UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

NUMBER: INTL 8300
TITLE: Politics and Religion

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Cas Mudde (mudde@uga.edu)
OFFICE: 205S Peabody Hall (new room!)
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays 9.00-11.00 (only online)

TERM: Fall 2021
DATE & TIME: Mondays, 4:10-7:10
ROOM: IA Building 117

Introduction:

In much of the second half of the 20th century political science devoted little attention to the role of religion in politics. Particularly in Europe, the (Enlightenment) idea was that economic and educational development would lead to mass secularization of society and an ever-decreasing relevance for religion and religious institutions. This seemed confirmed by both the decline and transformation of religiosity as well as of so-called Christian democratic parties in Western Europe. This was less the case in the United States, however, which was the main outlier of the so-called “secularization thesis”. Despite the fact that the US was in many ways the prototype of the advanced capitalist western democracy, Americans remained deeply religious and religious actors became increasingly active and important towards the end of the century.

With the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and particularly the (western responses to them, religion returned to the center of the public debate and thereby also to political science. As the political debate started to emphasize the importance of “culture” and “civilization”, religion became a key feature of political analysis – although primarily one specific religion, i.e. Islam.

This course aims to analyze the importance of religion in politics, focusing primarily on the 21st century. The focus is on changes in the relationship between religion and politics, in the past 50-60 years, across the world. After a few introductory classes, we will discuss the relationship between religion and politics within different geographical regions, before turning our attention to their relationship to specific themes, like gender, nationalism, and political violence.
This is the first time I will be teaching this course. I am not an expert on the topic and mainly teach it as a favor to students who expressed a strong interest in the topic. This means that you, the students, will have to carry the course. Classes will consist exclusively of students discussing the literature under my (laid-back) guidance – hence, participation will be 25% of your final grade. The course will include no lecturing!

Readings:

The course is based on a broad variety of readings, including a number of books. You can read the following two books for free through the UGA Library.


All other texts will be made available on the Elc course site, well ahead of the relevant class. If you have any problems accessing or locating readings, send me an email at mudde[@]uga.edu.

I will also use some episodes from podcasts, including my own podcast RADIKAAL, which is available on almost all podcast platforms.

Course objectives:

• To introduce you to some of the ways in which religion and politics are interconnected in the contemporary world.
• To think about the role of religion in contemporary politics.
• To analyze the chronological and geographical differences and similarities in the intersection of religion and politics.
• To discuss the ways in which religion connects to specific political themes.

Teaching Methodology:

The course is entirely discussion based. Students are expected to take the lead and the professor is mainly a facilitator.
Classroom Attendance and Activity

This class meets once a week and attendance would normally be mandatory, but because university polices do not provide a safe working environment, I cannot in good conscience force you to come to class. Hence, attendance is optional this semester. If you do feel safe, and we should be ok if everyone wears a mask, I really hope you attend and participate.

You are expected to read and reflect upon (at least) the compulsory readings before each class. In other words, I expect you to read the books (articles) well in advance of the class, and then reflect upon them in anticipation of the class discussion. I do expect you to participate actively in the classroom discussions. Remember, this is not an undergraduate class in which the professor lectures. This is a graduate class in which the students discuss independently under the guidance of the professor.

Office Hours:

I have office hours on Wednesday, 9-11 AM, which will be online. I devote these two hours exclusively to my students and I always enjoy talking to you individually. You can sign up online for the Wednesday office hours, in 20 minute slots. If you need more time, cannot make the regular office hours, or want to meet in person, we can schedule individual office hours by email.

I do appreciate students checking in regularly to discuss their progress or discuss other (academic) issues on their mind. New students are particularly encouraged to attend office hours at the beginning of the semester, as this helps us to get to know each other better and will help you during the rest of the course.

Course Evaluation:

- Participation (25%)
- Presentations (20%)
- Analytical papers (30%)
- Final paper (25%)

Participation (25%): You are expected to actively participate in each (online) class, which is based almost exclusively on student discussion. Your grade is based on the quality and quantity of your participation in the discussions.
Presentation (20%): You will be assigned to introduce four different articles or chapters (max. 10 minutes per presentation) and take the lead in the class discussion of that article/chapter. It is your task to present the most important points in your own words and clarify them (if necessary) with original examples, i.e. that go beyond the ones presented in the reading(s).

Analytical papers (30%): You have to write three analytical papers on the compulsory readings for a specific week during the course – I will draw up schedules for each student individually. The paper should be max. 1,000 words and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the article(s)/book by drawing on some other academic literature (which can be for other IA courses).

Final paper (25%): You have to write one final paper for the last class, addressing the statement: “Religion has returned as one of the key factors in contemporary politics.” The essay should be max. 2,000 words and should accurately and relevantly reference concrete examples and at least five compulsory course readings as well as at least three additional academic readings.

