

Politics and Religion
Political Science 425
Union University
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"Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" (Matthew 22). For Christians 2000 years ago and today, differentiating between what is God's and what is Caesar's has not always been easy. During the Middle Ages, the Pope claimed that all was God's and that the state must act within the dictates of the Church. Today, you will find people, including some religious people, who claim that all belongs to Caesar and God should not enter into any political considerations. Many of the proponents of this view take the separation of church and state literally by erecting a high wall that prevents any religious belief from entering the public square. However, they fail to realize that by passing legislation that restricts or regulates religious activity they breach the wall they claim to support.

Even if we could prevent the state from imposing upon the church or vice versa, we still could not eliminate religion from our public discussions. For many people, their faith is at the core of who they are. As such, their religious beliefs guide their political beliefs. Evangelicals' belief that a fetus is a human life leads them to oppose abortion. Jews who want to protect their religious heritage oppose prayer in school because they believe the state is denigrating their religion. African Americans believe that the God who brought the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt is a God of justice who supports government equalizing society. Even in the international arena, we see religious values at work. Much of Islamic terrorism is done in the name of a jihad or holy war, and the United States' commitment to human rights comes from our religious values.

If religion inevitably plays a role in domestic and international politics, what role exactly should religion play? What are the problems associated with full engagement or complete withdrawal or some place in between? These are some of the questions that will guide us over the coming semester. We begin by examining the role that religion plays in the public square looking at how religion's role in politics has evolved over the past millenia. Next, we examine the political behavior of religious groups in America. We spend more time on the Religious Right because they are more prominent, but we also pay attention to the Religious Left and the Social Gospel movement. Then we discuss how our religion affects current policies. Finally, we explicitly focus on the role that religion plays in the international arena by examining Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilization" thesis.

Requirements

Let me begin by discussing what this class is and is not. This class is not a class about theology. It is a class about politics but with an emphasis on how religion affects politics. As such, we will discuss theology but not in the context of who is right and who is wrong. Following the Baptist tradition, that is an issue between God and you. Instead, we will discuss how theology has influenced and continues to influence politicians, citizens, and political theorists.

This class will follow a seminar format. What this means is that I will not lecture or I will do it rarely. Instead, I will provide the topics and some overarching themes, but it is up to you to provide the discussion. In this discussion format, I am a facilitator as you and your colleagues grapple with important issues, challenge many of your existing beliefs, and improve your critical thinking and communication skills as you parry and thrust with your colleagues. However, this class will only work if you come to class prepared each day.

The readings for this class come from three books and many reserve readings available in the library. The three books available at the Lifeway Bookstore are:

Curtis, Michael. 1981. The Great Political Theories, Vol. 1. New York: Avon Books.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order. NY: Touchstone.

Wald, Kenneth D. 2003. Religion and Politics in the United States, 4th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grading. Your grade for this course is determined from three exams, a paper, and your in-class participation. As a 400 level course, all exams are essay and each of the three exams is worth 20% of your grade. There are no make-up exams so if you miss the first exam, the final counts twice.

While I have high expectations, I reserve the right to curve grades to your benefit. In addition, what is important is what you know at the end of the semester and not at the beginning. Therefore, if a student makes substantial improvement over the course of the semester, the student's grade is based on his or her work at the end of the semester (e.g., D on first test but A on last test and active participation and positive contribution to simulation, A for the course).

After exams are returned, you must wait 24 hours before discussing the exam with me. This serves as both a cooling off period and as a time for you to reflect upon the exam and what you may have done wrong. We will then sit down and discuss any problems you may have had with the exam, how we can correct this, and how you can improve

over the course of the semester. If I make a mistake, I will rectify that but I do not engage in point grubbing. Finally, when and/or if I curve test or final grades, I reserve the right to withhold the curve from students who never attend class.

Paper. The paper for this class requires students to do a social/political analysis of a church, synagogue, or mosque. In this paper, you will engage in participation observation, primary document analysis, Web page analysis, and outside research to discuss the role of politics in the religious group that you visit. More detailed information will be provided later. The paper is worth 30% of the grade and is due on April 7 though we will begin our discussions on April 5. Students must receive my approval for your church by February 10.

In writing your paper(s), please write in a clear and organized fashion. Be sure to include a thesis, topic sentences, introduction, conclusion, etc. While this is not a grammar course, an integral part of communication is good grammar. As such, I will stop reading any paper that has not been spell checked or grammar checked (it is usually easy to tell) and assign that paper an F. Since the paper requires some outside research, proper citations are required and rules against plagiarism are enforced. For more information, please check out my Writing Guide at www.uu.edu/personal/sevans/wrtngguide.htm.

