

PSCI 4150.001, Religion and Politics in the U.S.
MWF 12.00-12.50p, Wooten Hall 215
Syllabus, Fall 2016

Dr. Elizabeth Oldmixon
Office: Wooten Hall 156
Office hours: Monday 1.00-4.00p and by appointment

Course Description

In spite of predictions that religion would wither away with in the face of modernization, religion remains a factor in contemporary political life. Even casual observation indicates that religion remains interwoven into the fabric of contemporary politics. Our goal is to obtain an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the salience of religion in public life. Although the study of religion and politics raises a host of deep philosophical questions, the principal aim of the course is to understand how religion affects politics (and *vice versa*), rather than to explore the moral questions raised by the interaction of these two forces.

Student Learning Objectives

- Explain religion's role in American politics.
- Assess the relationship between religion and democracy.
- Demonstrate active participation in class.
- Think critically and communicate effectively about the course topics.
- Execute research that demonstrates the ability to apply course material.

Blackboard

A Blackboard page is maintained for this course at <https://learn.unt.edu/>. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard regularly for assignments and notices. Most assignments will be submitted and grades posted in Blackboard.

Links to both texts and the following course materials are also available in Blackboard.

- *Class Discussion in Piazza*
We will be using Piazza for class communications. The system is designed to get you help fast and efficiently from classmates and the instructional staff. Rather than emailing questions that might be of relevance to the entire class, post your questions on Piazza. If you have a question that is private in nature, you should send a private message in Piazza, rather than email. Create an account using the link in Blackboard. A note on etiquette: please sign your private messages with your name and include an appropriate salutation.
- *Remind* (optional)
If you wish to receive course-related reminders via email or text, you may sign up to receive notifications at this link: remind.com/join/psci4150 or text @psci4150 81010.

Required Materials

Putnam, Robert D. and David E. Campbell. 2010. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks – hereinafter called, AG.

Readings and videos available via Blackboard.

REEF Polling Account (*free for all UNT students*)

- Students should create (or log-in to an existing) REEF account in Blackboard.

Grading

All assignments and exams in the course will be assessed as Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory, with the specifications required for Satisfactory articulated on each assignment. In general, Satisfactory should not be viewed as “minimally competent,” but rather as a mark of having achieved the assignment’s learning goals and specifications. An assignment meets the goals, or it does not—there is no gradation of assessment. The only letter grade that will be given in the course will be your final grade, and it will reflect the “bundles” of assignments and requirements you have satisfactorily accomplished in the class. That final letter grade is not an assessment of your intelligence, your abilities, or your value as a person. Rather, the grade reflects what you demonstrated that you learned in the course: no more, no less.

Built into this system is a good deal of choice as to how much you wish to learn and how hard you want to work to demonstrate and apply that learning. You might choose that passing the course with a C is sufficient for your goals—it is perfectly appropriate and worthy of respect for you to make that choice, especially if it allows you to proactively allocate your time to other endeavors. If you strive to get an A in the course and maximize your learning, you should know that you are taking on that work and challenge yourself, and should make sure you are in a personal and academic situation to achieve that level of engagement.

Grading Bundles

A Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of A. The work required to complete this bundle provides strong mastery of course material, and indicates that students can apply it to your own life and effectively communicate it in their own words.

- Satisfactorily complete the basic portion of 2 exams
- Satisfactorily complete the advanced portion of 2 exams
- Earn 80% of available REEF points
- Satisfactorily complete Short Papers 1 and 2
- Satisfactorily complete Problem-Based Learning Paper

B Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of B. The work required to complete this bundle provides good mastery of course material and indicates that students can apply it to your own life.

- Satisfactorily complete the basic portion of 2 exams
- Satisfactorily complete the advanced portion of 1 exam

- Earn 80% of available REEF points
- Satisfactorily complete Short Paper 1
- Satisfactorily complete Problem-Based Learning Paper

C Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of C. The work required to complete this bundle provides fair mastery of course material.

- Satisfactorily complete the basic portion of 2 exams
- Satisfactorily complete Short Paper 1

D Bundle – Students who complete this bundle will receive a final course grade of D. The work required to complete this bundle provides minimal mastery of course material.

- Satisfactorily complete the basic portion of 1 exam
- Satisfactorily complete Short Paper 1

Students failing to Satisfactorily complete at least the D Bundle will receive a final course grade of F.

