RELIGION AND CONFLICT, LSHV 354-40

Mondays 6:30 – 9:00 PM

Course Description
Religious terrorism is on the rise. Even a cursory glance at world affairs will show that religion 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 is a graduate course designed to acquaint students with the analytical study of religion 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. We will address the role religion plays in these conflicts, and offer possible resolutions.

Through classroom lecture and discussion, reading assignments, media and student presentations, we will address the role religion plays in various 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: Mondays, 5:00 – 5:45 PM, ICC Atrium, 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.

Learning Objectives
The following objectives are built into the pedagogy of this course syllabus:
1. To provide an 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.

**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 20 page paper; DLS has additional requirements
- Individual 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 near the end of the semester.

**Grading Policy**

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

1. Class Participation/Discussion 10%
2. Analytical Essays 30% (10 X 3)
3. Research 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

**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.

**Use of Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices will be turned off at the beginning of class.

**Class Attendance and Late Arrival**

Attendance is mandatory, and roll call will be taken at the beginning of each class. 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.

**Readings Assignments**

Required readings for each class are listed below, and should be completed before the class period. Weekly readings are listed in order of priority. All others are highly recommended, and may be referred to in class. Shorter articles will be uploaded to Canvas. Additional websites and recently declassified government documents will be made available in class.

**Course Syllabus**

**Week 1, Aug 29 (Wednesday is a Monday)**

**Introduction to the Course**

**Foundations of Religious Conflict**


**Week 2, Sep 3, NO CLASS, Labor Day Holiday**

**Week 3, Sep 10 (Back to Monday)**

**What Initiates Religious Conflict?**


Robert D. Kaplan, Warrior Politics (New York: Random House, 2003), 3-64.


Week 4, Sep 17
Religious Conflict from Family Myth and Culture
First Analytical Essay Questions Distributed


Week 5, Sep 24
Organized Religion as a Locus of Blame
First Analytical Essay Due


**Week 6, Oct 1**

**On the Road to Transformation**


**Week 7, Oct 8**

**NO CLASS: Mid Semester Holiday**

**Week 8: Oct 15**

**Second Analytical Essay Distributed**

**Models of Reconciliation in Abrahamic Religions**


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


**Week 9: Oct 22**

**Models of Reconciliation: Judaism**

**Second Analytical Essay Questions Due**

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


**Week 10, Oct 29**

**Models of Reconciliation: Islam**

**Topic for Final Research Paper Must be Approved by Today**

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


**Week 11, Nov 5**

**Models of Reconciliation: Islam, continued**

*Third Analytical Essay Distributed*


**Week 12, Nov 12**

**Models of Reconciliation: the Balkans**

*Third Analytical Essay Questions Due*


**Week 13, Nov 19**

**The Road to Peace**


**Week 14, Nov 26**

**Interfaith Dialogue**


**Week 15, Dec 3**

**Liberation Theology**
Pope Francis


Week 16, Dec 10

**LAST CLASS**

**Final Class Oral Presentations**

*End of course*

**READING LIST**


Recommended


**United Nations and U.S. Government Documents; Additional Websites**

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)


Universal Declaration of Human Rights. [http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr](http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr)


Additional documents will be made available during the semester.