Religious Studies 90KM
Introduction to Religion and Politics

Fall 2009

Course Description
This course will give an overview of the influence of religion on politics in the United States. We will look at both the right and the left of the political spectrum to study people and groups seeking a greater alignment between religious values and public policy. With the historic principle of church-state separation in mind, we will examine the relationship between religion and political mobilization, interest group politics, public opinion, race and ethnicity, foreign policy, and elections.

Course Goals
By the end of this course you will be able to
- analyze debates regarding religion in politics in the United States
- express this analysis cogently through written and verbal communication
- understand specific characteristics about what Americans really believe and why religion (including civil religion) matters for activists, interest groups, faith-based organizations, and political leaders

Course Requirements
Please become familiar with the following course requirements and policies. If there is a component that is not understood, please ask for clarification.

Required Readings:
These titles are available for purchase at the UCEN Bookstore, the I.V. Bookstore, and from online booksellers, and are on reserve (2 hour loan) in Davidson Library:
- Mark Silk and Andrew Walsh, *One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics.*
- Rodney Stark, *What Americans Really Believe: New Findings from the Baylor Surveys on Religion*
- Randall Herbert Balmer, *God in the White House: how faith shaped the presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush.*

Required articles are accessible online at [www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu](http://www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu) and are listed below in the course schedule.

Current Events:
In addition to the texts, you are required to maintain a knowledge and understanding of current events. I recommend *The New York Times,* which is available online at
www.nytimes.com. Additional links dealing with religion and politics are provided below.

This is an essential part of the course that should be taken seriously. In addition to reading the newspaper, you will benefit from following other sources of political news while taking this class. Some of the better sources that I recommend are:

- This Week, ABC, http://abcnews.go.com/Sections/ThisWeek/
- All Things Considered, NPR, www.npr.com

**Gauchospace:**

The Gauchospace web-based course management system will be used to post grades, messages and reading assignments in addition to the books. Discussion forums will be available for you to use to communicate with fellow students; participation in assigned discussion forums is also evaluated. The professor will post discussion forum topics regularly. Required readings (except for the three books) are accessible on the website: www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu.

**Evaluation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Points</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam 50</td>
<td>A: 177 -- 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam 80</td>
<td>A-: 171 -- 176</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B+: 165 -- 170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1 10</td>
<td>B: 158 -- 164</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2 20</td>
<td>B-: 152 -- 157</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forums 10</td>
<td>C+: 146 -- 151</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation 30</td>
<td>C: 139 -- 145</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C-: 133 -- 138</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total: 200</td>
<td>D: 114 -- 132</td>
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<td></td>
<td>F: 0 -- 113</td>
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To avoid any confusion, here is what I expect for various grades:

A: Superb ability to offer original and insightful analysis of the facts.
B: Solid, very good work. The facts have been grasped and significant moves have been made to analyze the materials.
C: Reasonable efforts made to attend class, and a fair grasp of the materials has been demonstrated. Analytical level is fair – not original, missing certain important facts, but essentially correct about the facts covered.
D: A simplistic familiarity with the material is demonstrated by the student’s work, but much of what is presented could have been gleaned from media (not course assignments)

F: Little or no attempt made to engage with the materials, to respect the requirements of the course and its schedule, or to complete assignments on time.

Exams: The midterm (25% of course grade) and final exam (40% of course grade) will include fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions. These exams will be on the reading assignments, lectures, and audio-visual materials introduced in class meetings.

Paper 1: Your Religion and Politics (250 words)
What are your religious experiences? How have these experiences influenced your political views? Before we begin discussing how religion influences politics, I want you to reflect on how that influence has taken place in your own life. There is no right or wrong answer here and you will not be judged on your religion or lack of religion or doubts. Though this assignment is short, it needs to show some evidence that you have spent some time reflecting on this question. In class we will talk about possible definitions of “religion” so we can be aware of how we think of the category. Instructions about formatting, etc., will be provided in class.

Paper 2: Current Events (3-5 pages)

Participation: Attendance at lecture 3 times a week plus a weekly discussion section is required. Your participation in these settings is evaluated (15% of course grade). Also your posts to the regular discussion forums on Gauchospace will be evaluated as a part of your participation grade. Each of your posts will be evaluated on a 0-2 scale (from “no content related to the question” to “accurate application of principles of the readings/lectures to the question”). Instructions for this will be provided in class.