Tokens & Flexibility

Every student starts the course with 3 virtual tokens that can be “exchanged” for some leniency or opportunities for revision. Using a token will allow a student to do the following:

- Make up for 10 REEF questions
- Submit a Short Paper or the Problem-Based Paper up to 48 hours late with no penalty
- Revise an unsatisfactory Short Paper
- Resubmit the Advanced Section of One of the First Two Exams (2 tokens)

Assignments and Examinations

Examinations

Two midterm exams and a cumulative final exam will be given. Exams will cover material from lectures and required readings. Each exam will have Basic and Advanced Sections.

Basic Section

- Will include questions that require students to remember, understand, and apply course material.
- Question types will include a combination of multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false, matching, and ordering questions.
- The Basic Section of each exam will be administered as a closed-book/note test in the Sage Hall Testing Center during a regularly scheduled class meeting.
- In order to Satisfactorily complete the Basic Section of an exam, you must earn 70% of the available points.

Advanced Section

- Will include questions that require students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate

information using course material. (Students may consult their text and/or notes, but may not consult with each other.)

- Question types will include a combination of short answer and essay short essay questions.
- The Advanced Section of each exam will be administered as a take-home exam. Students may consult course materials, but not other students.
- In order to Satisfactorily complete the Advanced Section of an exam, students must earn 80% of the available points and turn the exam in via Blackboard by 11.59p on the same day as the Basic Section is taken.

If you are dissatisfied with your exam scores or missed one of the first two tests, you may take the final exam in an attempt to satisfactorily complete an additional exam.

No make-up exams will be given unless you have a university-excused absence or a family or a documented and verifiable medical emergency. If you will miss an exam because of a university-approved absence, you should make arrangements to take the exam early if you know about your absence ahead of time. Students that will miss an exam due to travel with UNT athletic teams or performance groups, or for observance of a religious holiday, for example, should make arrangements to take their exams prior to their absences.

REEF Points

We will use REEF polling (a student response system) in class this term. Students should use a personal electronic device to respond to REEF polling questions. For some REEF questions, there are 2 points possible; students earn 1 point for responding and 1 point for choosing the correct response. For some questions, students receive full credit for responding. If you do not have a personal electronic device that you can use in class (smartphone, tablet, or computer) and wish to earn credit for REEF participation, please see me right away. Missed REEF questions cannot be made up, except with the use of a token.

Short Papers

Two short papers are due during the semester. Due dates are listed on the syllabus. Papers prompts are listed below. Satisfactorily Short Papers require:

- Paper submission via Blackboard by the due date at 11.59p
- Papers be clearly written in one's own words
- Papers be responsive to the prompt
- Clear writing with no more than four spelling and/or grammatical errors per paper.
- Papers meet the word count requirement

1. Candidates' religion paper: write an opinion paper on the question of whether voters should take candidates' religion into account when casting their ballots. (1,000 words)

2. Congregational visit paper: students will attend at least one worship service of a faith other than their own and then write a paper describing the experience. This paper will also include some basic research on the congregation and its larger denomination. (1,500 words)

Problem-Based Learning Paper

You work for either the Republican National Committee or the Democratic National Committee. The mission of your organization is the build the party, support candidates, and elect as many of your fellow partisans as possible. The chair of your organization has appointed you to a team tasked with writing a report that 1) explains the importance of outreach to religion groups as an electoral strategy, 2) assesses and explains how well the party and its presidential candidate engaged religious groups in the 2016 presidential election, and 3) recommends strategies for future electoral success. Your report should be directed to the chair of your organization.

Complete this report in groups or two or three, and think through the following questions: What is the task we face? Is it multifaceted? What do know, and what do we need to know? Where can we find the information we need to complete this task?

Satisfactory papers require:

- Submission via Blackboard by 11.59p on the due date listed on the Course Schedule
- Clear writing in the words of the student authors
- Responsiveness to all components of the prompt
- Use of at least 5 journalistic, scholarly, and/or primary sources
- Proper citation of materials using APSA citation style
- No more than eight stylistic (spelling and grammatical) errors per paper
- 2,200-2,600 words of text, not counting the works cited page

Course Schedule

Unless otherwise instructed, you should plan to have all the readings completed for a topic by the date we begin the topic.

