

Religion and Politics in the United States

POS 4291 | Fall 2020

T | Period 4 (10:40am-11:30am)

R | Period 4-5 (10:40-12:35am)

Instructor: Dr. Angela F. McCarthy

Zoom Personal Meeting ID: 227 595 9385

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 12:30-2:30, (or) by appointment

Email: angelamccarthy@ufl.edu

BASIC COURSE COMMUNICATION INFORMATION

Communication: The best way for us to communicate is through Canvas messages or by email. For questions regarding graded work or course assignments, the safest way for us to communicate is through Canvas messages.

Office Hours: I am (almost) always available for students to inquire about their grades, discuss weekly assignments, or chat about religion and politics. I am available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 12:30 - 2:30, or by appointment. If the scheduled office hours do not fit your schedule, then let us make an appointment. I am happy to accommodate your scheduling needs.

Email Response: If I do not respond to your email inquiry within 24 hours, then you should email me again. You are not "bugging" me with a follow up email. I should respond to ALL emails within 24 hours. If you email me during schedule office hours, then I will email you within the hour. This is my commitment to you.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the (complex) relationship between religion and politics in the United States. We will examine both the history of religion in America and the role that religion plays in contemporary politics and society. The principal objective of this course is to increase our understanding of the salience of religion in America—both past and present.

COURSE FOCUS

To reach our objective we will examine:

- the religious landscape of the United States (past and present)
- existing theories of religion, politics, and culture
- public opinion and voting behavior among religious (and non-religious) individuals
 - major differences among measures of religion: belonging, behaving, believing
- organized religious groups and social movements
- the role of religious and political elites
- religion as an aspect of American culture, society, and identity
- politics of religion in the courts and the legal system
- current topics in the field of religion and politics

REQUIRED TEXTS

Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices (6th edition).
Hertzke et al. (2019)

The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics
Eds. Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth (2009)

Additional materials (scholarly articles, data, media sources, etc.) are posted in Canvas.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Writing Assignments: 50%.
2. Quality Check Assignments: 35%.
3. Discussion: 15%.

GRADED WORK DESCRIPTION

See Canvas "Grading Rubric" and "List of Graded Work"

In sum:

1. Writing Assignments: 50%. There are 10 writing assignments. Taken together, the writing assignments are worth 50% of your final grade in the course. These assignments are critical thinking assignments where you will address/answer a writing prompt. You are required to engage with the course materials and critically analyze the content. Writing assignments are 1-page and single-spaced.
2. Quality Check Assignments: 35%. There are 4 quality check assignments. Taken together, the writing assignments are worth 35% of your final grade in the course. These assignments are similar to the writing assignment with one major exception: quality check assignments are 2-pages and single-spaced.
3. Discussion: 15%. Discussion requirements are twofold: (1) discussion participation and (2) discussion summary file upload to Canvas. You are expected to participate in class discussions. Discussions will be on Thursdays during the scheduled course time via Zoom breakout rooms. Prior to the start of the discussion, I will provide groups with a prompt/question that you will answer. During/after the discussion, you will upload a discussion summary to Canvas. Overall, you should demonstrate to me that you have participated in the discussion by including a summary of the discussion talking points and/or questions that your group addressed.

GRADING POLICIES AND GRADING SCALE

Grading in this class is consistent with UF policies available at: [Grades and Grading Policies](#)

Policy on Late and Make-up Work: Late work is not accepted. If you find yourself unable to complete your assignments on time, email me *before* the assignment is due. I reserve the right to make an exception, provided there is valid documentation. Of course, students are able to make up assignments due to a university obligation, illness, death of a family member, or civic duty. Students who miss an assignment and have a valid excuse are given two days after the missed assignment to arrange a makeup. Otherwise, you are not allowed to make up the assignment. Late assignments are automatically deducted 1 letter grade. Without a valid excuse, you are not allowed to make up assignments.

Grade Return Timing: Grading is done on Saturdays. All assignments in this class are due on Fridays. Thus, you will have your graded work back to you within 48 hours (barring natural disaster, illness, or internet communication issues).

Point Range for this Class:

Letter Grade	Range:	
A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

UF POLICIES SHAPING THIS COURSE

Contact Hours: "Contact Hours" refers to the hours per week in which students are in contact with the instructor, excluding office hours or other voluntary contact. The number of contact hours in this course equals the number of credits the course offers.

Workload: As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. Work done in these hours may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.

Accommodation for Student with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). This class supports the needs of different learners; it is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Statement regarding Evaluations: Evaluations are part of our course. To ensure the highest quality of education, students are expected to provide professional feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [GatorEvals Public Data](#).