Course Schedule

Sept 25  Introduction (read syllabus and purchase books)

Sept 28-Oct 2  Civil Religion
Read: Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in America” (accessible at www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu)
View Obama’s Inaugural address and participate in discussion forum on course website at www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu

Oct 5-9  Social Movements and Religious Lobbyists
Read: Living Wage Movement at www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu
And Silk and Walsh, One Nation, Divisible, Ch 1
Oct 12-16  *U.S. Foreign Policy*  
Read: Silk and Walsh, One Nation, Divisible, Ch 2-3  
“Local Religious Peacemakers” at [www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu](http://www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu)

Oct 19-23  *The White House*  
Read: “American Presidential Rhetoric” at [www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu](http://www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu) and  
Balmer, God in the White House, entire book

Oct 26  *Elections*  
Read: Silk and Walsh, One Nation, Divisible Ch 4-6

Oct 28  MIDTERM (bring blue book)

Nov 2-6  *Race, Religion and Politics*  
Read: Silk and Walsh, One Nation, Divisible, Ch 7-9, and  
“Compassionate Conservatism and African Americans” at [www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu](http://www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu)

Nov 9, 13  *Anti-War Movements*  
Read: Stark, What Americans Really Believe,  
And “The Historical Development of the U.S. Plowshares Movement” at [www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu](http://www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu)

Nov 16-20  *Environmentalism*  
Read: to be assigned

Nov 23-27  *Faith Based Initiatives*  
Read: “Despite a Decade of Controversy,” and “Media Coverage of the Faith Based Initiative in the First Six Months of 2001 and 2009” at [www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu](http://www.gauchospace.ucsb.edu)

Nov 30-Dec 4  *Conclusion: retelling the story*  
Read: Silk and Walsh, One Nation, Divisible, Ch 10.

**Course Policies**  
*Make-up Exams*: Make-up exams will be allowed only in the event of a medical or family emergency and with advance notification. Documentation is required for all make-up exams. As soon as you know that you will miss an exam you need to get in touch with me to schedule a make-up. A long delay in informing me of your situation may result in not being allowed to take a make-up.  
*Make-up Quizzes*: Make-up quizzes are **not** permitted.  
*Attendance*: Your presence is expected at every class.
Extra Credit: Extra credit work will **not** be allowed. If you perform poorly on an exam, you are encouraged to place additional effort toward doing better on the next exam.

**Assistance:** Please visit during office hours; make an appointment, or e-mail if you require assistance or wish to discuss the class material further. Also please make use of the teaching assistant for this class.

**Electronic Gadgets in the Classroom:** Turn off all cellphones and other noise making devices before class. You are allowed to bring a laptop computer to class for the purpose of taking notes. Laptops may not be used for other purposes, such as checking e-mail or surfing the net. If I determine that laptop use is becoming too much of a distraction in class, I will ban their use for the remainder of the quarter.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Do you hand out a “study guide” before the exams?
   No. I strongly encourage you to make your own study guide. Since creating a study guide is a skill I want you do develop, I will not do it for you. I would be glad, however, to help you. After you make a study guide, bring it to my office and I will look over it and make suggestions. This must be done during office hours or by appointment. I will not review study guides submitted via email.

2. I missed class. Did I miss anything important?
   Yes, if I did not have anything important to say, I would have cancelled class.

3. OK, what did I miss?
   First, get the notes from a classmate for the class you missed, then (and only then) we can go over the parts that you do not understand during office hours.

4. I did poorly on an exam. Can I retake it or do any sort of extra credit work?
   No. You should place all your efforts into doing better on the next exam. If you need help, you should take advantage of my office hours, or make an appointment to see me.

5. I am only one point away from a C (or D, B, or A). Since I am so close, is there anyway you can just give me the extra point?
   No, it would not be fair to the rest of the class to give you an undeserved extra point.

6. I need to talk to you, when would be a good time?
   During my office hours. If you cannot make my office hours, please e-mail me to set up an appointment. Suggest some times that will work for you.

**Important Dates**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>First Day of Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Last Day to Drop Course (w/o $3 fee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>FIRST PAPER DUE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td>MIDTERM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Veterans Day Holiday, no class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 26-27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Holiday, no class</td>
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<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Last Day of Class</td>
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<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>Study Day</td>
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<td>Dec 7-12</td>
<td>Final Exams Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 20</td>
<td>Grades accessible on GOLD</td>
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