

**GOVT E-1071: The Politics of Religion in Liberal Democracies:  
American Exceptionalism, European Secularism?  
Spring 2018**



**Instructor:** Dr. George Soroka  
**Course:** Mon., 7:40-9:40 pm (CGIS K-108)  
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In contrast to the expectations of the secularization thesis' proponents, the evidence for a decline in religion's contemporary political salience is extremely equivocal. Indeed, multiple indicators suggest religious belief and belonging are currently experiencing a marked political resurgence; even among the most developed countries of the world partisan fault lines often appear drawn along religious dimensions. Why might this be the case today, when by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a great many social scientists were predicting that the influence of faith over the public square would eventually fade into obscurity and irrelevance as modernity advanced?

This course begins by examining the broad theoretical contours of the role religion plays in shaping political processes, then applies these insights to an analysis of how religion has influenced political realities in the United States (frequently considered "exceptional" in its religiosity) and Europe (widely understood to be a "secularized" continent). It concludes by considering what the implications are for democratic governance when religion stakes an overtly political claim.

GOV 94go is designed with three goals in mind: a) to provide students with the tools necessary to think critically about religion's role in politics and the tensions that accompany it in pluralistic societies; b) to introduce students to the relevant literatures and discourses in the field; and c) to survey political trends involving a substantive religious component across the United States and the European Union.

**Course Requirements:**

1. **Class Participation (35%):** As this is a discussion-based course, students are expected to attend all class meetings (obviously, emergencies do occur; if you find yourself in this situation, contact me as soon as you are able), keep up with weekly readings, and *actively* participate in discussion.

2. Written Assignments (50%): Undergraduate students will have the option of writing either a) two mid-length papers (10-12 pages each, double-spaced) addressing pre-assigned prompts or b) a longer research paper (25-30 pages, double-spaced) on a topic selected in consultation with me. Graduate students will be required to submit a research paper (also 25-30 pages, double-spaced). *Students must inform me of their choice in writing (email is fine) by the third week of class. Be aware that these decisions are binding.*

Two paper option: 1<sup>st</sup> paper due March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> due May 11<sup>th</sup>  
Research paper: due May 11<sup>th</sup>

3. Internet Postings (15%): Beginning the second week of class all students will be required to make short (approx. 1-2 paragraph) weekly postings to the GOVT E-1071 discussion blog. These may take the form of reflections concerning the assigned readings, analyses of news items which relate to the role of religion in contemporary U.S. or EU politics, or thoughtful responses to material posted by others. *Postings are to be made no later than midnight Sunday before each scheduled class meeting.*

### **Laptops/Mobile Phones:**

Unless you have a documented learning accommodation, the use of laptops is not permitted. Cellphones and other electronic devices must be turned off for the duration of the class.

### **Academic Integrity/Collaboration Statement:**

Students are encouraged to discuss politics and religion outside of class time, but are reminded that all assignments must be completed independently (this includes the readings). Students are also cautioned that no form of collaborative writing is permitted.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

Students needing accommodations because of a documented disability must present a letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) to me by the second week of the Fall term. The matter will be kept strictly confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.

### **Late Paper Policy:**

Students must turn in assignments on time in order to receive full credit. In exceptional circumstances extensions may be granted at my discretion, *but these must be approved beforehand*. Unexcused late papers will be marked down two-thirds of a letter grade (e.g., A to B+) for each full day they are late.

### **Course materials:**

The following books are required (make sure you get the correct edition):

Peter Berger, Grace Davie & Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Ashgate, 2008) ISBN: 0754660117

Morris Fiorina *et al.*, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (Longman, 2010 [3rd ed.]) ISBN: 0205779883

Kenneth Wald & Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014 [7th ed.]) ISBN: 1442225548

Robert B. Fowler *et al.*, *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices* (Westview, 2013 [5th ed.]) ISBN: 081334851X

Timothy Byrnes & Peter Kazenstein, *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge UP, 2006)  
ISBN: 0521676517

Jocelyne Cesari, *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies*  
(Palgrave 2013 ed.) ISBN: 1403969531

In addition, during certain weeks you will be provided with “case study” portfolios consisting of recent news articles and similar materials. These supplemental readings allow us to apply the theories we have studied to real-life events and afford us the flexibility to evaluate interesting happenings (e.g., the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign) as they unfold.

Finally, we will also be making use of two databases:

Pew U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (<http://religions.pewforum.org/>)  
*The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life also maintains an informative Website* (<http://pewforum.org/>)

The World Values Survey (WVS) (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>)  
*Online data analysis is free and does not require registration*

### **Discussion Topics and Readings:**

***Meeting 1: Intro (Jan. 22—NOTE: this session will be pre-recorded and available online; we will meet together for the first time the following week)***

Steven Kettell, “Has Political Science Ignored Religion?” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 45.1  
(January 2012): 93-100.

Daniel Philpott, “Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?” *Annual Review of Political Science*  
12 (June 2009): 183-202.

