POLITICS AND WORLD RELIGION BLHV 261-01

Wednesdays, 6:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Course Description
Even a cursory glance at world affairs will show that religion and politics is at the heart of today’s ongoing struggle between nations and ideology. Religion may be a motivator and catalyst in rallying popular support for waging war, and in fact may play a significant role in nurturing communal strife among various faith groups in their struggle to achieve governmental control.

This course is designed to acquaint students with the analytical study of religion, politics and conflict on the world stage. By design, the course is interdisciplinary, covering areas in religion (theology/philosophy), sociology (ethno-religious & identity conflicts), ethics and politics. Students will have an opportunity to focus on one or more of these areas for their semester paper. This course will help students comprehend the global resurgence of religion in intra-state and international affairs, and will focus on specific areas in the world where religion is the primary issue.

Through classroom lecture and discussion, reading assignments, media and student presentations, we will address the role religion and politics play in various global conflicts, the determination of whether religion is the basis of a given conflict, and possible resolutions to these conflicts.

Instructor
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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM, 640 Massachusetts Ave, NW.

Course Goals
To provide an intellectual framework and analytical tools for students to discuss, reflect upon, understand, and propose solutions to a variety of religion and conflict issues throughout the world.

Evaluation
Students are expected to attend lectures, read assigned texts, submit term paper & essays, and participate in discussion, as well as display an ability to absorb, comprehend, and analyze the course material.

Course Requirements
- Reading Assignments
Submit three short analytical essays (3 pages each, max) on assigned readings. Topics will be distributed for take home one week in advance.

Submit one 15-20 page research paper, in APA or Turabian

Oral Presentation: a 10 minute review of your semester paper, beginning Aug. 1

**Study Groups**

Depending on class size, study groups (usually four) will be formed to prepare class presentations on world “hot spots.” These 20-minute group presentations will take place near the end of the semester.

**Grading Policy**

Final grade for the course will be based on the following:

1. Class Participation 10% (5 points for group project; 5 points for film/video)
2. Analytical Essays 30% (10 X 3)
3. Term Paper 40%
4. Oral Presentation 20%

**Grade Table**

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+
60 - 66 % = D
Below 60 % = F

**Learning Objectives**

The following objectives are built into the pedagogy of this course syllabus:

1. To provide awareness, knowledge & understanding of the global resurgence of religiously motivated conflict and violence
2. To help students understand the cultural, psychological, political & religious/theological foundations for religion and conflict on the world stage
3. To provide the building blocks for students to develop models of reconciliation and peace to religion and conflict issues on the world stage

**Disabilities Statement**

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determin-
Seeking reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

**Georgetown Honor System**

All students are expected to follow Georgetown’s honor code unconditionally. We assume you have read the honor code material located at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor), and in particular have read the following documents: *Honor Council Pamphlet*, “What is Plagiarism?”, “Sanctioning Guidelines”, and “Expedited Sanctioning Process.”

Submitting material in fulfillment of the requirements of this course means that you have abided by the Georgetown honor pledge:

> *In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

Work that appears to have been plagiarized or otherwise violated the Honor Code will be reported to Georgetown’s Honor Council. If the Council finds that the work violates the university’s standards of academic honesty, the work will receive a grade of zero for the assignment for the first offense; a second infraction will earn an F for the course. The Honor Council may impose sanctions of its own as well.

**Turnitin.com**

Students acknowledge that by taking this course all required papers can be submitted for a Textual Similarity Review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Extreme weather, Emergencies, and Instructional Continuity**

During inclement weather or other emergencies on a day when we are scheduled to meet face-to-face, check the university’s Web site or call (202) 687-7669 for information on whether the university is open. If the university is open, this class will meet. If the university is closed, this class will meet through distance means such as online videoconferencing; check your e-mail for a message from me on how we will proceed in that situation. Due dates for written assignments submitted through Blackboard will not be changed due to campus closings.

The university recently has acquired the capability to send text messages and recorded messages about emergencies to cell phones and other mobile devices. Sign up on MyAccess.

**Devices**

The use of electronic devices (mobile phones for calls/texting, games, pagers, etc) during class is strictly forbidden. Audio/video recording of classroom lectures and discussions is not permitted. Laptop computers may be used for note-taking, without internet surfing.
Readings Assignments
Required readings for each class are listed below, and should be completed before the class period. All others are highly recommended, and may be referred to in class. Shorter articles will be uploaded to Blackboard. Additional websites and recently declassified government documents will be made available in class.

Attendance and Late Arrival
Attendance is mandatory, and roll call will be taken at the beginning of each class. Being late by 10 minutes or more will constitute an absence. Students with two absences for any reason may receive a failing grade for the course. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to make up any assignments on time and obtain class handouts. Students are expected to behave in class in accordance with the Code of Campus Conduct.

Late Assignments
No credit will be given for any assignment that is submitted late without the prior approval of the instructor. Prior Approval means the student has communicated with the instructor before the assignment deadline. An assignment that is submitted late with the instructor’s approval will have its grade reduced by 10 percent for every day it is late.

Required Texts


Course Syllabus
Week 1, May 20

**Introduction to the Course**
**Foundations of Religious Conflict**


Week 2, May 27

**What Initiates Religious Conflict?**


Week 3, June 3

**Religious Conflict from Family Myth and Culture**
*First Analytical Essay questions distributed*


Week 4, June 10

**Organized Religion as a Locus of Blame**
*First Analytical Essay Due: 3 pages max*


Week 5, June 17
On the Road to Transformation


Week 6, June 24
**Models of Reconciliation in Abrahamic Religions**
*Second Analytical Essay questions distributed*

Tzvi Marx, “Theological Preparation for Reconciliation in Judaism,” Gort, 93-104.


Week 7, July 1
**Models of Reconciliation: Judaism**
*Second Analytical Essay due: 3 pages max*

Marc Gopin, Chapter Six, “Patterns of Abrahamic Reconciliation,” *Holy War & Holy Peace*, 103-143.


Week 8, July 8
**Models of Reconciliation: Islam**
Anton Wessels, “Can the Children of Abraham be Reconciled: Ishmael and Isaac in the Bible and the Qur’an,” Gort, 134-144.


Week 9, July 15
**Models of Reconciliation: Islam, continued**
*Third Analytical Essay questions distributed*
**Topics Due for Semester Research Paper**


Week 10, July 22

Patterns in Abrahamic Reconciliation
Third Analytical Essay due: 3 pages max


Week 11, July 29

Models of Reconciliation: the Balkans
Student Oral Presentations


Marc Gopin, Holy War, Holy Peace, 186-197.


Week 12, August 5

Practical Applications of Reconciliation Models
The Road to Peace
Student Oral Presentations
Last Class
Marc Gopin, Holy War, Holy Peace, 198-228.


Final Research Paper due NLT August 16, 2015

End of Course. This syllabus is subject to updating and/or correction.

READING LIST

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


**United Nations and U.S. Government Documents**

Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. [http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/religion.htm](http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/religion.htm)


Additional documents will be made available during the semester.