Grading:

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COVID-19 INFORMATION

Face coverings:
Following guidance from the University System of Georgia, face coverings are recommended for all individuals while inside campus facilities.

How can I obtain the COVID-19 vaccine?
University Health Center is scheduling appointments for students through the UHC Patient Portal. Learn more here.

The Georgia Department of Health, pharmacy chains and local providers also offer the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to you. To find a COVID-19 vaccination location near you, please go to: https://georgia.gov/covid-vaccine.

In addition, the University System of Georgia has made COVID-19 vaccines available at 15 campuses statewide and you can locate one here: https://www.usg.edu/vaccination

What do I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?
Students showing COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see, https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies.

What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19?
If you test positive for COVID-19 at any time, you are required to report it through the DawgCheck Test Reporting Survey. We encourage you to stay at home if you become ill or until you have excluded COVID-19 as the cause of your symptoms. UGA adheres to current Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) quarantine and isolation guidance and requires that it be followed. Follow the instructions provided to you when you report your positive test result in DawgCheck.

Guidelines for COVID-19 Quarantine Period (As of 8/1/21)
Students who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine upon exposure unless they have symptoms of COVID-19 themselves. All others should follow the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) recommendations (check the website to ensure that you are following the most recent recommendations):

Students who are not fully vaccinated and have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 10 days. Those quarantining for 10 days must have been symptom-free throughout the monitoring period and continue self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms for a total of 14 days. You should report the need to quarantine on DawgCheck (https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/), and communicate directly with your faculty to
coordinate your coursework while in quarantine. If you need additional help, reach out to Student Care and Outreach (sco@uga.edu) for assistance.

Students, faculty and staff who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are no longer required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms.

**Well-being, Mental Health, and Student Support**

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu/. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources to support your well-being and mental health: https://well-being.uga.edu/

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) is your go-to, on-campus resource for emotional, social and behavioral-health support: https://caps.uga.edu/, TAO Online Support (https://caps.uga.edu/tao/), 24/7 support at 706-542-2273. For crisis support: https://healthcenter.uga.edu/emergencies/.

The University Health Center offers FREE workshops, classes, mentoring and health coaching led by licensed clinicians or health educators: https://healthcenter.uga.edu/bewelluga/

**Monitoring conditions:**

Note that the guidance referenced in this syllabus is subject to change based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia, or the Governor’s Office or. For the latest on UGA policy, you can visit coronavirus.uga.edu.

**Academic Integrity:**

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: http://www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.
Finally:

THE COURSE SYLLABUS IS A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE COURSE; DEVIATIONS ANNOUNCED TO THE CLASS BY THE INSTRUCTOR MAY (AND MOST PROBABLY WILL) BE NECESSARY!
Thematic Outline:

08/23 – Introduction (1)
We will start out by mutual introductions and an assessment of your general background in the study of religion and politics. We will then discuss the intentions of the course and go through the syllabus to address the outline of the course as well as our mutual expectations.

08/30 – Comparative Politics and Religion (2)
In this first substantive class, we will look at how the subdiscipline of comparative politics has engaged with religion. While religion played only a minor role in comparative politics in the second half of the 20th century, it has made a strong return in light of political developments in the late 20th century and, of course, the early 21st century.

Compulsory Readings:

Optional Reading:

09/06 – NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

09/13 – The “Clash of Civilization” Debate (3)
Few ‘academic’ articles have been so influential in both politics and political science as Samuel Huntington’s “The Clash of Civilizations”. Although published well before the seismic events of 9/11, the article has shaped the post-9/11 world more profoundly than anything written since. What are his main claims and how do they relate to reality and religion?
Compulsory Readings:


Optional reading:


REGIONs

**09/20 — North America (4)**

For decades, the United States has puzzled scholars of political and religion. Although the secularization thesis might have been overstated, most advanced democracies have become much less religious, and religion has lost much of its prominence in politics. Not so in the US, where religion and politics remain closely connected. What explains this “American exceptionalism”? And how has the Christian Right changed the relationship between politics and religion?

Compulsory readings:


RADIKAAAL with Nazita Lajevardi
Optional reading:


09/27 – Eastern Europe (5)
*Eastern Europe is region with often changing borders and countries, but also with a broad variety of religions. While a large part of the former Soviet-Union is Orthodox Christian, almost all countries have their own (unique) national Orthodox Church. Moreover, some Central East European countries are Catholic, Protestant, or a mix of the two. Finally, there are various countries and regions where Islam is the major religion. How has the long communist period affected religion and religious institutions and what is the state of religion in the postcommunist era?*

Compulsory readings:


Norris/Inglehart, ch. 5.


