Religious freedom matters but is imperiled. This simple proposition captures a central crucible of our age. As mounting scholarship shows, religious freedom is vital to building a future of greater peace, democracy, and thriving societies in the 21st century. Yet millions of people across the globe do not enjoy this fundamental right. Pivotal to meeting this challenge is developing a serious academic discipline focused on religious freedom in all its dimensions. This syllabus outlines the philosophical, religious, and political underpinnings of religious freedom, surveys the constituent components of its application in the contemporary world, and explores strategies to advance it in diverse settings. The outline can be used as the basis of a freestanding course, while the separate modules may be integrated as needed into other related classes.

SYLLABUS MODULES:

Global Overview

Learning Objectives:
- Understand the scope of religious freedom violations around the world.
- Provide a rationale for the academic focus on religious freedom.

Recommended Readings:

American Classic and Formative Texts

Learning Objectives:
- Analyze the relationship between persecution and freedom explored by classical theorists.
- Understand the formative arguments for greater religious toleration and free exercise
- Trace the contribution of theories of religious freedom to the grand liberal tradition.

Recommended Readings:
- Maryland Act of Toleration. Available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/maryland_toleration.asp
- Rhode Island Charter. Available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/ri04.asp
- Roger Williams, “The Bloudy Tenet of Persecution” (1644).
- John Locke,” A Letter on Toleration” (1689).
- James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments” (1784).

International Law and International Organizations

Learning Objectives:
- Understand the pivotal documents that undergird international law on religious freedom.
- Compare and contrast the legal agreements used to apply international religious freedom.
- Explore the struggles, tensions, and controversies in the application of international law and covenants.

Recommended Readings:
- Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948, Article 18.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, Article 18.
- Helsinki Accords, 1975, Article 7.
- Declaration on the Elimination of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, 1981.

For Further Reference:
  - Reports by the United Nation’s Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom.

Religious Freedom and Security

Learning Objectives:
- Summarize the arguments for religious freedom as a national security concern.
- Integrate these themes into the dominant models of International Relations theory and practice.

Recommended Readings:
Religious Freedom, Democracy, and Economic Well-being

Learning Objectives:
- Understand and analyze the connection between religious freedom and democracy.
- Explore the linkages between religious liberty and economic or social uplift.

Recommended Readings:
- Special issue of The Review of Faith & International Affairs on “Religion and Social Welfare in Comparative Perspective,” volume 7, number 3 (Fall 2009).

Religious Freedom, Evangelism, and Conversion

Learning Objectives:
- Understand the difference between political pluralism and religious relativism.
- Comprehend the human right to change faith and the right to attempt to peacefully persuade others to change faith, along with the sources of opposition.
- Analyze trends in apostasy and anti-conversion laws, their motivations, abuses, and their socio-political effects.

Recommended Readings:
- Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948, Article 18.
International Religious Freedom and American Foreign Policy

Learning Objectives:
- Understand the origins and intent of American international religious freedom policy.
- Assess the success and challenges facing the implementation of that policy.

Recommended Readings:

Debating American International Religious Freedom Policy

Learning Objectives:
- Compare the foundational differences and perspectives on religious freedom advocacy.
- Identify and define the main debates regarding international religious freedom policy.

Recommended Readings:
- The Imminent Frame at http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/religious-freedom/. See especially:
  - Allen D. Hertzke, “Beware the Unstated Assumptions” (3 March 2010)
  - Abdullahi An-Na’im, “‘Good Intentions’ Alone are not Good Enough!” (1 March 2010)

**Advocacy Strategies**

*Learning Objectives:*
- Understand the practical challenges facing religious freedom advocates.
- Identify and define the models and strategies employed in religious freedom advocacy, including their historical antecedents and major actors.

*Recommended Readings:*

**Judaism and Religious Freedom**

*Learning Objectives:*
- Understand and evaluate the ways that Jewish history and thought inform foundations and advocacy of International Religious Freedom.
- Identify the particular challenges and responses of Jewish advocacy for religious freedom.

*Recommended Readings:*
Orthodox Christianity and Religious Freedom

Learning Objectives:
- Understand and evaluate the ways that Orthodox history and thought inform foundations and advocacy of International Religious Freedom.
- Identify the particular challenges and responses of Orthodox advocacy for religious freedom.

Recommendings Readings:

Protestantism and Religious Freedom

Learning Objectives:
- Understand and evaluate the ways that Protestant history and thought inform foundations and advocacy of International Religious Freedom.
- Identify the particular challenges and responses of Protestant advocacy for religious freedom.

Recommendings Readings:

- Statements by Protestant Advocacy Groups:
Roman Catholicism and Religious Freedom since Vatican II

Learning Objectives:
- Understand and evaluate the ways that Catholic history and thought inform foundations and advocacy of International Religious Freedom.
- Identify the particular challenges and responses of Catholic advocacy for religious freedom.

Recommending Readings:
- *Nostra Aetate* (Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 1965)
- *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Freedom, Second Vatican Council, 1965)

Islam and Religious Freedom

Learning Objectives:
- Understand and evaluate the ways that Muslim history and thought inform foundations and advocacy of International Religious Freedom.
- Identify the particular challenges and responses of Muslim advocacy for religious freedom.

Recommending Readings:

**Asian Religions and Religious Freedom**

**Learning Objectives:**
- Understand and evaluate the ways that history and thought of Asian religious traditions inform foundations and advocacy of International Religious Freedom.
- Identify the particular challenges and responses of the various Asian religious traditions in religious freedom advocacy.

**Recommending Readings:**

---

1 This syllabus was made possible in part through the support of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the John Templeton Foundation.