Religion and Politics in the United States

Spring 2007

Political Science 4310, Sec.001
Blegen 5
T/Th 2:30-3:45
Course Number 67877

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Course web page: http://www.socsci.umn.edu/~abernath/Pol4310.htm

I. Introduction

What role has religion played in American democracy and what role does it currently play? How have America’s diverse religious traditions interacted with and shaped our political institutions, political participation, and public policies? To fully understand American political history and public policy one needs to consider these questions of the interplay between religious values and organizations and the larger civil society.

This course will examine the connection between religion and American politics, from the founding to current debates. Roughly one third of the course will be devoted to historical perspectives and the American context, one third to issues faced by members of specific faiths, and one third to current policy debates. By the end of the course, students should be able to critically reflect on the complex interplay between religion and politics in the American context.

II. Required Texts

The following books are required and available at the campus bookstore:

  Kenneth D. Wald.

- *Church and State in American History: Key Documents, Decisions, and Commentary From the Past Three Centuries*
  John F. Wilson and Donald L. Drakeman, eds.
  Westview, 2003

- *What's God Got to do with the American Experiment? Essays on Religion and Politics*
  E.J. Dionne, Jr. and John J. DiIulio, Jr., eds.
  Brookings Institution Press, 2000

These texts have also been placed on reserve at Wilson Library on the West Bank. Readings indicated as on the web can be found on the course web page.
III. Course structure and requirements

Format. The course will consist of a mixture of lecture, class discussion, and in-class activities.

Grades. Your final course grade will be based on three non-cumulative quizzes, three writing assignments, and class participation.

Quizzes
Three non-cumulative quizzes will be given in class. The third quiz will be given on the last day of classes. The quizzes will consist of a combination of objective and short answer questions. The first two quizzes will be worth 15 points. The third will be worth 10 points.

Writing Assignments
Writing will be an integral part of the course, and substantial class time will be devoted to teaching the writing of cogent, clear, thoughtful, and persuasive arguments. Each member of the class will be assigned to a writing group consisting of 1/3rd of the students. Six of the class sessions will involve meeting in these smaller groups to assist in this endeavor (see class schedule).

Students will complete three writing assignments. The first two are worth 10 points each. The third, which builds on the first two, is worth 20 points. More information on the assignments will be given in class. The total number of pages expected in the class will be 25-30.

Class Participation
Please come to class having completed the assigned readings. Regular class attendance is expected, as it will contribute to our discussions and investigations over the course of the semester. Lecture and class discussion material will be on the exams. All of the readings in the syllabus are required. Lectures and readings will not always overlap, and material from the assigned readings may be included in the exams, whether or not I have discussed it in class.

There will be 6 in-class activities offered, and students will receive 2 points for completing each one of these, up to a maximum of 10 points.

I will use the last 10 points of the final grade to ensure that students are on time, prepared, that they contribute, and that they help maintain an environment of respect and inquiry. Useful contribution does not necessarily mean constant contribution, though you will be expected to contribute when called on. A few thoughtful comments are as worthwhile (or more worthwhile) than constant comments that are not well thought-out.

The material that we will cover can be quite controversial, and many students may have strong beliefs and opinions. This is fine, and, if properly framed, will enrich our discussions. What we must remember, however, that our goal is not to examine religious traditions (their merits or beliefs) but the interplay between religion and American politics. I expect all students to be respectful of all beliefs, traditions, and points of view at all times, and I will do the same.

Because of these 10 discretionary points, if you are consistently disrupting the learning of other students, you will not get an “A” in the course, no matter how well you do on the quizzes and writing assignments.
Summary of Requirements:

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
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<td>Quiz 2</td>
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<td>Quiz 3</td>
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<td>Writing Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Writing Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Writing Assignment 3</td>
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<td>In-class activities</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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To calculate your final grade for the course, simply add up your points and convert to a letter grade using the following scale:

- **A**: Achievement outstanding relative to the basic course requirements
  - A: 93 points or more
  - A-: 90-92 points

- **B**: Achievement significantly above the basic course requirements
  - B+: 87-89 points
  - B: 84-86
  - B-: 80-83

- **C**: Achievement meeting the basic course requirements
  - C+: 77-79 points
  - C: 74-76
  - C-: 70-73

- **D**: Achievement worthy of credit but below the basic course requirements
  - D+: 66-69 points
  - D: 61-65

- **F**: Below 60 points

**IV. Course Policies**

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility.** Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.
Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, please contact the Professor or one of the TA’s. More information is available at: [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/StudentConduct.html](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/StudentConduct.html)

I will respect and follow University policies regarding sexual harassment, and I expect all students in the course to do the same. The Regents’ policy on sexual harassment can be found on the web at [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.html](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.html)

**Late work and missed exams.** Make-up exams are possible only in the case of emergencies or for University-approved functions. In both cases students will need to provide me with documentation (either a note from a physician or from your coach or faculty sponsor). If you must miss an exam for an approved function, you must contact me before the scheduled test time. The make-up exam questions may be different from the regular exam, though the format will be the same. Any late papers will be counted off 1 point per day late.

