

## POS 444: Religion and Politics in America

Wayne State College Fall 2014  
3 Credit Hours, Undergraduate level  
CH 129 (Monday) 6:00 pm – 8:45 pm

Instructor: Sister Madeleine Miller, OSB  
Office: CH 240  
Office Hours: Monday 4:40 pm – 5:40 pm, or by appointment.  
Email: [mamille1@wsc.edu](mailto:mamille1@wsc.edu) (or directly through Sakai)  
Phone Messages: (402) 375-7573  
Required Texts: - Fowler et al. *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)*;  
- Kiesbye (Ed.) *At Issue: How Does Religion Influence Politics?*; Various articles and primary sources

### I - Course Description

This course will investigate how religion and politics intersect in American society. While some experts claim that religion is irrelevant in a globalized and postindustrial world, other scholars convincingly argue that religion is a pervasive presence in America today. The American political landscape is deeply imbued with religious questions and issues on both sides of the aisle. Since the founding of the United States, we have been both a religious as well as a diverse society. By creatively exploring the dynamic relationship between religion and politics in America, students will gain a greater understanding of the world around them and the forces at work in American public life. Readings consist of both contemporary and historical sources. Much of the reading consists of articles available online, and these can be accessed through the Sakai resources page.

#### Course Learning Objectives:

- 1) Discover the interaction between religion and politics in America today.
- 2) Understand how religiously motivated individuals and groups engage in politics.
- 3) Analyze the evolution of the government's treatment of laws and policies related to both religion and morality.
- 4) Explore specific issues, individuals, and groups that bring together religion and politics in unique ways.

### II – Course Requirements

This syllabus constitutes a provisional semester outline. Lectures, activities, and readings will complement each other.

**Exams:** Two exams will be given during the semester. Exams will consist of essays. The midterm exam will be completed outside of class. The final exam will be in class, during the scheduled exam period set by the college.

**Class Challenges:** We will have regular challenges in our course that will consist of individual and group work. Some will be done entirely during class, and others will require work outside of class. Many will involve web 2.0 tools and creativity. We will use rubrics and reflections to assess our work together and learn from one another.

**Research Project:** Each student will develop a research paper and presentation about a topic of their choice that relates to the relationship between religion and politics in America. Papers must be turned in at scheduled times, and grades for late papers will be reduced one letter per day.

**Due Dates for Research Project**

Assignment given	Week 1, August 8 <sup>th</sup>
Topic due	Week 3, September 8 <sup>th</sup>
Outline due (see below)	Week 4, September 15 <sup>th</sup> – returned Week 5, September 22 <sup>nd</sup>
List of 4 academic sources due using Chicago Manual of Style (see below)	Week 5, September 29 <sup>th</sup> – returned Week 6, September 29 <sup>th</sup>
Rough drafts checked (paper and presentation)	Week 9, October 27 <sup>th</sup> – in-class feedback given
Final paper and presentation due	Week 11, November 10 <sup>th</sup>

General requirements are:

- This paper must be typed and double-spaced. It must be in Times New Roman font, size 12, with standard margins. It must accurately present your research.
- A minimum of four sources from academic literature must be used and correctly referenced using the Chicago Manual of Style (16<sup>th</sup> Edition: 2010) format. This means that they must be from academic journals or books. You may refer to the course texts, but these will not count as official sources. Many articles can be found through the WSC library website.
  - A citation guide for the Chicago Manual can be found here: [http://academic.wsc.edu/conn\\_library/research/citation/Chicago16.pdf](http://academic.wsc.edu/conn_library/research/citation/Chicago16.pdf)
- Your topic must be examined from a political science point of view, and include a discussion of at least two different religions or faith traditions (for the purpose of comparison).
- Your paper must make an argument or ask a question. If you use an argument, back up your conclusions with facts. If you ask a question, be sure to answer it using facts drawn from your research.
  - Include the opposing view of whatever you conclude in your paper for the sake of good scholarship and quality.
- Your topic must be specific and focused as it is said in your thesis statement. Some sample topics include Roman Catholics and voting, American Jews and Israel, or American Muslims after 9/11.
- Your outline must include an overview of:
  - The introduction and thesis statement (identify the problem, argument, or question you are exploring)
  - A literature review
  - Description and discussion of your findings
  - A summary of your findings and suggestions for further research/conclusion
    - If you need more information about this, come and talk to me, or consult these sites:
      - <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/political-science/>

