POLITICS AND WORLD RELIGION BLHV 261-01

Wednesdays, 5:15 PM – 8:15 PM, 640 Mass. Ave, NW

Course Description
Religious terrorism is on the rise. 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, 4:00 – 5:00 PM, 640 Mass. Ave, NW, or by appointment

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.
- Mid-Term Evaluation
- Submit one 15-20 page paper
- Oral Presentation: a 10-minute review of your semester paper

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 on Nov. 16.

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

1. Class Participation 10%
2. Analytical Essays 30% (10 X 3)
3. Research Paper 30%
4. Mid Term Evaluation 10%
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 determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

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.

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, 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.

Devices
All electronic devices will be turned off at the beginning of class.

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, First Class, May 22

**Introduction to the Course**

**Foundations of Religious Conflict**


Week 2, May 29, Memorial Day – NO CLASS

Week 3, June 5
What Initiates Religious Conflict?
Writing Exercise


Week 4, June 12
Religious Conflict from Family Myth and Culture
First Analytical Essay questions distributed


Week 5, June 19
Organized Religion as a Locus of Blame
First Analytical Essay Due: 3 pages max

Marc Gopin, HWHP, 58-91.


Week 6, June 26
**On the Road to Transformation**
Marc Gopin, *HWHP*, 92-100.


Week 7, July 3
**Models of Reconciliation in Abrahamic Religions**
*Second Analytical Essay questions distributed*


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

Week 8, June 10
**Models of Reconciliation: Judaism**
*Second Analytical Essay due: 3 pages max*

**Mid-Term Evaluation**


Week 9, July 17
**Models of Reconciliation: Islam**
*Topics Due for Semester Research Paper*
Anton Wessels, “Can the Children of Abraham be Reconciled: Ishmael and Isaac in the Bible and the Qur’an,” Gort, 134-144.

Week 10, July 24

Models of Reconciliation: Islam, continued

Third Analytical Essay questions distributed


Week 11, July 31

Patterns in Abrahamic Reconciliation

Third Analytical Essay due: 3 pages max

Gopin, “Patterns of Abrahamic Reconciliation,” HWHP, 103-143.


Week 12, Aug 7

Models of Reconciliation: the Balkans

Study Group Presentations


Week 13, Aug 14

Last Class
Peace and Reconciliation

**Final Oral Student Presentations**


**Final Research Paper Due: Aug 21, 2017 through Turnitin.com by 11:59 PM**

**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)
Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on freedom of religion or belief. 

UNCHR Annual Report on Religious Intolerance. 
http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/religion/annual.htm

UNCHR Press Releases on Religious Intolerance . 


http://www.echr.coe.int/Convention/webConvenENG.pdf

http://www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/

The Oslo Declaration on Freedom of Religion or Belief. 

Additional documents will be made available during the semester.

End of Syllabus. Syllabus may be updated.