Religion and U.S. Politics: Sexuality, Race, Gender, and the Regulation of American Bodies
Haverford College
Religion 276 (Cross-Listed with Gender & Sexuality Studies)
Wednesdays 1:30pm – 4:00pm
Spring 2019

Professor:
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Office – Hall Building 9A
(610) 896-4278

Office Hours:
Wednesdays 4:00pm-5:00pm and by appointment

Course Overview:
This course examines the reasons legislators and others frequently invoke religion in political debates that focus on gender and sexuality even though the United States is a secular democracy. The class will question if the United States has a secular government, explore what the separation of church and state means, and analyze if American citizens have religious freedom. The class will also explore the role religion has played in political movements centered on race, gender, and sexuality, and question why women’s reproductive rights and LGBTQ issues have been a common focus for government regulations and for religious lobbying.

Course Learning Goals—By the End of the Semester, Students Will Be Able To:
1. Articulate the complexities of the “separation of church and state” and “religious freedom.”
2. Apply course readings to contemporary issues of religion and U.S. politics and analyze why issues of gender and sexuality have been a common focus for religious groups and for individuals involved in politics.
3. Substantiate one’s own arguments about what role religion should play in politics and political movements.

Class Format:
This is a discussion seminar where our focus is on cultivating critical thinking skills through regular reading assignments, writing assignments, and in-class discussions. You should not expect the professor to lecture. Rather, you should be an active participant in all seminar discussions and activities. Class participation constitutes 22% of your semester grade.
This is a cross-listed course between the Department of Religion and the Program in Gender & Sexuality Studies. Given the nature of the course, students will be required to read, talk, and write about a variety of religious practices, sexualities, and genders. You are expected to treat every topic and tradition we study with respect. You should not be in this class if you are unable to respectfully and maturely discuss a diverse range of sexual practices, religious practices, and gender possibilities.

Class Expectations:
1. Attend every class. If you have an emergency or religious holiday that requires you to miss class, notify me by email. You are allowed one absence over the course of the semester. After that, your participation grade lowers by 20 percent.

2. Complete the reading for every class and be prepared to discuss the reading. This is crucial if you expect to succeed in this course. You will have, on average, 70-90 pages of reading each week. Plan accordingly. Since this seminar meets once a week, you will need to plan your time so that you will be able to complete each week’s readings and writing assignments, as well as semester essays, and be prepared for 2.5 hours of class discussions.

3. Be on time for class. Arriving late is distracting. You also need to stay for the entire class.

4. Cell phones must be put away and silenced prior to class.

5. Check your Haverford or Bryn Mawr email account every day.

I want every student to succeed in this class. To be successful, you must do the work outlined in the syllabus and take initiative if problems arise by notifying me ASAP.

Haverford Honor Code and Laptops in this Class:
Students in this seminar are bound by the Haverford Honor Code. The Honor Code extends not only to the written work you submit, but also to how you conduct yourself in class. In this class, unless otherwise requested, you are not to access the internet or apps during class time if you bring a laptop or tablet to class. Accessing the internet is distracting to other students and it is a disruption to our seminar. Students may use laptops and tablets, and connect to Moodle, to view readings as we discuss them in class. Students may also use such devises to take notes if they prefer them over pen and paper.

Accommodations:
Haverford is committed to providing equal access to students with a disability. If you have (or think you have) a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment, please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) at hc-ads@haverford.edu. The Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations.

Any student with an accommodation-based need should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Please bring the necessary documentation with you.
REQUIRED READINGS

Students need to purchase or borrow the following books:


*All other course readings are posted on Moodle or hyperlinked through the syllabus.*
COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: Introduction to Religion in America, U.S. Politics, and the Law
W/Jan. 23 Course Overview

Read: John Hinnells, “Why Study Religions?” pg. 5-19
Read: Tisa Wenger, We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom, pg. 1-16, 135-145, & 183-195
Due: Reading Summary of Hinnells from Group A and of Wenger from Groups B and C

W/Feb. 6 Religion in the American Legal System
Due: Reading Summary of 1-53 from Groups A and B and of 135-159 from Group C

Unit 2: Historical Overview of Religion in U.S. Politics
W/Feb. 13 Legislating Morality: Mormon Plural Marriage and the Government’s Problem with Polygamy
Read: Carrie Miles, “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Earthly Experience of Celestial Marriage, Past and Present,” pg. 185-207
Due: Reading Summary of Miles from Group A and of Foster from Groups B and C

W/Feb. 20 Religion as Resistance to Racial Oppression: Spectacle Lynching & the Civil Rights Movement
Read: James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, pg. xiii-29, 120-151, and 65-92
Read: Matthew Cressler, “Why White Terrorists Attack Black Churches” from Slate.com
Due: Reading Summary of xii-29 from Group A, of 120-151 from Group B, and 65-92 from C

W/Feb. 27 Exam

W/March 6 “One Nation Under God”: American Christianity Against Soviet Communism
Read: Kevin Kruse, “Pledging Allegiance,” from One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America, pg. 95-125
Read: Kevin Michael Schultz, “‘ Favoritism Cannot Be Tolerated’: Challenging Protestantism in America’s Public Schools and Promoting the Neutral State,” pg. 565-588
Due: Reading Summary of Kruse from Groups A and B and of Schultz from Group C

