

**Religion and American Politics**  
**POLS 3090**  
**Fall 2019**

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**Office Hours**

Wednesday 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM and 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
Thursday 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM  
by appointment and drop-in

**Class Time**

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 PM to 3:15 PM  
C-102 Brewster  
CRN 86230

**Course Description**

This course is concerned with two of the three things (see week 12 for the third) that we are taught never to discuss in polite company: religion and politics. We will examine the role of various religious traditions with each other and the interactions with government. We will look at both historical questions and the contemporary questions. What did the framers want? Did they get what they wanted? What were their beliefs? Did their beliefs influence the decisions they made? How do the various religious groups influence the political world today? How do religious attitudes influence political attitudes and behaviors today? Are these influences conditioned by group affiliation?

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Sketch the history of religious-political interaction in the United States.
- Describe the general contours of American religious diversity.
- Explain the roles religious affiliation and religiosity play in mass level American politics.
- Describe and explain how religion affects American jurisprudence.
- Explain when and why various religious groups have/have not had political influence.
- Offer a detailed empirical assessment of how religion and American politics intersect.
- Render informed normative judgments about whether and how religion and American politics ought to intersect.

**Readings**

Fowler, Robert Booth, Alan D. Hertzke, Laura R. Olson, and Kevin R. Den Dulk. 2019. *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*, 6th edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Style Manual for Political Science. 2006. Washington D.C.: American Political Science Association. <http://www.apsanet.org/files/Publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf> (accessed August 3, 2019).

## Emailed Readings

- Campolo, Tony. 2004. *Speaking My Mind: The Radical Evangelical Prophet Tackles the Tough Issues Christians Are Afraid to Face*. Nashville: W Publishing Group.
- Carter, Stephen L. 1994. *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Cone, James H. 1999. *Speaking the Truth: Ecumenism, Liberation, and Black Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Guth, James L., John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt, Lyman A. Kellstedt, and Margaret Poloma. 1997. *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.
- Kohut, Andrew, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, and Robert C. Toth. 2000. *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Kramnick, Isaac and R. Laurence Moore. 2005. *The Godless Constitution: a Moral Defense of the Secular State*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Meacham, Jon. 2006. *The American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*. New York: Random House.
- Richey, Warren. 2016. How the push for gay rights is reshaping religious liberty in America, parts 1-7 *Christian Science Monitor*, July 11-17.

## Video

"God in America" 2010. Six-part series. Available at <http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/view>

## Grading

Exam I	20%	September 26, 2019
Exam II	20%	November 5, 2019
Exam III	25%	December 10, 2019 (2:00 – 4:30 PM)
Research paper	25%	November 21, 2019
Quizzes	10%	

## Components of paper

<b>Topic</b> , hypothesis and sources for paper with each of the sources provide a few sentences summarizing the information in the source.	September 19, 2019	20%
<b>Introduction to paper</b> , brief summary of the research question, the literature on your topic, the logic of your hypothesis, a description of the data that are relevant, and how you will operationalize the variables.	October 10, 2019	20%
<b>Revised introduction to paper and analysis</b> , examination of the relationship between your dependent and independent variables.	October 31, 2019	40%
<b>Completed paper with conclusion</b>	November 21, 2019	20%

## Grading System

93 – 100	A	73-77	C
90 – 92	A-	70-72	C-
88 – 89	B+	68-69	D+
83 – 87	B	63-67	D
80 – 82	B-	60-62	D-
78 – 79	C+	0-59	F

## Examinations

There will be three examinations over the course of the term. These are designed to test your comprehension of material covered in readings and lectures. These examinations will be closed-note and closed-book. Makeup exams will not be given except under the most extreme of circumstances. In order to have any chance of being given a makeup examination, you must provide me with written documentation of a severe emergency that precluded you from taking the examination at the scheduled time.

## Quizzes

Quizzes will cover material from the reading assignments and may be administered **at the beginning** of the topic with which they are associated. That is, the quiz may come *before* any classroom discussion of the topic. Students who have read the material should do well on the quizzes. **No makeups will be given for quizzes.** The best three-fourths of your quiz scores will be used to calculate the grade for that portion of the course.

## Final Research Project

I want you to develop a hypothesis concerning religion and politics and evaluate this hypothesis with the available evidence. Do **NOT** simply look for evidence that supports your hypothesis. Look for evidence regardless of whether it supports your hypothesis. You will note, however, that there are several due dates associated with the paper. At each of these stages, you will receive a grade and comments on what you have turned into me. You are encouraged to turn in items early. I will endeavor to get them back to you with comments before you have to turn them in for a grade. Late assignments are penalized a full letter grade a day (weekends do not count).

There is neither a minimum or a maximum length for your paper. Most papers are between 10 and 15 pages, not counting references, tables, and figures. Shorter papers typically receive poor grades because they have not been adequately researched or developed.