Timothy Shah & Monica Toft, “Why God is Winning,” *Foreign Policy* 155 (2006):39–43.

***Meeting 2: The Secularization Thesis Revisited, Part I (Jan. 29)***

Rodney Stark, “Secularization, R.I.P. (Rest in Peace),” *Sociology of Religion* 60.3 (Fall 1999): 249-73.

Peter Berger, “The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview,” in Berger *et al.* (eds.), *The Desecularization of the World* (Eerdman's, 1999), pp. 1-18.

José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago UP, 1994), pp. 3-6, 11-39, 211- 34.

S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129.1 (Winter 2000): 1-29.

Michael O. Emerson & David Hartman, “The Rise of Religious Fundamentalism,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 32 (2006): 127-144.

***Meeting 3: Secularization Reconsidered, Part II (Feb. 5)***

Pippa Norris & Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge UP, 2011 ed.), pp. 83-110, 215-41.

Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Belknap Press/Harvard UP, 2007), pp. 423-535.

Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford UP, 2011), ch. 1-3.

***Meeting 4: The American Case (Feb. 12)***

Pew U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (<http://religions.pewforum.org/>)

*(Review the findings, paying close attention to the dimensions of inter-group variation)*

World Values Survey (WVS) (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>)

(At a minimum, look at religious attitudes in the U.S. and compare them to five European countries in the latest WVS round)

Kenneth Wald & Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), ch. 1-4.

Robert D. Putnam & David Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012 ed.), ch. 3-4.

Christopher Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (Oxford UP, 2006), pp. 157-225.

Susan Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (Metropolitan, 2004), ch. 1-2.

**NOTE: We will not meet on February 19<sup>th</sup> in observance of Presidents' Day (University holiday)**

**Meeting 5: How "Exceptional" is America? (Feb. 26)**

Case Study Portfolio #1 (distributed no later than the prior class)

Robert B. Fowler *et al.* *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices* (Westview, 2013), ch. 2-3, 12.

Kenneth Wald & Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), ch. 5-7.

Samuel Huntington *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (Simon & Schuster, 2005), pp. 81-106.

Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 134.4 (Fall 2005): 40-55.

VIEW:

Here's What's Making America Less Religious

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mbqo8r3mpdQ>.

**Meeting 6: The Rise of the Religious Right in U.S. Politics (Mar. 5)**

Case Study Portfolio #2 (distributed no later than the prior class)

Kenneth Wald & Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), ch. 8-9.

Robert B. Fowler *et al.*, *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices* (Westview, 2013), ch. 4-5.

Clyde Wilcox & Carin Robinson, *Onward Christian Soldiers?: The Religious Right in American Politics* (Westview, 2010), ch. 2.

Stephen Mockabee, *et al.* "In Search of a Religious Left" in John H. Aldrich & Kathleen M. McGraw (eds.), *Improving Public Opinion Surveys: Interdisciplinary Innovation and the American National Election Studies* (Princeton UP, 2011), ch. 16.

VIEW:

Senator Ted Cruz: We Stand With God Rally in South Carolina

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eo2BeSUpulc>.

Susan Jacoby on Secularism and Free Thinking

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZZfYIFr2nY>.

**NOTE: No class March 12<sup>th</sup> (Spring Break)**

**Meeting 7: The United States and the “Culture Wars” (Mar. 19)**

Case Study Portfolio #3 (distributed no later than the prior class)

Morris Fiorina *et al.*, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (Longman, 2010 [3rd ed.]).

Laura Olsen & John Green, “The Religion Gap,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39.3 (2006): 455-459.

Michael Hout & Claude S. Fischer, “Explaining Why More Americans Have No Religious Preference: Political Backlash and Generational Succession, 1987-2012,” *Sociological Science* 1 (Oct. 2014): 423-447.

VIEW:

Patrick Buchanan's Speech to 1992 GOP Convention:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO5\\_1ps5CAc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iO5_1ps5CAc) (Part I)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pICypNXHKbg&feature=related> (Part II)

**Meeting 8: Europe as a Historical and Religious Concept (Mar. 26)**

Kaspar von Greyerz, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1800*, trans. Thomas Dunlop, (New York: Oxford UP, 2008), ch. 1 (read for background context—do not get lost in details).

J. Bryan Hehir, “The Old Church and the New Europe: Charting the Changes,” in Byrnes & Katzenstein (eds.) *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge UP, 2006), pp. 93-116.

George Soroka, “Religion and the Making of Post-War Europe: Assessing Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on European Integration [Review Essay],” *Politics & Religion* 10.4 (Dec. 2017): 906-916. (*Read intro and conclusion for an overview—you can skip the evaluation of each book’s contents if you want.*)

**Meeting 9: Is European Secularism Overstated?(Apr. 2)**

Case Study Portfolio #4 (distributed no later than the prior class)

World Values Survey (WVS) (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>)

(*Compare religious attitudes among at least five European countries of your own choosing, utilizing both the aggregated four-wave dataset and the latest stand-alone dataset*)

Jytte Klausen, “Why Religion has Become More Salient in Europe: Four Working Hypotheses about Secularization and Religiosity in Contemporary Politics,” *European Political Science* 8.3 (Sept. 2009): 289-300.