W/March 13 Spring Break

W/March 27 Abortion, Gay Rights, and the Political Influence of the Religious Right
Read: Tina Fetner, How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism, pg. xi-xv & 1-22
Read: Margery Eagan, “Race, Not Abortion, was the Founding Issue of the Religious Right,” from the Boston Globe
Due: Reading Summary of Dowland from Groups A and B, of Fetner from Group C
Due: Is America a Christian Nation?
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<th>Topic</th>
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<td><strong>Unit 3: Contemporary Issues of Religion and Politics</strong></td>
<td><strong>W/April 3 Islam, Feminism, and U.S. Foreign Policy</strong></td>
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<td>Read: Homar Hoodfar, “The Veil in their Minds and on Our Heads: The Persistence of Colonial Images of Muslim Women”</td>
<td>Read: Saba Mahmood, “Feminism, Democracy, and Empire: Islam and the War on Terror,” pg. 81-114</td>
<td>Due: Reading Summary of Hoodfar from Group A and of Mahmood from Groups B and C</td>
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<td>Read: Amber Phillips, “Mississippi’s New Law Allowing Refusal of Service to LGBT People is the Most Sweeping Yet,” from <em>Washington Post</em></td>
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<td>Due: Reading Summary of “Why Religion, Why Sex” from Groups A and B and “Getting Religion” from Group C</td>
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<td>Read: Pew Research Center, “A Portrait of Jewish Americans,” from Pew Research Center</td>
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Read: John Sides, “Why Most American Jews Vote for Democrats, Explained,” from Washington Post
Read: Tara Burton, “Rabbis Cancel Annual High Holidays Call with Trump over His Response to Charlottesville,” from Vox

W/May 1 Semester Reflections on Religious Freedom and the Regulations of American Bodies
Due: Final Paper: Current Controversy in Religion and Politics

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading Summaries (Due: Follow the syllabus according to Groups A, B, and C)
The purpose of the reading summaries is to make sure you understand the readings, to ensure that you can synthesize scholars’ writings in your own words, and to practice writing concisely and coherently.

Instructions: In one paragraph of about five-six sentences, summarize the main points of the reading in your own words. What would you say are the most important aspects from the reading, and how can you describe them in a way that presents a coherent, full, yet succinct picture of the reading? Put differently, if someone asked you to briefly describe the reading, what would you say? Make sure to consider if the reading contains an argument. If so, be sure to include the author’s argument in your summary. Do not quote from the reading. The paragraph should be entirely in your own words.

The Reading Summary paragraphs will be graded out of 5 points.
5=excellent understanding of the reading and/or argument(s) that sufficiently captures the author’s main points, well organized paragraph, well written with no grammar mistakes.
4=good understanding of the reading or argument(s), missing something of significance from the author’s main points, or some small writing, organizational, or grammar issues.
3=average or superficial-level understanding of the reading or argument(s), missing important points that are key to the reading, and/or more than a couple writing, organizational, or grammar issues.
1-2=poor understanding of the reading or argument(s), and/or several writing issues.

2. In-Class Exam (February 27)
The purpose of the exam is to give you an opportunity to display what you have learned about the topics studied. The exam is closed book and will include a range of questions from short answer to paragraph responses. The exam is out of 100 points.

3. Essay: Is America a Christian Nation? (Due: March 27)
The purpose of this essay is for you to reflect on some of the course’s guiding questions and to offer your own perspective after having studied religion and politics for several weeks.

Instructions: Write a four-page essay where you argue if America is a Christian nation. Based on the course’s readings, on what grounds would you argue that the United States is or is not a Christian nation? Is it a secular nation? What does it mean to say the United States is a Christian nation or a secular nation? Is there a separation between church and state? On what grounds are you making this argument? What examples from the American political and legal systems allow you to make this argument? You need to have a clear thesis that you will defend by substantiating your analysis with references to at least 4 course readings. Your citations may follow MLA, APA, or the Chicago Manual of Style.
The essay will be graded out of 100 points. 90-100=astute analysis, clear thesis, well organized, strong connection to at least four course readings, and well written. 80-89=sufficient connection to course reading(s), decent/mostly above-average analysis, moderately clear thesis, mostly well organized, and/or some grammar mistakes. 70-79=Insufficient connection to course readings, average analysis, unclear thesis, some structural issues, and some grammar mistakes. 69 and below=subpar analysis, organization, or weak connection to course readings, and multiple grammar mistakes.

4. Final Paper Thesis and Outline (Due: April 17)
The purpose of this assignment is to get feedback on your final paper ideas before submitting the paper.

Instructions: Bring to class a completed thesis for your final paper and an outline of what each paragraph in your paper will address. The outline needs to clearly indicate the outside sources you are using and the course texts you are using to analyze those sources—in each paragraph.