- [http://qcpages.qc.edu/Political\\_Science/tips.html](http://qcpages.qc.edu/Political_Science/tips.html)

- Your paper must be between 7-10 pages in length.
- Your paper needs to be logically organized. You can use headings and subheadings.
- You are expected to write in complete, grammatically correct sentences, using proper spelling and academic style. Also, your term paper must include grammatically correct in-text citations and a bibliography of your sources.
- Your paper must be turned in on time, stapled, with a bibliography and a title page. It must be turned in as a hard copy on **November 10<sup>th</sup>**, the day of presentation.
- Your presentation must be 5-7 minutes in length. It can be created on any software of your choosing (PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Presentation, or LiveBinder, among others). You must submit a file or link to the file of your presentation on **November 10<sup>th</sup>**. Hard copies are appreciated.
- If you cheat or plagiarize, you will automatically fail the assignment.

### III – Points

Exams: 250 points

Research Project: 150 points

Class Challenges: 200 points (20 points each – 10 weeks – this excludes the first week, the week of the midterm, and the week of the final)

Attendance/Participation: 100 points

Total possible points = 700

### IV – Grading Scale:

Percentage	Letter grade
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
59% and under	F

**Note:** Grades will be based on performance, not on request or negotiation.

### V – Classroom Policies & Procedures

This course will be taught using group activities, assessments, discussions, and lectures. Assignments and assessments will support students in accomplishing their learning goals. Assessments will consist of activities designed to evaluate your knowledge and ability to accomplish the intended learning outcomes. There will be different types of assessments: papers, working in teams, exams, and research projects. Not all assessments will be used for

grading. Some assessments will be used formatively as a means of feedback for you and for me in terms of your progress.

This course will have resources posted on Sakai. You will need to have access to the internet to complete some assignments, both inside and outside of class. If you don't have internet access personally, you are welcome to use the computers on campus. You are responsible for reading all class materials and resources ahead of time.

#### Participation

Readiness to learn means that you will come to class with questions and insights to offer to others and prepared to discuss the relevance and application of the course materials.

Attendance is expected at all class sessions.

#### Characteristics of students who excel in this type of course:

- 1) Come to class with readings and assignments finished.
- 2) Are willing to take risks and trust others so everyone can succeed.
- 3) Prepare for exams or projects with peers.
- 4) Take notes during class and while completing reading assignments.

#### Recommended study habits:

- 1) Check Sakai often for updates and to interact with your peers.
- 2) Highlight or underline while reading the text or other resources.
- 3) Form study groups to prepare for exams, and use technology to study (such as [www.thinkbinder.com](http://www.thinkbinder.com), [www.studyblue.com](http://www.studyblue.com), and [www.coogle.it](http://www.coogle.it)). Please see me for additional resources and links. Get contact information early on from your classmates so that you can collaborate easily.

There are no excused absences in this course. I will never waste your valuable time. In order for you to learn and contribute to others' learning, you must be present. I will not reteach material to individual students who cannot be responsible. All assignments will be due at the beginning of class. Assignments coming in after that will receive lower grades (10 points per day).

All Wayne State College policies about plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and cheating will be observed in this course. If you do not know the definitions and consequences of cheating, please learn about them in the Wayne State College Student Handbook.

#### Technology requirements

We will use technology during class in order to explore current topics and to create content. I expect students to use technology responsibly and only for class-related activities.

During the semester, we will use both Sakai and an external site for our course. The web address for our external site is: <http://waynestatecollegepos444fall2014.weebly.com/>. Each student must have an email account and check it regularly. We will learn how to upload to our site together.

#### Communication

I encourage students to communicate with me. I am eager to hear from each student, so do not feel that I am ever too busy for you. If I cannot respond to your question or request right away, I will always let you know that and set up an alternate time. Let me know as soon as you can if you are going to miss class or are having difficulties.

