

**Class meets Wednesdays, 3:30-6:00 PM  
ICC 209B**

### **Overview**

This course explores the complexity of religious belief and practice and its impact on the political context in contemporary South Asia. While the methodology is interdisciplinary, the main focus of the class is the analysis of religion and politics through the lens of Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. In the first half of the course, students will learn religious methodology. The course will begin with an analysis of religious frameworks and ideologies are embedded in all arenas of cultural, political, and social life in South Asia. In this seminar we will explore how and why religious factors matter and policy dimensions that flow as a result. This will be set in a broad framework that looks to ethical dimensions of global challenges and issues.

In the second half of this course, students will analyze case studies and contemporary issues that complicate how religious beliefs influence politics. What are the religious dimensions of communal violence, marginalization, and political protest? Are the laws in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh reflective of particular theological values and norms? How do these laws incorporate and protect minority communities in these countries, if at all? Case studies will include an analysis of religious/communal violence, women's rights, third-gender/LGBTQ rights, and religious minorities.

The course is especially relevant for students who wish to better understand how religious beliefs function in contemporary politics and world affairs. A central focus of the course will be individual research which will culminate in a substantive paper. For the final paper, students can focus on any country/region/religion to analyze and discuss.

### **Seminar goals and description**

The course will establish core principles to guide the analysis of religious dimensions of many topics. This must start with definitions, a brief historical overview, and an appreciation for religious belief and practice in South Asia. We will also analyze religious methodology including different approaches to various religious topics. We will focus on different ways that religious belief and practice impacts social and legal issues. We will explore several case studies explore the relationships between religious ideology among religious, ethical, and political challenges and issues.

By the end of the semester, you will have

- Deepened your knowledge of the role of religion and ethics in many facets of global affairs.
- Improved your ability to make persuasive arguments in writing.
- Enhanced your capacity to address social and legal dimensions of issues that involve religion.
- Sharpened your oral communication skills.
- Enhanced your ability to research a topic thoroughly.

## Requirements

1. **Active class participation** is crucial. Come to class prepared to discuss the class readings with your colleagues.
2. Students will prepare for each class a **1-page overview of ONE selected reading assignment for each week**, to be **posted on Canvas before the beginning of class**. These overviews (1 page, single spaced **maximum**) should state the central thesis or theses and issues raised. We will discuss our evaluations and critiques orally in class.
3. A **20-25 page final research paper** (double-spaced). This paper should address one of the topics treated in the course, either a more theoretical/conceptual “framework” issue or one of the practical matters. It should build on material treated in the course and the assigned readings and show that the student has a solid grasp of the issues. The instructors and student will discuss the focus and resources for this paper during the instructor’s office hours or at another time that will be arranged.
  - a. Students should **meet on or before February 15 (earlier is better)** to discuss the paper topic. It is the student's responsibility to make an appointment for this meeting well in advance.
  - b. **Send a one page proposal** of the topic of the paper to the instructor at least **48 hours before this appointment**. The proposal should include: the proposed title of the paper, the problem or question addressed, the thesis the paper will likely argue, and a preliminary bibliography of **only those writings the student intends actually to consult**.
  - c. **Presentation of draft**. Student will present a draft of the paper during the final sessions of the course. The instructor will assign the dates for these presentations. The draft will be **distributed electronically to the instructor the Monday prior to the presentation**.

Note: A draft is not just the first few pages of a full paper. It should include:

- The **title** of the paper.
  - A statement of **the problem** addressed in the paper. This statement of the problem should indicate the **question** to which the paper will provide an **answer**.
  - The **basic argument** of the paper.
  - The tentative **conclusion**.
- e. The oral presentation of the draft will last no more than **ten minutes**. The presenter should presume that other seminar participants have read the draft in advance. The professor will select a person from the seminar to respond briefly to this presentation, and to suggest ways it might be improved.
  - f. **Submission of completed final paper**. The final version of the paper is due via email **May 15 at 5 PM**. Use Chicago Manual of Style for Humanities or some other

standard system of style. Being late on the deadlines for the draft, presentation, or final paper will affect your grade.

