion”? *Political Studies Review* 14(2): 210-222.

Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2012. Why Comparative Politics should Take Religion (More) Seriously. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 15: 421-442.

Optional:

Gill, Anthony. 2001. Religion and Comparative Politics. *Annual Review of Political Science* 4: 117-138.

Fox, Jonathan and Shmuel Sandler. 2004. *Bringing Religion into International Relations*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 2.

Week 2: The Weberian tradition

(SKIM) Weber, Max. [1930] 2001. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Routledge. Chapters 1, 2, 5.

Woodberry, Robert D. 2012. The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy. *American Political Science Review* 106(2): 244-274.

Optional:

Guiso Luigi, Paola Sapienza, Luigi Zingales. 2003. People's opium? Religion and Economic Attitudes. *Journal of Monetary Economics* 50(1):225-282.

Cantoni, Davide. 2015. The Economic Effects of the Protestant Reformation: Testing the Weber Hypothesis in the German Lands. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 13(4): 561-598.

Becker, Sasha O. and Lidger Woessmann. 2009. Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124 (2): 531-596.

Barro, Robert J. and Rachel M. McCleary. 2003. Religion and Economic Growth across Countries. *American Sociological Review* 68: 760-781.

Week 3: Following up on Weber: Are there distinct religious values?

Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72(3): 22-49.

Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2002. Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the 'Clash of Civilizations' Thesis. *Comparative Sociology* 1 (3-4): 235-263.

(SKIM) Kuru, Ahmet. 2019. *Islam, Authoritarianism, and Underdevelopment: A Global and Historical Comparison*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction & Chapters 2-3.

Optional:

Patterson, Eric. 2004. Different Religions, Different Politics? Religion and Political Attitudes in Argentina and Chile. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43(3): 345-362.

Hail, Henry. 2011. Do Eastern Religions Promote Political Passivity? Religion and Political Participation in South Korea and Taiwan. CDC Conference Paper. [Link](#)

Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis E. Owen, and Samuel S. Hill Jr. 1988. Churches as Political Communities. *The American Political Science Review* 82(2): 531-548.

Week 4: The social function of religion

(SKIM) Durkheim, Emile. [1912]1995. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. The Free Press. Chapter 1 and Conclusion.

Stark, Rodney. 1984. Religion and Conformity: Reaffirming a Sociology of Religion. *Sociological Analysis* 45(4): 273-282.

Lim, Chaeyoon and Robert D. Putnam. 2010. Religion, Social Networks, and Life Satisfaction. *American Sociological Review* 75(6): 914-933.

Putnam, Robert and David E. Campbell. 2010. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapter 13.

Optional:

Childs, Ellen. 2010. Religious Attendance and Happiness: Examining Gaps in the Current Literature—A Research Note. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49(3):550–560.

Becker, Sascha and Ludger Woessmann. 2018. Social Cohesion, Religious Beliefs, and the Effect of Protestantism on Suicide. *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 100(3): 377-391.

Campante, Filipe and David Yanagizawa-Drott. 2015. Does Religion Affect Economic Growth and Happiness? Evidence from Ramadan. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130(2): 615-658.

Week 5: The social dimension of religion: Promoting solidarity or instigating conflict?

Norenzayan, Ara. 2013. *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 9.

Ginges, Jeremy, Ian Hansen, and Ara Norenzayan. 2009. Religion and Support for Suicide Attacks. *Psychological Science* 20(2): 224-230.

Seul, Jeffrey R. 1999. 'Ours is the Way of God': Religion, Identity, and Intergroup Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research* 36(5): 553-569.

Ben-Nun Bloom, Pazit, Gizem Arikan, and Marie Courtemanche. 2015. Religious Social Identity, Religious Belief, and Anti-Immigration Sentiment. *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 203-221.

Optional:

Ysseldyk, Renate, Kimberly Matheson, and Hymie Anisman. 2010. Religiosity as Identity: Toward an Understanding of Religion from a Social Identity Perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14(1): 60-71.

Atran, Scott. 2016. The Devoted Actor: Unconditional Commitment and Intractable Conflict across Cultures. *Current Anthropology* 57(13): 192-203.

Mitchell, Claire. 2005. Behind The Ethnic Marker: Religion and Social Identification in Northern Ireland. *Sociology of Religion* 66: 3-21.

Week 6: Religion, morality, and cooperation

Norenzayan, Ara. 2013. *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-3.

Willard, Aiyana K., Adam Baimel, Hugh Turpin, Jonathan Jong, and Harvey Whitehouse. 2020. Rewarding the Good and Punishing the Bad: The Role of Karma and Afterlife Beliefs in Shaping Moral Norms. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 41(5): 385-396.

Stark, Rodney. 2001. God, Rituals, and the Moral Order. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40(4): 619-636.

Optional:

Whitehouse, Harvey, et al. 2019. Complex Societies Precede Moralizing Gods Throughout World History. *Nature* 568: 226-229.

