

RELIGION AND POLITICS

Fall 2008
Room 104 PAC
Mon. & Wed. 1:10-2:30 p.m.

Office: 310 PAC, x. 2489
Hours: Mon. 11-12, Wed. 3-4,
Thurs. 4-5, & by appointment

How has religion affected political institutions and ideologies and, in turn, been affected by them? Which religious values and institutions are compatible with political life and which ones go against or beyond politics? Can the concepts of law in religion and politics be reconciled?

Do the differences among religions matter when it comes to political community, or are all religions the same in their external relations to the state, as communal identities mobilized for political or for anti-political ends? When people are mobilized into social movements and political parties based on religious identity, what happens as these groups approach plurality or majority status? What effect do they have on other parties in the coalition that forms the government, and how do they strengthen or destabilize the regime?

On religious doctrine: are the distinction between public and private life, and the privatization of fundamental moral commitments, compatible with certain religious doctrines and incompatible with others? On religious practice: can decisions of religious judges, independent of central political authority, co-exist with state power, and what happens when religious and secular law conflict? Can this be resolved? More generally, to what extent does a constitutional political order depend on cultural presuppositions from religion? Or is the modern state better off without them?

Our topic is the effect of religion on political life. This also involves looking at the effect of political life on religion. We can consider religion and politics at the empirical level -- what is and what can be; as well as at the normative level -- what should be.

We will explore the relation of three major monotheisms -- Judaism, Christianity (especially Roman Catholicism and Protestantism), and Islam -- to political life in nation-states and empires. We will study some historic texts of each religion, and elaborations in early modern Europe. We will devote special attention to the United States, with comparisons to Europe and the Middle East.

Texts: The following paperback books are recommended for purchase. All books, and some chapters and articles, are on two-hour reserve at Olin Library. The articles and some chapters are also available on ERes, electronic reserve for the course.

Arian, Asher. Politics in Israel. The Second Republic, 2nd ed. (CQ Press, 2005)
 Esposito, John L. Islam. The Straight Path, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2005)
 Holy Bible. HarperCollins Study Bible, New RSV (HarperCollins Publishers), OR
Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, RSV (Penguin Group, USA, Intl.)
Koran, trans. N.J. Dawood (Penguin)
 Morgan, Edmund S. The Puritan Dilemma (Longman)
 Nusseibeh, Sari. Once Upon a Country. A Palestinian Life (Picador)
 Reichley, A. James. Faith in Politics (Brookings)

Course Structure and Expectations

I will lecture for background and setting frameworks -- presenting themes and posing questions. Readings should be completed by the date for which they are assigned, so we can have good discussions. (Readings in parentheses are optional.)

Written work: one essay, one paper, midterm quiz, and final exam. Essay (3 pages) due Sept. 12. Paper (5 pages) due Oct. 17. Midterm quiz, Nov. 12. Final exam.

Eric Taffet will serve as Teaching Apprentice and is available to help with the assignments, as am I.

Syllabus

- Sept. 3 Introduction: Religion, Civil Society, and Politics
 James Reichley, Faith in Politics, Ch. 1
- Belief and Practice
- Sept. 8 Leviticus 16
 Isaiah 57:14 to 58:14
 John Esposito, The Straight Path, rev. 3rd ed., "Epilogue"
 Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, eds., Medieval Political Philosophy,
 "Introduction," pp. 12-15 (xerox)
- Sept. 10 Isidore Epstein, "The Talmud in the Making" and "Talmudic Judaism (iii);
 Religious Observances," in Judaism (1959, 1964), Chs. 13 & 16, pp. 121-131,
 160-179 (ERes)
 Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets (1969), vol. I, Ch. 11, "Justice" (ERes)
- Sept. 12 ESSAY DUE

cont.

Hebrew Bible

- Sept. 15 Creation and family
 Genesis 1-4; 6:1-10; 9:1-19; 11:1-9; 21-22; 25:19-34; 27:1-45
- Sept. 17 Covenant and law
 Genesis 15; 17
 Exodus 1-23; 32
- Sept. 22 Kingship
 1 Samuel 8-9; 10:1, 17-27; 12; 15:1; 16:1, 14-19
 2 Samuel 3:1; 5:1-5; 6:1-5; 7; 8:15

Christian Scriptures

- Sept. 24 Teachings and parables
 Matthew 1-2; 5-6; 10; 20:1-15; 22; 23:15-40
- Sept. 29 Messiah and apostles
 Matt. 26-28
 Mark 1; 4
 Luke 1-2
 John 1; 11:47-53
- Oct. 1 State and society
 Matt. 22:17-21; Mark 12:17; Acts 5:29
 Romans 12:2; 13
 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; 13

Islamic Revelation

- Oct. 6 Creation and destiny
Koran (Qur'an), 23 The Believers, 55 The Merciful, 96 Clots of Blood, 87 The Most High, 41 Revelations Well Expounded, 12 Joseph, 19 Mary, 11 Hūd, 37 The Ranks
- Oct. 8 Social justice and repentance
Koran, 5 The Table, 2 The Cow, 4:1-45, 126-end, Women, 17 The Night Journey, 33 The Confederate Tribes, 58 She Who Pleaded, 9 Repentance

Christianity in the United StatesProtestantism

- Oct. 13 Religion and politics in the American founding
Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Dilemma
- Oct. 15 A. James Reichley, Faith in Politics, Ch. 3, "Intentions of the Founders"
- Oct. 17 PAPER DUE
- Oct. 20 Religion in American political history
Reichley, Ch. 5, "Religion and Political Action, 1790-1963"
- Cf. France: Phyllis Cohen Albert, The Modernization of French Jewry, Intro.,
Ch. 3, Summ. and Concl., pp. xix-xxii, 45-55, 303-14 (ERes)
- Oct. 22 Reichley, Chs. 6 & 7, "Time of Turmoil, 1965 to 1985," "Faith in Action, 1986
to 2002"
- Oct. 29 First Amendment liberties
Reichley, Ch. 4, "Interpreting the First Amendment"
- Cf. France: Patrick Weil, "Lifting the Veil of Ignorance," Progressive Politics
3.1 (March 2004), 5 pp. (ERes)

Judaism in Israel

- Nov. 3 Zionism
Shlomo Avineri, "Introduction: Zionism as a Revolution," in The Making of
Modern Zionism. Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State, pp. 3-13 (ERes)
Asher Arian, Politics in Israel. The Second Republic, Chs. 1-2, 12
- Nov. 5 Political parties
Arian, Chs. 5, 7-8
- Nov. 10 Government
Arian, Ch. 9; Ch. 4 passim.
Avineri, "Rabbi Kook: The Dialectics of Redemption," in Making of Modern
Zionism, Ch. 16, p. 187-197 (ERes)
- Nov. 12 Interests and policy
Arian, Ch. 3 passim.; Ch. 10, esp. pp. 348-363;
in Ch. 11, pp. 364-368, b.404-m.408 (nb pages different in 1998 ed.)
- Nov. 12 QUIZ

Islamic and Muslim regimes

- Nov. 17 Islamic movements in history
John Esposito, Islam. The Straight Path, Chs. 1-2
- Nov. 19 Belief and practice
Esposito, Ch. 3
- Nov. 24 Contemporary politics
Esposito, Ch. 5
- Dec. 1 Palestinian nationalism
Rashid Khalidi, The Iron Cage. The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood, b.p. 52-64 (ERes)
Sari Nusseibeh, Once Upon a Country. A Palestinian Life,
Prologue, Chs. 1-10
- Dec. 3 Nusseibeh, Chs. 11-21
- Dec. 8 Nusseibeh, Chs. 22-33, Epilogue

(For review:

Benjamin Neuberger, "Religion and State in Europe and Israel," in Reuven Hazan and Moshe Maor, eds., Parties, Elections and Cleavages, pp. 65-85 (ERes))