## **VI – Academic Freedom and Responsibility**

Student academic performance will be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards. Students should be free to take

reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled. Students who believe that an academic evaluation reflects prejudiced or capricious consideration of student opinions or conduct unrelated to academic standards should contact the chair of the department in which the course is being taught to initiate a review of the evaluation.

### **VII – Note to Teacher Education Students**

Outcome 1: Teacher candidates inquire and reflect to facilitate learning and foster development in all learners.

Outcome 2: Teacher candidates plan, facilitate, and evaluate caring learning communities that facilitate learning and foster development in all learners.

Outcome 3: Teacher candidates demonstrate an integration of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, skills, and dispositions in the subjects they teach.

Outcome 4: Teacher candidates have the ability, skill, and desire to communicate with understanding.

Outcome 5: Teacher candidates possess and demonstrate the values, demeanor, and reflective decision-making of a professional educator.

### **VIII – Tentative Class Schedule**

*This schedule is subject to change according to the instructor's discretion.*

#### Week 1

August 18: Introduction: How I teach; Course guidelines/expectations; Class member introductions; Overview of religion in America

#### Week 2

August 25: Religion, politics, and culture: Discuss a complicated relationship and how it is measured

Fowler et al, Ch. 1-2, 4

John Winthrop, "Model of Christian Charity" (1630)

Alexis de Tocqueville, "Essay on American Government and Religion" (1831)

Pew Forum, "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey" (2008): Affiliation, portraits, comparisons (Ch. 1-3) <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>

Pew Forum, "How the Faithful Voted: 2012 Preliminary Analysis" (2012)

Pew Forum, "Nones' on the Rise" (2012)

Nigel Barber, "Why Religion Rules American Politics" (2012)

*Class Challenge 1*

September 1: Labor Day, no class

Week 3

September 8: Exploring civil religion: A legacy with historical roots

Fowler et al, Ch. 6-7

Thomas Jefferson, "Virginia Bill for Religious Freedom" (1786)

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address (1864)

Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" (1967)

Gail Gehrig, "The American Civil Religion Debate" (1981)

George W. Bush, September 11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Address (2002)

Mark Schloneger, "My Faith: Why I Don't Sing the Star Spangled Banner" (2011)

*Class Challenge 2*

Research topic due today

Week 4

September 15: Dissecting church and state (1): The Establishment Clause

Fowler et al, Ch. 8

At Issue, Ch. 1-2

John Ferguson, "Vouchers" (2002)

Joseph Jarret, "Laws From on High" (2005)

Tom Bennett & George Foldes, "Our Father in Heaven" (2008)

"Establishment Clause Overview" (2011)

*Class Challenge 3*

Research outline due today

Week 5

September 22: Dissecting church and state (2): The Free Exercise Clause

Fowler et al, Ch. 9

David L. Hudson Jr., “Teachers’ Religious Liberties” (2002)

Julie P. Samuels, “Graduation Ceremonies” (2005)

Shaun P. Mcfall, “Vaccinations & Religious Exemptions” (2008)

PBS God in America Episode 5: Soul of a Nation (2010)

Claire Mullally, “Free Exercise Clause Overview” (2011)

*Class Challenge 4*

Research sources due today, research outline returned today

Week 6

September 29: Identifying the players: Organized religious groups and movements

Fowler et al, Ch. 5

Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter From a Birmingham Jail” (1963)

Allen Hertzke, “The Globalization of Religious Advocacy in America” (2010)

Pew Forum, “Lobbying for the Faithful: Executive Summary” (2012)

*Class Challenge 5*

Research sources returned today

Week 7

October 6: **Midterm Exam**

Following the paths of movement realignment: African Americans, Latinos, and the Christian Right

Fowler et al, Ch. 10

PBS God in America Episode 6: Of God and Caesar (2010)

Pat Robertson, “Road to Victory ‘94” (1994)

Cal Thomas, “Religious Right R.I.P.” (2008)

October 13: Midterm break, no class

Week 8

October 20: Learning to navigate the intersection between gender and the American religious-political landscape