**University resources.** Students who feel they might benefit from test-taking services should contact the University Learning and Academic Skills Center at 109 Eddy Hall, East Bank (612-624-3323) or on the web at [http://www.ucs.umn.edu/lasc/](http://www.ucs.umn.edu/lasc/)

I will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Please contact Disability Services (180 McNamara Alumni Center: 612-626-1333) to discuss your individual needs as early as possible in the semester. More information on disability services is available at [http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu](http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu)

This class will use writing assignments. The Student Writing Center has TA’s and ESL specialists to help with your writing skills. The Writing Center is at 306 B Lind Hall, East Bank (612-625-1893) or on the web at [http://swc.umn.edu](http://swc.umn.edu)

V. Weekly Schedule and Assigned Readings

**Part I: Religion in the American Context**

1/16  **Course Introduction**

No Readings

1/18  **Considerations on Religion and Politics in America**

Wald, Chapter 1

1/23  **The American Context**

Wald, Chapter 2


1/25  **Pre-constitutional America**

Wald, Chapter 3

*Articles, Lawes, and Orders, Divine, Politic, and Martiall for the Colony of Virginia* (Wilson and Drakeman pp. 25-27)

*Preface to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut* (Wilson and Drakeman pp. 27-28)

*An Act Concerning Religion in the Maryland Colony* ((Wilson and Drakeman pp. 28-30).


*The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* (Wilson and Drakeman pp. 32-33).

1/31  **The Constitution of the United States**

*The Constitution of the United States*

Wald, Chapter 4

James Madison, *Madison’s Memorial and Remonstrance* (Wilson and Drakeman pp. 63-68)


2/1  **Religion and American Public Opinion**

Wald, Chapter 6

2/6  **Religion, Participation, and Mobilization**

Wald, Chapter 5

*Writing Assignment #1 due in class February 6*

2/8  **Quiz #1 (in class)**

2/13  **Writing Group A**

2/15  **Writing Group B**

2/20  **Writing Group C**
Part II: Selected Issues Facing Religious Traditions in the United States

2/22 Catholicism

Wald, pp.247-268

*Catholic and Patriot: Governor Smith Replies* (Wilson and Drakeman pp.183-185)


John F. Kennedy, *Remarks on Church and State* (Wilson and Drakeman pp.188-191)

2/27 African-American Protestantism

Wald, pp.276-284

*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954 (handout)

3/1 Judaism

Wald, pp.285-292

Richard L. Rubenstein, *Church and State* (Wilson and Drakeman pp.180-183)

*County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union*, 1989 (Wilson and Drakeman pp.293-298)

*Goldman v. Weinberger*, 1986 (Wilson and Drakeman pp.322-329)

3/6 Islam

Wald and Calhoun-Brown, pp.300-305 (Handout)


3/8 Other Faith Traditions

Wald and Calhoun-Brown, pp.305-312 (Handout)

*Cantwell v. Connecticut*, 1940 (Wilson and Drakeman pp.191-193)


**Spring Break: March 12-16**
3/20 Evangelical Protestantism
   Wald and Calhoun-Brown, Chapter 7

3/22 Evangelical Protestantism (continued)
   No Readings

   Writing Assignment #2 due in class March 22

3/27 Quiz #2
3/29 Writing Group A
4/2 Writing Group B
4/5 Writing Group C

Part III: Religion and American Public Policy

4/10 Faith-Based Governmental Services
   Dionne and DiIulio, Chapters 1, 2, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 22

   No Class Thursday, April 12
   (Midwest Political Science Association)

4/17 Gay Marriage and Civil Unions
   Wald and Calhoun-Brown, pp.329-347 (Handout)
   TBA (will be on course web page, no more than 30 pages)

4/19 Teaching Human Origins

4/24 Prayer in Schools


Writing Assignment #3 due in class April 24th

4/26 Vouchers

Lemon v. Kurtzman, 1971 (Wilson and Drakeman pp.351-357)

State of Wisconsin v. Yoder, 1972 (Wilson and Drakeman pp.305-314)


5/1 End-of-Life Policy (time permitting)

Readings TBA (available on course web page).

5/3 Quiz 3 (in class)