

INTL 4780H
Religion and Politics
TTh 11:10-12:25
100 Old College

Lih Ben Shirit
Office: 304 IA Building¹
Office Hours: Tuesday 2pm-4pm (Zoom)

lben@uga.edu

Course Description

From the 1970s to the present, religion has garnered increasing attention from observers of politics around the world. The secularization thesis that saw modern history as the story of the gradual withdrawal of religion from public life has now all but been abandoned. From the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, to the mujahideen's fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, to the rise of the Hindu right in India, and religious nationalism in places as different as Sri Lanka and Israel, to the events of 9/11 and the subsequent US wars, and to domestic conflicts over reproductive rights and same sex marriage - religion continues to be a force to be reckoned with in the domestic politics of many countries and in their international affairs. But religion has not only been a source of conflict. It has also offered inspiration and resources for peacebuilding, calls for justice and for more ethical political arrangements. This course explores the so-called "resurgence" of religion in politics, and the various attendant questions that have accompanied this phenomenon. In the first part of the course we will address such topics as: What is the place of religion in a pluralist democracy? How can states deal with deep religious diversity in which their citizens hold vastly different conceptions of the good? What are the tradeoffs between religious freedom, tolerance, and respect on the one hand, and other values such as freedom of speech, or the equality of women and sexual minorities on the other? We will then move from domestic politics to the role of religion in international affairs, exploring its connections to conflict and violence, as well as to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and international interfaith dialogue. In the final part of the course and the final paper, we will explore the ways in which the discipline of political science has studied the interaction of religion and politics in the past decade.

¹ The IA building is officially known as Candler Hall. "[Allen Candler](#) served Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1883 to 1891 and as Governor from 1898 to 1902. Candler also served in the Confederate Army, and as Governor, successfully lobbied for a Democratic whites-only primary based on the argument that the Democratic Party was not subject to the Fifteenth Amendment, which prohibits states from disenfranchising voters based on race or skin color. In an 1899 editorial, Candler claimed that the "enfranchisement of the Negro was a crime against civilization." His tenure coincided with the most violent lynchings in Georgia history, and he was noted for his response to the lynching of Sam Hose in 1899, in which he admonished the black victims of the violence as well as the entire black community." USG created an advisory group on building names, which recommended to change the names of 75 university buildings across Georgia, including 33 at UGA, among them Candler Hall. However, the Board of Regents [decided](#) not to change any of the names.

Required Texts

- Omer, Atalia, R. SCOTT APPLEBY, and DAVID LITTLE. "Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding." *The Oxford Handbook of Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding*. (Available at UGA Bookstore and for purchase online)
- Additional articles and chapters will be available on ELC.

Grading

Grading Scheme

| | |
|----|--------|
| A | 93-100 |
| A- | 90-92 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 83-86 |
| B- | 80-82 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 73-76 |
| C- | 70-72 |
| D+ | 67-69 |
| D | 63-66 |
| D- | 60-62 |
| F | 00-59 |

Grade Composition

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Presentation: | 15% |
| Group presentation: | 15% |
| Participation/Discussion: | 20% |
| Midterm exam: | 20% |
| Final paper: | 30% |

Assignments

Presentation

Each student will choose one article/chapter from those appearing under “presentation” [P] on the syllabus and will present it in class during the relevant week. The presentation should be of about 15 minutes and include a summary of the piece – main argument, evidence provided, and students’ evaluation of the piece, as well as and an explanation of how it relates to the other readings and topics for that week. The student presenting will also be responsible for preparing three discussion questions and for leading a classroom discussion about the article. Please send a copy of your presentation to lben@uga.edu by 10pm on Wednesday prior to the Thursday on which you will be presenting.

Group Presentation

Formal group presentations will take place toward the end of the semester (see syllabus). Presentations will review the engagement with religion & politics in leading political science journals (APSR, AJPS, Journal of Peace Research, and Journal of Conflict Resolution). There will be a class session devoted to preparing the presentations and additional information will be provided.

Participation/Discussion

This has two components: 1) Students should come to class having read all the required readings and prepared to both pose and answer questions and engage in discussion on the

subject matter. 2) Students should post to ELC a one-paragraph response to the readings by 7pm on Monday. Responses do not need to summarize the readings. Instead, discuss what you found the most interesting in the readings and why, and include 3 questions for discussion in class.

Midterm Exam

Midterm exam covering the topics addressed in the course so far.

Final Paper

The final assignment will be an annotated bibliography on a topic of students' choice. Students should select at least 10-12 peer reviewed academic sources to draw. The paper should be between 10-12 double-spaced pages. Further instructions about the final assignment will be provided in the second half of the semester.

Policies

Attendance

There is no grade for attendance. However, participation makes up 20% of your grade. In the event of Covid-19 related changes, the course may become hybrid or online, and synchronous and asynchronous options will be outlined. If you have any public health concerns (if you are sick, or feel the classroom is unsafe given UGA has no mask or vaccine mandates) I will also make a Zoom link available for you to participate in the class online instead of in-person.