The thesis and outline will be graded out of 10 points. 9-10=strong, clear thesis that can be used in your final paper, and an outline that clearly shows how you will lay out your argument and analysis. 7-8=good start to thesis and/or outline, but can use some improvement before the final paper is submitted. 6 and below=the thesis does not yet present a clear argument and/or the outline does not make evident how you will use course texts to support your argument; both likely need serious revision before proceeding to the final paper.

5. Final Paper: Current Controversy in Religion and Politics (Due: May 1)
The purpose of this paper is for you to apply what you have learned from this course to a current controversial news topic of your choosing.

Instructions:
1) Select a topic of current controversy involving religion and U.S. politics that has taken place within the past twelve months. Follow news coverage of this topic and gather information about the multiple sides of the controversy, the issues at stake, the people and organizations involved, and how the controversy has developed over time. You need to locate a minimum of five sources that discuss the controversy. Your sources should primarily come from reputable journalism.

2) Write a 4-5 page analysis of the controversy. Make an argument, which might necessitate that you pick a side of the controversy. Or, you might make an argument about the ways the controversy has been depicted in the media, or the ways politicians have discussed it. Write a thesis where you clearly present your argument. Then, use a minimum of four readings from the semester to substantiate your argument. You also need to incorporate your five journalistic sources into the paper.

The Current Controversy paper is out of 100 points. 90-100=astute analysis, clear thesis, well organized, strong connection to at least four course readings, good use and analysis of outside sources, and well written. 80-89=sufficient connection to course reading(s), decent/mostly above-average analysis, moderately clear thesis, mostly well organized, and/or some grammar mistakes. 70-79=Insufficient connection to course readings and/or external sources, average/superficial analysis, unclear thesis, some structural issues, and some grammar mistakes. 69 and below=subpar analysis, organization, or weak connection to course readings, and multiple grammar mistakes.

6. Participation Grade
Your participation grade is out of 100 points and is based on the following factors:
- Volunteering to answer questions posed by the professor and other students.
- Actively engaging in class discussions.
- Regular attendance.
- Arriving to class on time.
- Paying attention to whomever is speaking in class (other students and professor).
- Participating in class activities (small group discussions and exercises, writing reflections, etc.).
- Paying attention to video clips shown during class.

**GRADING**

Your semester course grade is out of 460 points:
1) Reading Summaries: 5 points each (x10) = 50 points (10% of semester grade)
2) Exam = 100 points (22%)
3) Essay: Is America a Christian Nation? = 100 points (22%)
4) Final Essay Thesis and Outline = 10 points (2%)
5) Final Essay: Current Controversy in Religion and Politics = 100 points (22%)
6) Participation = 100 points (22%)

You will be graded on how you think, not on what you think. You are not expected to agree with the professor, fellow students, or the arguments in the assigned readings. You will be graded on how well you express your thoughts and positions, and how closely you read the assigned texts.

Please note: All assignments are graded, in part, on the quality of your writing. Your writing needs to be clear, well-organized, and free of spelling and grammatical mistakes with accurate and adequate citations.

Letter grade distribution for semester grade:
A = 94 – 100  B = 84 – 86  C = 74 – 76  D = 64 – 66
A- = 90 – 93  B- = 80 – 83  C- = 70 – 73  D- = 60 – 63
B+ = 87 – 89  C+ = 77 – 79  D+ = 67 – 69  F = 59 and lower

Incompletes: An incomplete semester grade (I) may not be given unless a contract is signed by both the student and the professor specifying the conditions necessary for completing the course. This means that if you stop submitting work, your grade will reflect the missed assignments. Please note that I rarely give out “I” grades, except in exceptional circumstances where the student has communicated well in advance the reasons for petitioning for an incomplete grade.

**PROFESSOR KRUTZSCH’S TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE**

1) **Write a Reading Summary for EVERY reading in this course** even though you will not hand most of them in for a grade. Writing a short paragraph summary after each reading will better prepare you for class discussions (and your participation grade), and they will be excellent resources as you prepare for the exam and both papers. It is my #1 tip for a reason!

2) **Be okay to say something incorrect** or not agreed on by all in the class. In order to participate in the seminar at a high level, we all have to be okay getting things wrong sometimes. Everyone benefits when someone says something not fully accurate because it gives us an opportunity to welcome other thoughts and to better flesh out ideas. Remember, you should actively participate in every class, not every other class, and not only for the thirty minutes of class. Actively participate for all two and a half hours of each class.
3) **Write your two major papers early and set up an appointment with me** so I can look over your thesis and some of the essay. Then you will have time to revise before you hand it in for a grade.

4) **Come meet with me if things come up** that you think I should know, or if you would like to discuss other things that will help improve your learning experience. And, visit me so I get to know more about you, your goals, and experiences as a student.

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**A Note on Course Topics Related to Various Forms of Violence:** This course, at times, engages with topics like racial and gender-based violence, which can be troubling. We explore these topics because of their prevalence, so that the response to them is not to ignore the magnitude of the problem. Course topics are outlined in the syllabus. If you know that reading about a particular topic could be traumatic for you, please notify me. My ultimate goal is for us to have productive discussions about important topics in our society, and for you to feel that you are in a safe environment to learn.

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