**There will be no mid-term or final examination.**

**Readings.** The core reading is about 30-50 pages per week and will be available on Canvas. Students are expected to read and come to class prepared to discuss each of the required readings.

**Grading:**

Class participation and reading reviews: 30% of grade.

Final research paper (draft, presentation, and finished paper combined): 70% of grade.

**Cell Phones:** Using cell phones in class is not permitted. Laptops are to be used to consult the electronic readings assigned for class or to research relevant immediate topics.

**Honor Pledge.** Students are bound by the Georgetown Honor Pledge and Standards of Conduct. These are available at: <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/policies>

**Instructional continuity:** If classes are cancelled (for example because of weather) we will hold class by Zoom.

**Course plan and Overall Schedule (summary guide)**

The seminar is structured in four parts. Several sessions will include work on specific case studies and scenarios.

**Part I: Framing, defining, and linking religion (s), religious practice and ritual to related issues (human rights, conflict and violence, and religious freedom)**

1. **January 16:** Introduction. What is “religion” and how do we understand the term? Definitions, demography, and brief overview of religious traditions in South Asia focusing on Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity
2. **January 23:** Focusing on the religious core beliefs and practices.
3. **January 30:** Exploring various ethical “scaffolds” and their links to religious teachings and practice.
4. **February 6:** Religion, violence, conflict in South Asia.

**Part II: Religion and Politics in India**

1. **February 13:** History of India—colonialism and its legacy on the Indian state.
2. **February 20:** Caste—where does it come from and how does it function?
3. **February 27:** Affirmative action, legal protections, and religious minorities.
4. **March 13:** Missionaries, proselytizing, and Indian nationalism.

**Part III. Religion and Politics in Pakistan**

1. **March 20:** Partition—the history of Pakistan and its struggle with Islam.
2. **March 27:** Blasphemy Law and religious minorities.
3. **April 3:** Muslim minorities in an Islamic state.

**Part IV: Religion and Politics in Bangladesh**

1. **April 10:** History of Bangladesh and its independence.
2. **April 17:** Religion and conflict, religious institutions, and gender equality.

**Part V: Student Presentations**

1. **April 24:** Student paper presentations
2. **April 30:** Student paper presentations

Final paper due: **May 15, 2019**

**Detailed class schedule and reading assignments**

Note: Please check on Canvas each week as specific reading assignments are likely to change in keeping with student interest and events

**Class 1:** Introduction. What is “religion” and how do we understand the term? Definitions, demography, and brief overview religious traditions in South Asia.

- Introduction: What is Religion Really About?
- What Are We Doing When We Study Religion? Reading: Herling, *Beginner’s Guide to the Study of Religion*, Chapter 1, 1-21 Herling, Chapter 2, 23-45
- \*\*Supplemental articles on Canvas

**Class 2:** Religious core beliefs and practice in South Asia

- Flood, Gavin D. *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge University Press, 1996. (selected chapters)
- Smith, Huston, *A Concise Introduction to Islam*, Harper Collins, 2001. (selected chapter)
- Esposito, John. *Islam the Straight Path*, Oxford University Press, 1998. (selected chapters)

**Class 3:** Exploring various ethical issues and their links to religious teachings and practice

- “Women,” in Wael B. Hallaq, *Introduction to Islamic Law*, pp. 64-71.

- “What Do Women Want?” Ch. 4 in John L. Esposito & Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, pp. 99-133.
- Ahamad, Tauffiqu and Mishra Kumar Ali, “Legal Status and Rights of Women in Indian Constitution” in *International Journal of Advanced Education and Research*, Volume 1; Issue 1; January 2016; Page No. 39-42.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290691292\\_Legal\\_status\\_and\\_rights\\_of\\_women\\_in\\_Indian\\_constitution](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290691292_Legal_status_and_rights_of_women_in_Indian_constitution)
- Madhana B. “Third Gender Rights: Emerging Trends & Issues” in *The World Journal on Juristic Policy*, March 2017. <http://jurip.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Madhana-B.pdf>
- Gayathri, N and P. Karthikeyan, “Inclusion and Exclusion of Third Genders –Social Hinderance in India”, in *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities* Vol. 6, No. 3, March 2016, pp. 20-30.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297612096\\_Inclusion\\_and\\_Exclusion\\_of\\_Third\\_Genders\\_-\\_Social\\_Hinderance\\_in\\_India](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297612096_Inclusion_and_Exclusion_of_Third_Genders_-_Social_Hinderance_in_India)
- \*\*Supplemental articles on Canvas

**Class 4:** Religion, violence, conflict in South Asia

- Bhalotra, Sonia, “Politician Identity and Religious Conflict in India,” <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b6e6/5fa4db8dae308f366716ed54c5619f7cd65f.pdf>
- Religious Violence and Intolerance in India, WCC. [http://www.gossner-mission.de/media/pdf/Statement\\_WCC.pdf](http://www.gossner-mission.de/media/pdf/Statement_WCC.pdf)
- Violence and Discrimination in India Against Religious Minorities. [https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MRG\\_Rep\\_India\\_Jun17-2.pdf](https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/MRG_Rep_India_Jun17-2.pdf)
- Nellis, Gareth, Secular Party Rule and Religious Violence in Pakistan, September 2017. [http://www.garethnellis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Nellis\\_Siddiqui\\_Secular\\_Parties.pdf](http://www.garethnellis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Nellis_Siddiqui_Secular_Parties.pdf)
- “Religion, Politics, and Society in Pakistan.” [http://www.garethnellis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Nellis\\_Siddiqui\\_Secular\\_Parties.pdf](http://www.garethnellis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Nellis_Siddiqui_Secular_Parties.pdf)
- “Ethnic Cleansing in Bangladesh” [http://www.garethnellis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Nellis\\_Siddiqui\\_Secular\\_Parties.pdf](http://www.garethnellis.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Nellis_Siddiqui_Secular_Parties.pdf)
- “Challenges for Religious Minorities in Bangladesh” [https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/MRG\\_Rep\\_Ban\\_Oct16\\_ONLINE.pdf](https://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/MRG_Rep_Ban_Oct16_ONLINE.pdf)

**Class 5:** History of India—colonialism and its legacy on the Indian state

- Dirks, Nicholas B. *The Scandal of Empire: India and the Creation of Imperial Britain*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006. (selected chapter)
- Dirks, Nicholas B. *Colonialism and Culture*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992. (selected chapter)
- Panter-Brick, Simone. *Gandhi and Nationalism: The Path to Indian Independence*, I.B. Tauris, 2015. (selections)
- Sen, S. N. *History of the Freedom Movement in India (1857-1947)*, New Age International, 2003. (selections)
- \*\*Supplemental articles on Canvas

**Class 6:** Caste—where does it come from and how does it function?

- Dumont, Louis. *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste Systems and Its Implications*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966. (selected chapter)
- *The Laws of Manu*. Translated by Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty. London: Penguin Books, 1991. (selections)
- Deliege, Robert. *The Untouchables of India*. Oxford: Berg Press, 1999 (selected chapter)
- Dirks, Nicholas B. *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. (selections)
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Religion, Caste, and Politics in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. (selections)

**Class 7:** Affirmative action, legal protections, and religious minorities

- Ambedkar, B. R., and Valerian Rodrigues. *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002. (selections)
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Dr Ambedkar and Untouchability: Fighting The Indian Caste System*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002. (selections)
- Clarke, Sathianathan. “Dalits Overcoming Violation and Violence.” *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 54, no. 3 July (2002): 278-95.

**Class 8:** Missionaries, proselytizing, and Indian nationalism

- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Hindu Nationalism a Reader*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. (selections)
- Massey, James. *Downtrodden: The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity and Liberation*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997. (selections)
- Clarke, Sathianathan. *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998. (selections)
- \*\*Supplemental articles on Canvas

**Class 9:** Partition—the History of Pakistan and its struggle with Islam

- Khan, Yasmin. *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007. (selections)
- Ahmed, Akbar S. *Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin*. London: Routledge, 1997. (selected chapter)
- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation?* New Delhi: Manohar, 2002. (selected chapter)
- Jalal, Ayesha. *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League, and the Demand for Pakistan*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985. (selections)