Academic Integrity

Every student must agree to abide by UGA's academic honesty policy and procedures known as [A Culture of Honesty](#) and the University of Georgia Student Honor Code, which work together to define a climate of academic honesty and integrity at the university.

Special Needs

This course is guided by the assumption of dignity and respect for all persons in the classroom. My hope is to support diversity of learners and to provide a non-threatening environment. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of classes), and make sure that you have contacted the Disability Resource Center: <http://drc.uga.edu>

Laptops and Other Devices in Class

The use of laptops, ipads, phones, and any other electronic devices in class is not permitted. If you require the use of an electronic device due to a disability, speak with me during the first week of classes to receive permission. In the case of transition to hybrid format due to concerns about public health, computers will be permitted.

Coronavirus Information for Students

Face Coverings:

Wear a mask if you care about other people's health and safety.

DawgCheck:

Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website—whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus: <https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/>

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.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 am notified that I have been exposed?

Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc: to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

How do I get a test?

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162.

UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

What do I do if I test positive?

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is **required** to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.

Class Schedule and Readings*

*This is a tentative schedule and changes will be made during the semester

| | |
|---|--|
| Tue. Jan. 11 | Introduction to the Course |
| Part I: Religion, Secularism, Resurgence | |
| Thur. Jan. 13 | Why Religion? Why Now? (+What is Religion? + Intros) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hehir, J. Bryan. "Why Religion? Why Now?" <i>Rethinking religion and world affairs</i> (2012): 15-24. • Casanova, José. "Rethinking public religions." |
| Tue. Jan. 18 | Religious Resurgence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berger, Peter. "The De-secularization of the World: A Global Overview," in <i>The Descularization of the World</i>. • Grzymala-Busse, Anna (2012) "Why Comparative Politics should take Religion (More) Seriously", <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i>, 15, 421-442. |
| Thur. Jan 20 | Secularism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. <i>Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2011. Chapter 3 Comparing secularization worldwide. • [P] Charles Taylor, "Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism." in <i>The power of religion in the public sphere</i>. Columbia University Press, 2011. • [P] Schaefer, Donovan O. "The Secular Twist: Nonreligion in the World Religions Classroom." <i>Implicit Religion</i> 22.1 (2019): 86-93. |
| Part II: Religion and Democracy | |
| Tue. Jan. 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stepan, Alfred C. "Religion, democracy, and the" twin tolerations"." <i>Journal of democracy</i> 11.4 (2000): 37-57. • Rawls, John. "Idea of Public Reason Revisited, The." <i>University of Chicago. Law Review</i>. 64 (1997). |
| Thur. Jan. 27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] March, Andrew "Rethinking Religious Reasons in Public Justification." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 107.03 (2013): 523-39. • [P] Habermas, Jürgen. "Religion in the public sphere." <i>European journal of philosophy</i> 14.1 (2006): 1-25. • [P] Bhargava, Rajeev. "How Should States Deal with Deep Religious Diversity: Can Anything Be Learnt from the Indian Model |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| | of Secularism?" |
| Tue. Feb. 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying Religion in the Age of Trump." <i>Religion and American Culture</i> 27.1 (2017). • Braunstein, Ruth, Todd Nicholas Fuist, and Rhys H. Williams. "Religion and progressive politics in the United States." <i>Sociology Compass</i> 13.2 (2019) |
| Thur. Feb. 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P]Minkenberg, Michael. "Religion and the radical right." <i>The Oxford handbook of the radical right</i> 1 (2018): 366-393. • [P] Leidig, Eviane. "Hindutva as a variant of right-wing extremism." <i>Patterns of Prejudice</i> 54.3 (2020): 215-237. • [P] Tao, Yu. "Unlikely friends of the authoritarian and atheist ruler: Religious groups and collective contention in rural China." <i>Politics and Religion</i> 8.1 (2015): 86-110. |
| Tue. Feb. 8 | <p>Religion and Freedom of Speech</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Screening: Danish Cartoons Documentary</i> • Mahmood, Saba. "Religious reason and secular affect: An incommensurable divide?" <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 35.4 (2009): 836-862. • March, Andrew F. "Speaking about Muhammad, Speaking for Muslims." <i>Critical Inquiry</i> 37.4 (2011): 806-821. |
| Thur. Feb. 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] Tamir, Yael. "Remember Amalek: Religious Hate Speech," in Rosenblum, Nancy L. <i>Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith: Religious</i>. |
| Tue. Feb. 15 | <p>The Politics of Religious Freedom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman. <i>Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion</i>. Princeton University Press, 2015. (selections) • Martínez-Torrón, Javier. "COVID-19 and religious freedom: Some comparative perspectives." <i>Laws</i> 10.2 (2021): 39. |
| Thur. Feb.17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] Laborde, Cécile, and Winnifred F. Sullivan. "Religious Exemptions? A dialogue on the impossibility of religious freedom." <i>Quaderni di diritto e politica ecclesiastica</i> 16.1 (2013). • [P] Mauldin, Joshua T. "Contesting religious freedom: Impossibility, normativity, and justice." <i>Oxford Journal of Law and Religion</i> 5.3 (2016): 457-481. • [P] Wenger. <i>Indian Dances and the Politics of Religious Freedom, 1870–1930</i>. |
| | Part III: Religion and Gender |