Egbert Ribberink, Peter Achterberg & Dick Houtman, “Deprivatization of Disbelief? Non-Religiosity and Anti-Religiosity in 14 Western European Countries,” *Politics and Religion* 6 (2013): 101-120.

Grace Davie, “Religion in Europe in the 21st Century: The Factors to Take into Account,” *European Journal of Sociology* 47.2 (August 2006): 271-96.

**Meeting 10: The European Union and Religion (Apr. 9)**

Case Study Portfolio #5 (distributed no later than the prior class)

François Foret, *Religion and Politics in the European Union: The Secular Canopy* (Cambridge UP, 2014), ch. 1-2.

Daniel Philpott & Timothy Shah, "Faith, Freedom, and Federation: the Role of Religious Ideas and Institutions in European Political Convergence," in Byrnes & Katzenstein (eds.) *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge UP, 2006), ch. 2.

José Casanova, "Religion, European Secular Identities, and European Integration," in Byrnes & Katzenstein (eds.) *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge UP, 2006), ch. 3.

François Foret & Virginie Riva, "Religion between Nation and Europe: The French and Belgian 'No' to the Christian Heritage of Europe," *West European Politics* 33.4 (2010): 791-809.

Jean-Paul Willaime, "European Integration, Laïcité and Religion," *Religion, State and Society* 37.1 (2009): 23-35.

VIEW:

Irish MEP, Gay Mitchell, on the role of religion in Europe following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dj4D8UKj-S8>

### **Meeting 11: Muslims in Europe (Apr. 16)**

*Case Study Portfolio #6 (distributed no later than the prior class)*

Jocelyne Cesari, *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies* (Palgrave, 2013), pp. 29-80.

Jytte Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe* (Oxford UP, 2008), ch. 1-2, 4-5. Please note: E-book version is available through HOLLIS

Bassam Tibi, "Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe: Political Democracy vs. Cultural Difference," in Byrnes & Katzenstein (eds.) *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge UP, 2006), ch. 8.

Jytte Klausen, "Europe's Real Border Problem," *Foreign Affairs* (November 16, 2015).

Kenan Malik, "Europe's Dangerous Multiculturalism," *Foreign Affairs* (December 8, 2015).

Alexander Betts, "The Elephant in the Room," *Foreign Affairs* (February 2, 2016).

Claire L. Adida *et al.*, "Don't Fear Muslim Immigrants," *Foreign Affairs* (April 26, 2016).

VIEW:

Debate on Islam in Europe (Oxford Union)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyjamZvjuUQ>. (Watch at least to 50:00)

### **Meeting 12: Democracy, Liberalism, and Religion (Apr. 23)**

Alfred Stepan, "Religion, Democracy, and the 'Twin Tolerations'," *Journal of Democracy* 11.4 (October 2000): 37-57.

Jeffrey Stout, "2007 Presidential Address: The Folly of Secularism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76.3 (September 2008): 533-44.

Richard Rorty, "Religion in the Public Square: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31.1 (2003): 141-9.

Brian Barry, "How Not to Defend Liberal Institutions," *British Journal of Political Science* 20 (1990): 1-14.

John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 64.3 (1997): 765-807.

Joshua Mitchell, "Religion Is Not a Preference," *The Journal of Politics* 69.2 (May 2007): 351- 62.

Giorgi Areshidze, "Taking Religion Seriously? Habermas on Religious Translation and Cooperative

Learning in Post-Secular Society,” *American Political Science Review* 111.4 (Nov. 2017): 724-737.

VIEW:

The Religious Situation in Germany and Europe Today:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0ZR63cHLtY> (Watch at least to 48:00)

***Meeting 13: The Challenges of Pluralism (Apr. 30)***

Kwame Anthony Appiah, “Causes of Quarrel: What’s Special about Religious Disputes?” in Banchoff (ed.), *Religious Pluralism, Globalization, and World Politics* (Oxford UP, 2008): 41-64.

Please note: E-book version is available through HOLLIS

Ahmet T. Kuru, “Assertive Secularism and the Multiculturalist Challenge” in *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2009), ch. 4.

Francis Fukuyama, “Identity, Immigration, and Liberal Democracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 17.2 (April 2006): 5-20.

Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* (Princeton UP, 2007), ch. 3.

Robert D. Putnam & David Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012 ed.), ch. 15.

VIEW:

Religion in the Age of Pluralism: Diana Eck

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkgSuuUWdPE>

***Meeting 14: Tying Things Together (May 7)***

Peter Berger, Grace Davie & Effie Fokas *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Ashgate, 2008).

VIEW:

The Faith Debate: The Role of Religion in Politics—Institute of Politics

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNEB45GxFYo>