**Class 10:** Blasphemy Law and religious minorities in Pakistan

- Jaffrelot, Christophe. *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins*. London: Anthem Press, 2002. (selected chapter)
- Gabriel, Theodore P. C. *Christian Citizens in an Islamic State the Pakistan Experience*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers., 2007. (selected chapter)
- Sookhdeo, Patrick. *A People Betrayed: The Impact of Islamization on the Christian Community in Pakistan*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2002. (selections)
- Addleton, Jonathan. "A Demographic Note On the Distribution of Minorities in Pakistan." *Al Mushir* Vol. XXVII No. I (Spring 1985).
- Lall, Philip S. "Pakistani Christians: Population, Employment and Occupation." *Focus* (Multan) 13:3 (1993): 140-164.

**Class 11: Muslim minorities in an Islamic state**

- Esposito, John L. *Islam and Politics*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984. (selected chapter)
- Usman Qasmi, Ali. *The Ahmadis and the Politics of Religious Exclusion in Pakistan*, Anthem Press, 2015. (selections)
- Gualtieri, Antonio R. *The Ahmadis: Community, Gender, and Politics in a Muslim Society*, McGill University Press, 2004. (selections)

**Class 12: History of Bangladesh and the Independence Movement**

- Schendel, van Willem. *A History of Bangladesh*, Cambridge University Press, 2009. (selections)
- Meghna, Guhathakurta. *The Bangladesh Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, Duke University Press, 2013. (selections)
- \*\*Supplemental articles on Canvas

**Class 13: Religion and conflict, religious institutions, and gender equality in Bangladesh**

- Saika, Yasmin. *Women, War, and the Making of Bangladesh: Remembering 1971*, Duke University Press, 2011. (selections)
- \*\*Supplemental articles on Canvas

**Class 14: Student paper presentations**

- Arranged with the instructor

**Class 15: Student paper presentations**

- Arranged with the instructor

## **Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability who requires accommodations or if you think you may have a disability and want to inquire about accommodations, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 202-687-8354 or arc@georgetown.edu.

## **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.

## **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 <http://scs.georgetown.edu/academic-affairs/honor-code>, and in particular have read the following documents: Honor Council Pamphlet, What is Plagiarism, Sanctioning Guidelines, and Expedited Sanctioning Process. Papers in this course will all be submitted to turnitin.com for checking.

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.*

## **Plagiarism**

In accord with university policy, all incidents of suspected plagiarism or other Honor Code violations will be reported to the Honor Council without fail.

If the Honor Council finds that a student has plagiarized or has violated the Honor Code in any other way, the student may receive a grade of F for the course.



**Policy Accommodating Students' Religious Observances**

The following is university policy:

Georgetown University promotes respect for all religions. Any student who is unable to attend classes or to participate in any examination, presentation, or assignment on a given day because of the observance of a major religious holiday or related travel shall be excused and provided with the opportunity to make up, without unreasonable burden, any work that has been missed for this reason and shall not in any other way be penalized for the absence or rescheduled work. Students will remain responsible for all assigned work. Students should notify professors in writing at the beginning of the semester of religious observances that conflict with their classes.

**Title IX at Georgetown**

<https://titleix.georgetown.edu/>

***Sexual Misconduct***

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ("Title IX") prohibits discrimination based on sex in any educational programs, which includes sexual harassment or any acts of sexual misconduct. Title IX requires the University, upon becoming aware of any incident of sexual harassment and misconduct to respond appropriately to protect and maintain the safety of the University community, including students, faculty, and staff.

Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, and stalking.

Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

Please know that as a faculty member I am committed to supporting survivors of sexual misconduct, including relationship violence and sexual assault. However, University policy also requires me to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct.

Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

**Jen Schweer, MA, LPC**

Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual  
Assault Response and Prevention  
(202) 687-0323  
[jls242@georgetown.edu](mailto:jls242@georgetown.edu)

**Erica Shirley**

Trauma Specialist  
Counseling and Psychiatric Services  
(CAPS)  
(202) 687-6985  
[els54@georgetown.edu](mailto:els54@georgetown.edu)

More information about campus resources and reporting sexual misconduct can be found at:  
<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/get-help>.

***Pregnancy Adjustments and Accommodations***

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical need and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out at: <https://titleix.georgetown.edu/student-pregnancy>.