Participation. I expect all of you to participate in class. This is a small class so if you neither read and nor participate, it will be obvious. While quality is usually more important than quantity, the small size of this class makes both equally important. Moreover, an important component of a liberal art education is your ability to synthesize and present material to others and this tests this. Finally, you increase your ability to participate by reading and bringing the relevant reserve readings and textbook to class. I do however expect that you treat all members of the class, including any special speakers that may come, the courtesy that you would like exhibited toward you.

Class participation is worth 10% of your grade. In assessing participation, students who attend class but do not participate earn a D in participation. Those who show they read but show a superficial understanding receive a C. Those who read and show they understand the material in discussions receive a B for participation and those who excel by showing a thorough understanding of readings and an ability to connect concepts across lectures, readings, and discussions receive an A for participation.

Cheating. Don't do it. Anyone caught cheating will receive an automatic F for the course and will be referred to the appropriate authorities for punishment.

Extracurricular. Students are expected to attend special political science events this semester.

Special Needs. If you have any special needs that will affect your ability to learn in this class, please inform me and I will take the appropriate steps to help you.

The Syllabus. I reserve the right and prerogative to modify the syllabus in accordance with student needs. The syllabus should not be construed as a contract.

Class Outline

Feb. 1 Introduction – What is God’s and what is Caesar’s?

Feb. 3 The City of God and the City of Man
Curtis The Great Political Theories, Vol. 1, "Early Christianity"

Feb. 6 The Two Swords and the Separation of Church and State
Curtis, “Medieval Life and Thought” and “The Two Realms”

Feb. 8 The Secular State and the Reformation
Curtis, “The Renaissance” & “The Reformation”

Feb. 10 Middle Ages
Curtis, “Resistance,” “Divine Right,” and “Constitutionalism”

Feb13 Classical Conservatism
Selections from Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France

Feb. 15 Move to Secularism
Adams "Classical Theories of Law"

Feb. 17 Can the state enforce morality?
Adams "Boundaries of the Law"

Feb. 20 Traditional Conservatism Responds
Nash, Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, chs. 2-3

Feb. 22 Neoconservatism
Excerpts from Gershon's The Essential Neoconservative Reader

Feb. 24 Naked Public Square
Selections from Neuhaus The Naked Public Square

Feb. 27 The Things That Matter Most
DiIulio and Dionne What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment?, Politics and Witness

March 1 Is politics inherently immoral and how can Christians be effective?

March 3 Catch – up and review

March 6 First Exam

March 8 Is the US a Christian Nation?

Wald, chs. 1& 3

March 10 Civil Religion

Pierand & Linder, Civil Religion and the Presidency, chs. 1-2

March 13 Church-State Relations

Wald, ch. 4

March 15 Religion and American Public Policy

Wald, ch. 5

March 17 Religious Dimension of American Political Behavior

Wald, ch. 6

March 20-24 Spring Break

March 27 Christian Right

Wald, ch. 7

March 29 Non Evangelical Religious Politics Today

Wald, ch. 8

March 31 Catch-up

April 3 Second Midterm

April 5 Churches and politics – paper discussions

April 7 Churches and politics – paper discussions

April 9 Your faith and politics/Evangelical Political Philosophy

National Association of Evangelicals “[For the Health of the Nation](#)”

April 12 The Social Gospel

Selections from Rauschenbusch’s Christianizing the Social Order

April 14 Good Friday – No Class

April 17 Liberation Theology

Gutierrez “Liberation Theology” and Chopp “Latin American Liberation Theology”

April 19 Just War Theory

Fotion "Reactions to War: Pacifism, Realism, and Just War Theory" and Crawford “Just War Theory and US Counterterrorism War”

April 21 Human Rights/Humanitarian Intervention
Caney "Human Intervention and State Sovereignty"

April 24 Faith Based Organizations
DiIulio and Dionne What's God Got to Do with the American Experiment?, Faith Based
Social Action

April 26 Values as Solutions to the Collective Action Problem
Frank "A Theory of Moral Sentiments" and Smidt "Religion as Social Capital"

April 28 Clash of Civs
Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Part I

May 1 Clash of Civs
Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Part II

May 3 Clash of Civs
Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Part III

May 5 Clash of Civs
Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Part IV

May 8 Clash of Civs
Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, Part V
May 10 The Next Christianity
Jenkins "The Next Christianity"

May 12 Catch-up and review

May 17 Final 8:30-10am