You are preparing a *research paper*, not an essay, not a summary of a book, books or articles. As the name states, you are expected to do research. Research on a topic related to this class will require you to analyze data such as public opinion polls, election returns or roll call votes. Although I am requiring the development and testing of a hypothesis, **do not attempt a survey.** Doing a survey well requires much more than can be done this semester.

All paper topics must be approved. The paper proposal must contain enough information for me to be able to determine what you are going to write about and how you propose to go about it. You need to include a hypothesis statement. You must tell me where you are going to obtain the data necessary to test your hypothesis. You will need to list the specific books and scholarly articles that you will employ.

I will offer feedback and a grade on this first component of your paper. At each stage, you are to turn in the **previous** component of your paper. Failure to do so will result in a one-letter grade reduction. I will return the new material at each stage. If at any stage you either get a poor grade or I write meet with me, meet with me. Regardless, you are required to meet with me about your paper at least once before the hypothesis is turned in.

All stages of the paper must be submitted as hard copies. E-mail attachments will not be opened or graded.

### **Preparing the paper**

The purpose of this paper is to communicate information - the results of your research. I have some suggestions and admonitions below.

Have a clear title that conveys what the reader is getting into.

In the introduction, the author should lay out the topics that will be addressed in the paper.

The conclusion should recapitulate the major points made in the body of the paper. You may also point out suggested extensions of your research.

The author should be careful to lead the reader along. Using headings and subheadings is one way to communicate to the reader that the author is moving on to a new topic. If you do not use headings, you must be clear with your transitions as new topics are introduced.

There is generally no place in a research paper for an encyclopedia, except perhaps for strictly factual information. Even here, there are better sources. Scholars should be extremely careful with open internet sources, such as Wikipedia. As anyone can edit these, one might find erroneous information. In one case, the campaign manager for one candidate posted negative information about an opponent in his online biography. Also, I have seen students and others fall for obvious hoaxes, such as the relative intelligence of candidates for office.

### **Pet Peeves and Pedantic Points**

The names of the parties are capitalized - Democratic and Republican. Nouns such as Democratic or Republican party, legislature, legislator, and committee are singular. Consequently, they should be accompanied by singular verbs and pronouns. If you are avoiding a gender specific pronoun by using the plural, then use the plural for the noun.

“Data” is plural. The singular of data is “datum.”

Make certain to be aware of the difference between percent and percentage. If Barack Obama won 40% of the vote and Hillary Clinton won 50% of the vote, Clinton’s increase is 10 percentage points or a 25% increase over Obama’s performance.

### **Academic Integrity**

Although students are encouraged to study collaboratively and consult with one another frequently, cheating on tests, assignments, or the research paper will not be tolerated. I will diligently enforce the **University Academic Integrity Policy**.

## Students with Disabilities

East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138. Phone number: 252-737-1016.

## Class Decorum

I expect all students to exhibit a high level of courtesy toward each other. Please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Do not get up in the middle of class to go to the trash can. Do not leave in the middle of class to go the bathroom. While I endorse the reading of newspapers and listening to music, please refrain from doing either in class. If you feel the need to make use of a computer (tablet, laptop, etc.), please come by my office and tell me why. Also, note that those who feel the need to do so will be sitting in the front of the class. Please be respectful while other students are asking or answering questions. Treat those individuals as you would wish to be treated. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations analysis of the class by the instructor may be necessary.

## Course Schedule

Week 1 The Historical Legacy	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Chapter 1</li><li>● Meacham, "Introduction"</li></ul>
Week 2 Theories of Religion and Politics	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Chapter 2</li></ul>
Week 3 Religion in America - Christianity	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Chapter 3</li><li>● Kramnick and Moore, "Is America a Christian Nation"</li><li>● Carter, "The 'Christian Nation' and Other Horrors"</li></ul>
Week 4 Religion in America - Judaism, Islam, and Other Expressions of Religious Pluralism	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Chapter 4</li></ul>
Week 5 Latino and African American Politics	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Chapter 5</li><li>● Cone, "Christian Theology and Scripture as the Expression of God's Liberating Activity for the Poor"</li></ul>
Week 6 Sex and Politics	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Chapter 6</li></ul>

Weeks 7 and 8 Public Opinion and Political Behavior	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chapter 7</li> <li>● Kohut et al., "Religion and Political Attitudes"</li> </ul>
Week 9 The Politics of Organized Interest Groups	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chapter 8</li> <li>● Organizational websites</li> </ul>
Week 10 Political and Cultural Elites	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chapter 9</li> </ul>
Weeks 11 and 12 Civil Society and Political Culture	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chapter 10</li> </ul>
Week 13 Religion and the State	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chapters 11 and 12</li> </ul>
Week 14 Political Action and Policy	Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Guth et al., "Politics of Protestant Clergy"</li> <li>● Guth et al., "The Real Two-Party System"</li> <li>● Carter, "Matters of Life and Death"</li> <li>● Campolo, "Can We Help the Poor Without Making Matters Worse?"</li> <li>● Richey, "How the push for gay rights is reshaping religious liberty in America."</li> </ul>
Week 15 Conclusion and Recap	Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chapter 12</li> </ul>