Lang, Martin, et al. 2019. Moralizing Gods, Impartiality and Religious Parochialism across 15 Societies. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 286: 20190202.

Week 7 – Reading week

Week 8: Religion, cooperation, and conflict-Which dimension matters most?

Bloom, Paul. 2012. Religion, Morality, Evolution. *Annual Review of Psychology* 63: 179-199.

Ganiel, Gladys and Paul Dixon. 2008. Religion, Pragmatic Fundamentalism and the Transformation of the Northern Ireland Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research* 45(3): 419-436.

Froese, Paul, Christopher Bader, and Buster Smith. 2008. Political Tolerance and God's Wrath in the United States. *Sociology of Religion* 69(1): 29-44.

Hoffmann, Lisa, Matthias Basedau, Simone Gobien, and Sebastian Prediger. 2020. Universal Love or One True Religion? Experimental Evidence of the Ambivalent Effect of Religious Ideas on Altruism and Discrimination. *American Journal of Political Science* 64(3): 603-620.

Optional:

Hunsberger, Bruce. 1995. Religion and Prejudice: The Role of Religious Fundamentalism, Quest, and Right-Wing Authoritarianism. *Journal of Social Issues* 51(2): 113-129.

Preston, Jesse Lee and Ryan S. Ritter. 2013. Different Effects of Religion and God on Prosociality. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 39(11): 1471-1483.

Djupe, Paul and Brian R. Calfano. 2012. Religious Value Priming, Threat, and Political Tolerance. *Political Research Quarterly* 66(4): 768-780.

Week 9: Rational choice approach to religion

Fox, Jonathan. 2006. World Separation of Religion and State into the 21st Century. *Comparative Political Studies* 39(5): 537-569.

Stark, Roger and Laurance R. Iannaccone (1994). A Supply-side Reinterpretation of the "Secularization" of Europe. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33: 230-252.

Gill, Anthony. 2007. *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.

Optional

Grim, Brian J. and Roger Finke. 2006. International Religion Indexes: Government Regulation, Government Favoritism, and Social Regulation of Religion. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 2(1): 1-40.

Fox, Jonathan. 2018. *An Introduction to Religion and politics: Theory And Practice*. Routledge. Chapter 7.

Fox, Jonathan and Ephraim Tabory. 2008. Contemporary Evidence regarding the Impact of State Regulation of Religion on Religious Participation and Belief. *Sociology of Religion* 69(3): 245-271.

Sarkissian, Ani. 2015. *The Varieties of Religious Repression: Why Governments Restrict Religion*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Chapters 1&2.

Week 10: The consequences of religion-state relations

Helbling, Marc and Richard Traunmüller. 2016. How State Support of Religion Shapes Attitudes toward Muslim Immigrants: New Evidence from a Sub-national Comparison. *Comparative Political Studies* 49(3): 391-424.

Grim, Brian J. and Roger Finke. 2007. Religious Persecution in Cross-National Context: Clashing Civilizations or Regulated Religious Economies? *American Sociological Review* 72(4): 633-658.

Akbaba, Yasemin and Zeynep Taydas. 2011. Does Religious Discrimination Promote Dissent? A Quantitative Analysis. *Ethnopolitics* 10 (3-4): 271-295.

Muchlinski, David. 2014. Grievances and Opportunities: Religious Violence across Political Regimes. *Politics and Religion* 7: 684-705.

Optional

Fox, Jonathan and Shmuel Sandler. 2004. *Bringing Religion into International Relations*. New York: Plagrave MacMillan. Chapter 3.

Fox, Jonathan. 2018. *An Introduction to Religion and politics: Theory And Practice*. Routledge. Chapter 6.

Arikan, Gizem and Pazit Ben-Nun Bloom. 2019. Religion and Political Protest: A Cross-Country Analysis. *Comparative Political Studies* 52(2): 246-276.

Week 11: Religion and elite influence

Philpott, Daniel. 2007. Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion. *American Political Science Review* 101(3): 505-525.

Trejo, Guillermo. 2009. Religious Competition and Ethnic Mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church Promotes Indigenous Movements in Mexico. *American Political Science Review* 103(3): 323-342.

Smith, Amy Erica. 2016. When Clergy are Threatened: Catholic and Protestant Leaders and Political Activism in Brazil. *Politics and Religion* 431-455.

Isaacs, Matthew. 2017. Faith in Contention: Explaining the Saliency of Religion in Ethnic Conflict. *Comparative Political Studies* 50(2): 200-231.

Optional

McCauley, John F. 2014. The Political Mobilization of Ethnic and Religious Identities in Africa. *American Political Science Review* 108(4): 801-816.

Toft, Monica Duffy; Daniel Philpott & Timothy Samuel Shah. 2011. *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*. New York: WW Norton. Chapter 7.

Appleby, Scott. 2000. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*. Rowman & Littlefield. Chapter 5.

Week 12: Revision and essay discussion