

# God and Caesar

Political Studies 220

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Office: Room 408

Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, Room 404

4<sup>th</sup> period (12:00 - 12:50)

5<sup>th</sup> period (1:00 - 1:50)

## Course Description

What is the proper relationship between religion and state? Is it strict separation, as many Americans believe? Or are there other alternatives worth considering? What should we make of the oft-heard claim that America is a “Christian country”? Do the Ten Commandments belong in courthouses? Do the words “under God” belong in the Pledge of Allegiance? How should people with differing religious beliefs argue about political issues? Is a religious democracy a logical possibility? In this course, we will analyze philosophical and religious theories of religion and the state; investigate the ways in which the United States and other nations handle the boundaries – or lack thereof – between politics and religion; explore religion-state conflicts in selected states (including France, China and Israel); and consider the nature and promise of Muslim democracy as it takes root in the emerging regime of Iraq and elsewhere. The course will conclude with student research presentations on conflicts between God and Caesar in countries around the world.

## Structure

Class sessions will vary in format. On most days, the class will be conducted seminar-style. Once in a while I will give a mini-lecture on a new topic or reading selection. We will explore the issues through writing, discussion and in-class debates. Consistent active engagement of every student is essential to the success of the course.

## Books

You may not make any marks in the three course texts provided by BHSEC. If you would like your own copies (which I would recommend), the books are cheap and readily available.

- John Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration* (any edition)
- Stephen Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (Anchor Books, 1994)
- Noah Feldman, *After Jihad: America and the Struggle for Islamic Democracy* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003)

## Additional Readings

Many of our readings will be drawn from a two-volume coursepack, the first volume of which I will distribute early in the semester. These anthologies are yours to keep courtesy of Bard College (so mark them up to your hearts' content!), but safeguard your copies and write your name on the outside cover: you'll get only one of each. I will pass out additional photocopied readings from time to time.

## Websites to Bookmark

Several websites contain extensive country-by-country information on religion and politics that should prove interesting and useful in getting started on your final research projects (*see Requirements, below*). The U.S. State Department's annual International Religious Freedom Report is the most comprehensive and updated (<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2004/>). The Religious Freedom World Report, though a bit out of date, features links to other relevant articles and websites (<http://www.religiousfreedom.com/wrpt/rptindex.htm>).

## Requirements

*Preparation for class:* Everyone must come to each class ready to participate. Prior to each class each student must complete the reading assignment listed on the syllabus for that day and have something to say about it.

*Response Journal:* You must dedicate a notebook to in-class and out-of-class writing on the questions and topics we will be exploring. *You should make journal entries for every reading on the syllabus.* You are free to choose a format that works for you, but I would strongly suggest using a "quote and response" format for at least some of your entries. With this format, you copy down a short passage from the day's reading and then attempt to explain it, critically engage it, or ask questions of it. This can mean exploring an author's argument, developing a response, ranting, raving, querying, but in all cases *engaging*. When I examine and evaluate your response journal (which I will do, with short notice, several times during the term), I will look for evidence that you are reading carefully and thinking through questions raised by the readings. Your consistent interaction with the texts in your journal is crucial to effective and reflective participation in class discussions.

*Exams:* There will be no Midterm. A Final Exam will be administered in January.

*Writing Assignments:* In addition to less formal in-class and out-of-class writing, each student will write two polished essays of 3-4 pages each.

*Final Research Project:* In groups of three, each student will identify, research and teach a portion of a class on a contemporary question of religion and politics not otherwise covered in the course. Our class meetings after the Winter Recess will be devoted to presentation of these issues. A written component of the project will be due at the time of the presentation. Further details forthcoming in late October.

## Grading

Attendance and Participation	20%
Response Journal and Short Writing Assignments	20%
Two 800-word Essays (each 10%)	20%

Final Project (1000 words of writing + presentation)	20%
Final Exam	20%

(\*) Attendance includes punctuality, attendance and overall contributions to class discussions and debates. Note that participation does not mean simply talking in class. It means being well prepared, contributing thoughtfully to discussions, listening carefully to others and engaging fellow students' concerns and questions. Latenesses and absences will adversely affect your participation grade.

**A very important note: Be sure to provide appropriate citations in all of your work! (1) Any phrases, sentences or paragraphs appearing in your essays that are directly taken from another source must appear within quotation marks AND be followed by a citation (footnote or parenthetical reference). (2) Any ideas that are taken from another source must be identified with a citation. (3) All listed citations must be to sources you have researched (i.e., seen with your own eyes). Never list sources in your bibliography that you have not found yourself. (4) All work submitted must be your own, and must not be work submitted for another class. Consequences for academic dishonesty include automatic failure and additional sanctions. When in doubt if you are citing correctly, ask.**

## Calendar and Reading Assignments

[Note: readings denoted (CP) are found in the coursepack]

### Part I: Introduction and Theoretical Set-up

<b>Week 1 (9/15 - 9/16)</b> Th. 9/16	<b>Introduction to the course</b> Preliminaries; <i>Matthew 22: 15-33</i> ("Render unto Caesar..."), <i>Matthew 6:24</i> ("No man can serve two masters") (CP); assignment for Monday: write a 1-2 pp. personal "preface" to your study of religion and politics
<b>Week 2 (9/19 - 9/22)</b> Mon. 9/19  Wed. 9/21 Th. 9/22	<b>Toleration</b> Leon Botstein's Bard College Commencement Address, 2005 (CP); Feldman, Preface to <i>Divided by God</i> , "History and Destiny," pp. 16-17 (handout); sharing of students' personal prefaces Locke, <i>Letter Concerning Toleration</i> (entire) Locke discussion
<b>Week 3 (9/26 - 9/29)</b> Mon. 9/26  Wed. 9/28 Th. 9/29	<b>Public Religion</b> Benyamin Neuberger, "Models of Religion-State Relationship" (CP); Alfred Stepan, "Religion, Democracy and the 'Twin Tolerations'" (CP) Jose Casanova, <i>Public Religions in the Modern World</i> , ch.1, pp. 3-39 (CP) Jose Casanova, <i>Public Religions in the Modern World</i> , ch. 2, pp. 40-66 (CP)

### Part II: Religious Argument in Democratic Debate

<b>Week 4 (10/3 - 10/6)</b> Mon. 10/3 Th. 10/6	<b>Keep Religion Out</b> Audi, "The Place of Religious Argument in a Free and Democratic Society" (CP) Discussion of Audi's position
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\*\* Rosh Hashana, Tues. 10/4 - Wed. 10/5 - No School \*\*

\*\* Columbus Day, Mon. 10/10 - No School \*\*

**Week 5 (10/12) Bring Religion In**  
Wed. 10/12 Stephen Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief*, chs. 1-3 (pp. 3-66) & ch. 11 (pp. 213-232); Richard Rorty, "Religion as Conversation-Stopper" (CP)

**\*\* Yom Kippur, Th. 10/13 - No School \*\***

**Week 6 (10/17 - 10/20) A Middle Way?**  
Mon. 10/17 John Rawls, "The Idea of Public Reason Revisited" (CP); Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (CP)  
Wed. 10/19 Michael Walzer, "Drawing the Line: Religion and Politics" (CP); Michael McConnell, "Five Reasons to Reject the Claim that Religious Arguments Should Be Excluded from Democratic Deliberation" (CP)  
Th. 10/20 In-class debate: *Should religious reasoning play a role in political discussion?*

### **Part III: Religion and Politics in the United States**

**Week 7 (10/24 - 10/27) Origins**  
Mon. 10/24 Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, pp. 1-20 (CP); Stephen Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief*, ch. 5 (pp. 83-101); E.J. Dionne Jr., "Faith Full" (CP)  
Wed. 10/26 Noah Feldman, *Divided by God*, pp. 1-56 (CP)  
Th. 10/27 Discussion

**Week 8 (10/31 - 11/3) Perspectives**  
Mon. 10/31 Feldman, *Divided by God*, pp. 220-251 (CP); Mark Lilla, "Church Meets State" (CP)  
Wed. 11/2 Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, pp. 479-492 (CP)  
Th. 11/3 Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief*, chs. 7-9 (pp. 124-182)

**Week 9 (11/7 - 11/10) Contemporary Issues**  
Mon. 11/7 Ten Commandments displays: Linda Greenhouse, three articles (CP)  
Wed. 11/9 "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance (handouts)  
Th. 11/10 Faith-based initiatives (handouts)

### **Part IV: International Perspectives**

**Week 10 (11/14 - 11/17) China: official secularism**  
Mon. 11/14 Chen Huanzhong, "A Brief Overview of Law and Religion in China" (CP); Anne S.Y. Cheung, "In Search of a Theory of Cult and Freedom of Religion in China: The Case of Falun Gong" (CP)  
Th. 11/17 Tu Weiming, "The Quest for Meaning: Religion in China" (CP)

**\*\* Wed. 11/16 - Community Day (No class) \*\***

**Week 11 (11/21 - 11/23) France and Turkey: *laïcité***  
Mon. 11/21 Andrew Davison, "Turkey, a 'Secular' State?" (CP)  
Wed. 11/23 Dominique Maillard, "The Muslims in France and the French Model of Integration" (CP)

**\*\* Thanksgiving Recess: Th. 11/23 - Sun. 11/27 \*\***

**Week 12 (11/28 - 12/1) Israel: Jewish democracy**  
Mon. 11/28 Cohen and Susser, *Israel and the Politics of Jewish Identity*, ch. 1 (CP)

Wed. 11/30 Steven Mazie, "Rethinking Religious Establishment and Liberal Democracy:  
Lessons from Israel" (CP)  
Th. 12/1 Discussion

## **Part V: Muslim Democracy**

### **Week 13 (12/5 - 12/8) Combining Islam and Democracy**

Mon. 12/5 Vali Nasr, "Muslim Democracy" (CP)  
Wed. 12/7 Feldman, *After Jihad*, pp. xi - 50 (preface + chs. 1-4)  
Th. 12/8 Feldman, *After Jihad*, pp. 51 - 78 (chs. 5-8)

### **Week 14 (12/12 - 12/15) Case Studies**

Mon. 12/12 Iran: Feldman, *After Jihad*, pp. 81-100  
Wed. 12/14 Turkey and Indonesia: Feldman, *After Jihad*, pp. 101-118  
Th. 12/15 Parkistan, Egypt & beyond: Feldman, *After Jihad*, pp. 119-136, 162-173, 182-186

### **Week 15 (12/19 - 12/22) Islam and the Constitution of the new Iraq**

Mon. 12/19 Feldman, *After Jihad*, pt. 3 "The Necessity of Islamic Democracy," pp. 189-234  
Wed. 12/21 Iraq's constitution (handouts)  
Th. 12/22 Discussion: *How well does Iraq's constitution blend Islam and democracy?*

**\*\* Winter Recess: Sat. 12/24 - Mon. 1/2 \*\***

## **Part VI: God vs. Caesar, continued**

### **Week 16 (1/4 - 1/5) Student Project Presentations**

Wed. 1/4  
Th. 1/5

### **Week 17 (1/9 - 1/12) Student Project Presentations**

Mon. 1/9  
Wed. 1/11  
Th. 1/12

**\*\* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Mon. 1/16 \*\***

### **Week 18 (1/18 - 1/19) Student Project Presentations**

Wed. 1/18  
Th. 1/19

**Final Exams: Mon. 1/23 - Fri. 1/27**