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| | |
| Tue. Feb. 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening: <i>Get: The Trial of Vivian Amsalem</i> • Nussbaum, Martha. "Religion and women's equality: The case of India." In <i>Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith</i> (2000). |
| Thur. Feb. 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Okin, Suzan, "Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?" • Al-Hibri, Azizah, "Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/Minority Women?" • Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Do Muslim women really need saving?" Anthropological reflections on cultural relativism and its others." <i>American anthropologist</i> 104.3 (2002): 783-790. |
| Tue. March 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mahmood, Saba. "Feminist theory, embodiment, and the docile agent: Some reflections on the Egyptian Islamic revival." <i>Cultural anthropology</i> 16.2 (2001): 202-236. • Ben Shitrit, Lihi. "Women, freedom, and agency in religious political movements: Reflections from women activists in Shas and the Islamic movement in Israel." <i>Journal of Middle East Women's Studies</i> 9.3 (2013): 81-107. |
| Thur. March 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm Exam (take home) |
| Tue. March 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puar, Jasbir. "Rethinking homonationalism." <i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> 45.02 (2013): 336-339. • Deo, Nandini (forthcoming) "Religion, Nationalism, and Gender: Perspective from South Asia", <i>Asian Journal of Comparative Politics</i>. • Ben Shitrit, et al. "'Pinkwashing' the radical-right: Gender and the mainstreaming of radical-right policies and actions." <i>European Journal of Political Research</i> (2021). |
| Thur. March 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] Cassese, Erin C. and Mirya R. Holman (2017) "Religion, Gendered Authority, and Identity in American Politics", <i>Politics and Religion</i>, 10(1), 31-56. • [P] Zion-Waldoks, Tanya. "Religious Feminism (s) and Beyond: Reflections on Politics of Change and Knowledge Production." <i>Religion and Gender</i> 11.1 (2021): 137-143. |
| | Part IV: Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding |
| Tue. March 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Textbook Chapter 2) Appleby, R. Scott, et al. "Religious Violence." • Cavanaugh, William T. "Does religion cause violence." <i>Harvard Divinity Bulletin</i> 35.2 (2007): 1-18. |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | |
| Thur. March 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening: <i>Paradise Now</i> |
| Tue. March 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Textbook Chapter 9) Omar, A. Rashied. "Religious Violence and State Violence." • Saiya, Nilay (2019) "Religion, State and Terrorism: A Global Analysis", <i>Terrorism and Political Violence</i>, 31(2), 204-233. |
| Thur. March 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] Kate E. Temoney, "Religion and Genocide Nexuses: Bosnia as Case Study," <i>Religions</i>, 2017. • [P] Timothy Longman, "Church Politics and the Genocide in Rwanda," <i>Journal of Religion in Africa</i>, 2001. |
| Tue. April 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening: <i>The Imam and the Pastor</i> • (Textbook Chapter 1) Omer, Atalia. "Religious Peacebuilding." |
| Thur. April 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] Abu-Nimer, Mohammed. "Conflict resolution, culture, and religion: Toward a training model of interreligious peacebuilding." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 38, no. 6 (2001): 685-704. • [P] (Textbook Chapter 19) Ochs, Peter. "The possibilities and limits of inter-religious dialogue." |
| Tue. April 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Textbook Chapter 14) Gopin, Marc. "Negotiating secular and religious contributions to social change and peacebuilding." • (Textbook Chapter 15) Shah, Timothy Samuel. "Secular militancy as an obstacle to peacebuilding." |
| Thur. April 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [P] (Textbook Chapter 17) Kadayifci-Orellana, S. Ayse. "Peacebuilding in the Muslim World." • [P] (Textbook Chapter 16) Ngo, Tam, D. Smyer Yu, and P. Veer. "Religion and peace in Asia." |
| Tue. April 19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Textbook Chapter 12) Hayward, Susan. "Women, religion, and peacebuilding." • Blanch, Andrea K. "Women Reborn: A case study of the intersection of women, religion and peacebuilding in a Palestinian village in Israel." 30-59. |
| Thur. April 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group presentations and final paper review |
| Tue. April 26 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of group presentations |
| Thur. April 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Presentations |
| Tue. | Considering Religious Literacy |

| | |
|-------|--|
| May 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Moore, Diane L.</u> "Diminishing religious literacy: Methodological assumptions and analytical frameworks for promoting the public understanding of religion." <i>Religious literacy in policy and practice</i> (2015): 27-38. |
|-------|--|

Final Paper Due: May 11 at 5pm.