Fowler et al, Ch. 11

Rose Schneiderman, “We Have Found You Wanting” (1911)

Pew Forum, “The Stronger Sex – Spiritually Speaking” (2009)

Kathryn Joyce, “Women’s Liberation Through Submission” (2009)

Emily Wax, “Moderate American Muslim Tries to Navigate a Deeply Divided Community” (2012)

Hemant Mehta, “Why do Black Women Remain in the Church?” (2013)

Natalie Dicou, “The Movement to Ordain Mormon Women” (2014)

*Class Challenge 6*

Week 9

October 27: Discovering how to keep score: The culture wars between religion and politics

Fowler et al, Ch. 12

John F. Kennedy, “Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association” (1960)

Mario Cuomo, “Religious Belief and Public Morality: A Catholic Governor’s Perspective” (1984)

Rob Kerby, “Have Americans Lost Their Faith...in the Old ‘Mainline’ Religions?”

Jack Jenkins, “Why Faith Groups Are Rallying Behind Immigration Reform” (2013)

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (and others), “Standing Together for Religious Freedom” (2014)

*Class Challenge 7*

Research rough drafts checked today (paper and presentation)

Week 10

November 3: Identifying the issues at the top: Leadership, endorsements, and activism

Fowler et al, Ch. 6

At Issue, Ch. 7-8



Barak Obama, “Call to Renewal Keynote Address” (2006)

Naomi Schaefer Riley, “What Saddleback’s Pastor Really Thinks About Politics” (2008)

Amy Sullivan, “Let’s Focus on Policy, Not Just Theology” (2012)

Ask the Rabbis “Are There Times When a Rabbi Must Express His or Her Political Opinion From the Pulpit?” (2013)

Carl Kenney, “Byndom Making Baha’i History With City Council Run” (2014)

*Class Challenge 8*

Week 11

November 10: **Research Projects are due: Student presentations (all students)**

Week 12

November 17: Exploring how religion and foreign policy interact today

Fowler et al, Ch. 3

At Issue, Ch. 12

Peter J. Gomes, “Patriotism is Not Enough” (2003)

Gregory Levey, “The Other Israel Lobby” (2006)

Robert McMahon, “Christian Evangelicals and U.S. Foreign Policy” (2006)

Andrew Preston, “Why is American Foreign Policy so Religious?” (2012)

Bruce Stokes, “Next Year in Jerusalem” (2013)

John Winchester, “Evangelicals, the Millennial Generation, and Israel” (2014)

*Class Challenge 9*

Week 13

November 24: Discerning the interplay between religion and rights: American Muslims

At Issue, Ch. 9, 13

Andrea Elliott, “A Muslim Leader in Brooklyn” (2006)

Firas Ahmad, “The Muslim American Community’s ‘Obama’ Problem” (2008)

Peter Skerry, “The Muslim American Muddle” (2011)

*Class Challenge 10*

Week 14

December 1: Discovering the future of American religious politics

At Issue, Ch. 10

Robert Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital” (1995)

Kwok Pui-lan, “A Transnational Approach to Religion” (2010)

Anugrah Kumar, “Most Americans Think Religious Freedom Fast Declining in the US” (2013)

Pew Forum, “Millenials in Adulthood” (2014)

Week 15

December 2-8: Study week; December 9-12: **Final exam** (according to the college calendar)

**IX - Supportive Services**

WSC provides an array of services to assist students, including the US Conn Library and computer labs located across campus. The Holland Academic Success Center provides assistance in career planning, goal setting, personality assessment, stress management, and individual and group counseling. For further information, contact Dr. Jeff Carstens, the Dean of Students at 402-375-7318. If you need some assistance, ask for it! We will try to help you.

**X - Disabilities Accommodations (ADA Policy)**

NOTE: In accordance with federal law, it is Wayne State College policy to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you believe that you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability that requires an academic accommodation, contact the Disabilities Services Coordinator, Jamie Mackling, by phone at (402) 375- 7321, via e-mail at [jamack11@wsc.edu](mailto:jamack11@wsc.edu) or visit the Disability Services Program in the Counseling Center located in the Student Center, Room 103.