10/04 – Latin America (6)
*Latin America is a continent deeply affected by colonialism and, as elsewhere, religion is closely associated with that. Mostly settled by the Spanish, Catholicism has been the predominant religion for centuries. However, while it initially served the colonial masters, it became (also) a voice of the repressed, in some countries, during the military dictatorships of the second half of the 20th century. And, more recently, religion is linked to a different kind of colonial*
power, the United States, as can be seen in the rise of the Evangelical movement in society and politics.

Guest Lecture: Amy Erica Smith (Iowa State University) – online!

Compulsory readings:

Optional readings:

10/11 – Middle East (7)
If there is one region where religion is treated as the key factor in politics, it is the Middle East. Most notably, Islam is often discussed as the root of all evil in the region, from the lack of democracy to the alleged omnipresence of conflict and war. As so often, the reality is much more complex.

Guest lecture: Lihi Ben Shitrit (University of Georgia) – online!

Compulsory readings:
Ben Porat, Guy and Dani Filc (forthcoming) “Remember to Be Jewish: Religion and Populism in Israel”, Politics and Gender, FirstView.
Norris/Inglehart, ch.6.
Pankhurst, Reza (2010) “Muslim Contestations over Religion and the State in the Middle East”, Political Theory, 11(6), 826-845.

Optional readings:

**10/18 – Asia (8)**

*Asia is the continent of the “other religions”, of which several are often portrayed as “good” religions (Buddhism, Confucianism), in the sense that they are allegedly tolerant and non-violent. But what role does religion play in the diverse set of autocracies and democracies in Asia?*

Compulsory readings:
Haynes, chapters 2 (Friedlander), 5 (Barr), 6 (Friedlander).

Optional readings:

**10/25 – NO CLASS**

**THEMES**

**11/01 – Political Parties (9)**

*In many European countries religious (Christian) parties were among the first (mass) political parties to emerge. However, one hundred years later, Christian democracy is both in decline and transformation. At the same time, other religious parties are thriving, from Hindu parties in India to (some) Islam(ist) parties in the MENA region.*

Compulsory readings:
The link between religion and nationalism is as old as the phenomenon of nationalism and as nationalism became more central to political science again, in the wake of the fall of communism, scholarship re-focused on the link with religion, particularly in postcommunist Europe.

Guest lecture: Anna Grzymala-Busse (Stanford University) – online!

Compulsory readings:

Optional readings:

11/15 – Political Violence (11)
In the post-9/11 world, religion is often linked to political violence. Or, more accurately, one specific religion is linked to violence: Islam. What is the
relationship between religion and political violence? And are some specific religions really linked (more) to political violence?

Haynes, ch.22 (Juergensmeyer)
RADIKAAL with Amarnath Amarasingam

Optional readings:

11/22 – Sexuality and Gender (12)
Since the 1960s views on gender roles and sexuality have changed radically in many countries, which has led to a backlash from more conservative forces. In many countries religious organizations play a key role in this “conservative” backlash. And what are the differences and similarities across regions and religions?

Compulsory readings:
Deo, Nandini (forthcoming) “Religion, Nationalism, and Gender: Perspective from South Asia”, Asian Journal of Comparative Politics.
Haynes, ch.21 (Aune & Nyhagen)
Optional readings:

11/29 – De-secularization and the Repoliticization of Religion (13)
With the world de-secularizing, what explains the religious resurgence and how do the anti-Islam responses to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 feature in this?

Compulsory readings (and listening):
Haynes, ch.15 (Jocelyne Cesari)
Roy, Olivier (2016) “Beyond Populism: The Conservative Right, the Courts, the Churches and the Concept of a Christian Europe”, in Nadia Marzouki, Duncan McDonnell and Olivier Roy (eds.), Saving the People: How Populists Hijack Religion. London: Hurst, 185-201. *
RADIKAAL with Nadia Marzouki

Optional reading:
Norris/Inglehart, ch.4.

12/04 – Foreign Policy (14)
Given the close relationship between religion and politics, one would assume that religion also plays a role in foreign policy. Do different religions lead to different foreign policies? Or is religion mainly used as window-dressing?

Guest Lecture: Nukhet Sandal (Ohio State) – online!

Compulsory reading:
Haynes, chs. 17 (Fox & Sandal), 18 (Sandal), 19 (Shani)

Optional reading:
Haynes, chs. 16 (Mavelli & Wilson), 20 (Wessels).

Final paper: Your final paper should discuss the statement “Religion has returned as one of the key factors in contemporary politics.” The paper should be max. 2,000 words and should accurately and relevantly reference concrete examples and at least five compulsory course readings as well as at least three additional academic readings.