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

UNIVERSITY POLICE

[UF Police](#) (392-111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies)

CAREER CONNECTIONS CENTER

[Career Connections Center](#) (352-392-1601 | CareerCenterMarketing@ufsa.ufl.edu) connects job seekers with employers and offers guidance to enrich your collegiate experience and prepare you for life after graduation.

COUNSELING AND WELLNESS CENTER

[Counseling and Wellness Center](#) (352-392-1575) provides counseling and support as well as crisis and wellness services including a [variety of workshops](#) throughout the semester (e.g., Yappy Hour, Relaxation and Resilience).

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

[Dean of Students Office](#) (352-392-1261) provides a variety of services to students and families, including [Field and Fork](#) (UF's food pantry) and [New Student and Family programs](#)

DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

[Disability Resource Center](#) (DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu | 352-392-8565) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

MULTICULTURAL AND DIVERSITY AFFAIRS

[Multicultural and Diversity Affairs](#) (352-294-7850) celebrates and empowers diverse communities and advocates for an inclusive campus.

OFFICE OF STUDENT VETERAN SERVICES

[Office of Student Veteran Services](#) (352-294-2948 | vacounselor@ufl.edu) assists student military veterans with access to benefits.

ONE.UF

[ONE.UF](#) is the home of all the student self-service applications, including access to:

- [Advising](#)
- [Bursar](#) (352-392-0181)
- [Financial Aid](#) (352-392-1275)
- [Registrar](#) (352-392-1374)

OFFICIAL SOURCES OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

The official source of rules and regulations for UF students is the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) and [Graduate Catalog](#). Quick links to other information have also been provided below.

- [Student Handbook](#)
- [Student Responsibilities](#), including academic honesty and student conduct code
- [e-Learning Supported Services Policies](#) includes links to relevant policies including Acceptable Use, Privacy, and many more
- [Accessibility](#), including the Electronic Information Technology Accessibility Policy and ADA Compliance
- [Student Computing Requirements](#), including minimum and recommended technology requirements and competencies

Lecture Date	Topic	Readings/Materials	Graded Work
September 1	Introduction	Syllabus	
September 3	Religious Landscape in the United States	America's Changing Religious Identity	Discussion
September 8	History of Religion in the United States	RPA: Ch1	
September 10	History of Religion in the United States	Oxford: Ch2 "God in America"	Discussion Quality Check 1
September 15	Theories in Religion and Politics	RPA: Ch2 Oxford Ch1	
September 17	Theories in Religion and Politics	Smidt (2019)	Discussion Writing Assignment 1
September 22	Religious Groups	RPA: Ch3 RPA: Ch4	
September 24	Religious Groups	theARDA	Discussion Writing Assignment 2
September 29	Ethnicity, Race, and Gender	RPA: Ch5 RPA: Ch6	
October 1	Ethnicity, Race, and Gender	Emerson et al. (2015) Holman and Podrazik (2018)	Discussion Writing Assignment 3
October 6	Public Opinion	Oxford: Ch7 Oxford: Ch8 Oxford: Ch9	
October 8	Public Opinion	Cont'd.	Discussion Quality Check 2
October 13	Voting Behavior	RPA: Ch7 Oxford: Ch12	
October 15	Voting Behavior	Neiheisel (2019)	Discussion Writing Assignment 4
October 20	Social Groups/Social Movements	RPA: Ch8 Oxford: Ch10	
October 22	Social Groups/Social Movements	McVicar (2019) McCarthy et al. (2019)	Discussion Writing Assignment 5
October 27	Elites	RPA: Ch9 Oxford: Ch13	
October 29	Elites	Oxford: Ch 16	Discussion Writing Assignment 6
November 3	Culture and Society	RPA: Ch10 Oxford: Ch5	
November 5	Culture Wars	Culture Wars	Discussion Quality Check 3
November 10	The Legal System	RPA: Ch11 RPA: Ch12	
November 12	Church and State	PBS Newshour: Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission et al.	Discussion Writing Assignment 7
November 17	Big Themes	RPA: Ch13	
November 19	Tolerance	Oxford: Ch15	Discussion Writing Assignment 8
November 21	Semester Recap	N/A	Quality Check Assignment 4 (due Dec. 4)
December 1	Morality Politics	Oxford: Ch20	
December 3	Morality Politics	Euchner (2019)	Discussion Writing Assignment 9
December 8	Spiritual, But Not Religious	Searching for Spirituality in the U.S.	Writing Assignment 10 (due December 11)