Unit 1: The Religious Context of American Politics

Introductory Material

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| August 29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read syllabus• Create a REEF account• Create a Piazza account• Sign up for Remind (optional) |
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Religious Concepts

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| August 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wald and Calhoun-Brown, “A Secular Society?” |
| September 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No class• Watch “God in America” |
| September 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No class |
| September 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• AG ch. 1 |

Constitutionalism and Culture

September 9	• Evans, “The Constitutions of Religious Pluralism in the United States”
September 12	• Tocqueville, selections from <i>Democracy in America</i>
September 14	• Bellah, selections from <i>Habits of the Heart</i>

The Religious Landscape

September 16	• Jones, “The Eclipse of White Christian America”
September 19	• AG chs. 3 and 4
September 21	• AG ch. 5

Unit 2: Religion and the State

Establishment

September 23	• Madison, “A Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments”
September 26	• Lithwick, “Crèche Test Dummies”
September 28	• Selected cases to be determined in class

Free Exercise

September 30	• Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> , Query XVII
October 3	• Epps, “The Strange Career of Free Exercise”
October 5	• Selected cases to be determined in class

Religious Tests

October 7	• Campbell, Green, and Monson, “A Stained-Glass Ceiling? Mormon Candidates and Presidential Campaigns”
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Exam

October 10	• Units 1 and 2 exam
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Unit 3: Political Engagement in Community

Attitudes and Mobilization

October 12	• AG ch. 11
	• Short Paper 1 due
October 14	• AG ch. 12
October 17	• Wald and Leege, “Mobilizing Religious Differences in American Politics”

Protestants

October 19	• Wald and Calhoun-Brown, “The Political Mobilization of Evangelical Protestants”
October 21	• Wald and Calhoun-Brown, “Mainline Activism: Sources and Reactions
October 24	• Finke and Stark, “Why ‘Mainline’ Denominations Decline”
October 26	• --

Catholics

October 28	• Jelen, “The American Church: On Being Catholic and American”
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October 31 • --

Race and Ethnicity

- November 2 • McDaniel, “When Will the Call Be Made? A History of Black Church Political Activism”
- November 4 • King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
- November 7 • AG, ch. 9
- November 7 • Leal, “Religion and the Political and Civic Lives of Latinos”

Sex and Sexuality

- November 9 • AG, ch. 8
- November 11 • Calhoun-Brown, “This Far by Faith? Religion, Gender, and Efficacy”

Minority Traditions

- November 14 • Greenberg and Wald, “Still Liberal After All These Years?”
- November 16 • Campbell and Monson, “Dry Kindling: A Political Profile of American Mormons”
- November 18 • Jamel, “Muslim Americans: Enriching or Depleting American Democracy?”
- November 21 • Short Paper 2 due

Pluralism, Tolerance, and Political Violence

- November 23 • Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State from Christian Militias to Al Qaeda*, ch. 1
- November 25 • No Class – Thanksgiving
- November 28 • Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State from Christian Militias to Al Qaeda*, pp. 182-192
- November 28 • “We the Klan Believe...”
- November 28 • Butler, “This is *Aryan Nations*”
- November 30 • Juergensmeyer, *Global Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State from Christian Militias to Al Qaeda*, ch. 5
- November 30 • Problem-Based Learning Paper due
- December 2 • AG ch. 15
- December 5 • --

Exams

- December 7 • Unit 3 exam
- December 14 • Cumulative Final Exam, 10.30a-12.30p
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Class Policies

For course drop information, see schedule at <http://essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html>.

Laptops

Research suggests that using laptops in class is negatively associated with student success. I advise against using laptops, but it is up to you. The larger problem is that laptop use negatively affects student success for the people sitting around laptop users. Laptop users should take care not to distract their peers.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of F in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Classroom Conduct

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Track Your Progress

Use this checklist to track your progress in PSCI 4150. To earn a grade, you must satisfactorily complete all items in that grade's column and all columns to the right.

- To earn a C, you must complete all items in the C and D columns.
- To earn a B, you must complete all items in the B, C, and D columns.
- To earn an A, you must complete all items in the A, B, C, and D columns.

	A	B	C	D
Exams – basic section			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exams – advanced section	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Short Paper 1				<input type="checkbox"/>
Short Paper 2	<input type="checkbox"/>			
80% of Reef Points		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Problem-Based Learning Paper		<input type="checkbox"/>		

Tokens Available: