

Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective

Spring 2023

POS 6292 (28726)

REL 5397 (28727)

Wednesdays 5th to 7th period

Classroom: 216 Anderson

***Class will meet from the first day of classes
in 216 Anderson, the Political Science Conference Room
(Please do not go to the Psychology room listed in One.UF – Thank you!)***

Dr. Patricia Sohn, Ph.D. Associate Professor Office: 333 Anderson
Office Telephone: 352-273-2370 Email: pjsohn@ufl.edu

Office Hours

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in 333 Anderson; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in 333 Anderson; and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in 1120K Turlington. In person or via Zoom @ this link: https://ufl.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAsceyvpiIsHNAEXpWahBbajQkoVK_rRPuZ

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Addresses themes of religion and politics in comparative, global, and international perspective. Themes include: *Homo religiosus* and the *axis mundi*; the ritual process and implications for ritual and politics; religion and secularism in MENA; Catholicism in Italy; religion and state in China; messianism in Israel and Palestine; religion, secularism, and the state in comparative and international perspective; and case studies in religion and politics in the Sahel (Africa), South Asia, Europe, MENA, and East Asia (including China).

The Canvas page for this course is published; when you register, you should be able to see it.

PREREQUISITES

5LS / 7LS and up; other departments welcomed.

TEXTS

√=free e-book at Smathers Library course e-reserves

These texts, e-reserves items, and optional items are already posted on reserve and will be available to students on or before the first day of classes. 10/24/22.

- √ -- **Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East** by Fawaz Gerges. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018.) (Religious-secular conflict in MENA)
- **The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion** by Mircea Eliade (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1987 [1957].) (Theoretical, cross-national)
- **The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure** by Victor Turner. (New York: Routledge, 1995.) (Africa)

- **Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China** by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David Wank. (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.) (China)
- **Catholicism in Modern Italy** by John Pollard. (New York: Routledge Press, 2014.) (Europe)
- **√ – Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises** by Mordechai Inbari. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.) (MENA)
- **√ – Political Secularism, Religion, and the State** by Jonathan Fox. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.) (Cross-national)
- **√ – Beyond the Death of God: Religion in 21st Century International Politics**, edited by Simone Raudino and Patricia Sohn. (University of Michigan Press, May 2022.) (Europe, Africa, MENA, South Asia, East Asia including China)
- **Library West Reserve Deskreadings.** Averaging one to two (1.65) readings per week from Reserve Desk or E-reserves readings including three chapters from Derrida, *Writing and Difference*; one chapter from Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.
- **E-Reserves articles and/or chapters (free online with Gatorlink, on campusaccess, and/or VPN).** One chapter from Bourdieu, *Distinction*; one chapter each from Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (3), and *The Interpretation of Cultures* (11); one chapter (or two short chapters) each from Buber, *I and Thou*, Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence* (5 & 6), and Said, *Orientalism* (II); plus Robert Bellah (“civil religion in America”); Wilfred Cantwell Smith (presidential address to AAR/SBL); Talal Asad (“reading a modern classic”); Jose Casanova (“the secular and secularisms”); Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (from *Beyond Religious Freedom*); Peter Berger (“secularism in retreat” and “religion and world construction”); Tamsin Shaw (“Nietzsche as a moral antirealist”); Mary Douglas (from *Purity and Danger*); Durkheim (“solidarity by similarities”); Michael Walsh (China, from *Stating the Sacred*); Sayyid Qutb (from *Social Justice in Islam*); Dan Smyer Yu (“virtual Tibet”); Huntington (“religion and the third wave”); and Claude Lévi-Strauss (“the structural study of myth”).

OPTIONAL RESOURCE MATERIAL AVAILABLE ON SMATHERS LIBRARY E-RESERVES OR AT LIBRARY WEST RESERVE DESK.

Some writing assignments for this class require no outside resources. You can include any of the following as secondary readings in written assignments that are otherwise restricted to class readings only. It is not required to do so; it is purely optional.

Asad, Talal, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam” in *Qui Parle*. Berger, Peter, “Religion and the West” in *The National Interest*

Bond, Louis, “Identity, Alterity, and Racial Difference in Levinas” in *Identities and Difference*, edited by Rafael Winkler. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

Bourdieu, Pierre, “Identity and Representation” in *Language and Symbolic Power*. Polity Press, 1991.

Casanova, Jose, “Civil Society and Religion: Retrospective Reflections on Catholicism and Prospective Reflections on Islam” in *Social Research*

Crapanzano, Vincent, “Historical Origins: Sufism” in *The Hamadsha*. University of California Press, 1973.

Desai, Sonalde and Gheda Tamsah, “Muslim and Hindu Women’s Public and Private Behaviors: Gender, Family, and Communalized Politics in India” in *Demography*.

Eurobarometer, 2005 Survey Report, Religion in Europe.

Fox, Jonathan, “Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations” in *International Studies Review*.

Gurses, Mehmet, *Anatomy of a Civil War: Sociopolitical Impacts of the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*. University of Michigan Press, 2018.

Kertzer, David, “The Ritual Construction of Political Reality” in *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. Yale

University Press, 1988.
Mahmood, Saba, “Topography of the Piety Movement” in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the*

- Feminist Subject*. Princeton University Press, 2005.
- _____. *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*. Princeton University Press, 2016. Mazie, Steven and Patricia Woods [Sohn], "Prayer, Contentious Politics, and the Women of the Wall: The Benefits of Collaboration in Participant Observation at Intense, Multifocal Events" in *Field Methods*.
- Pew Research Center, Religious Landscape Study, 2014.
- Simpson, George (Emile Durkheim), "A Durkheim Fragment" in *American Journal of Sociology*.
- Sohn, Patricia, "Inhabiting Orthodoxy: Discussing Islam and Feminism, Continued" in *E- International Relations*.
- Shaw, Tamsin. *Nietzsche's Political Skepticism*. Princeton University Press, 2010.
- Turner, Victor, "Frame, Flow, and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality" in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*.
- Villalon, Leonardo, "From Argument to Negotiation: Constructing Democracy in African Muslim Contexts" in *Comparative Politics*.
- Woods [Sohn], Patricia, "The Irony of State Incorporation" in *Judicial Power and National Politics: Courts and Gender in the Religious-Secular Conflict in Israel*. Second Edition, State University of New York Press, 2017.
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ASSIGNMENTS

10% Participation. Participation grade is made up of (33-34% each): (A) **Ad-Hoc Daily Discussion:** Active and appropriate participation in discussion, group activities, individual presentations, and ad hoc presentations on readings in the classroom. Participation in discussion and brain-storming activities when other students present their research papers or peer-reviews of research papers. (B) **Individual Presentations (two):** Each student will be assigned to present on the main text during two weeks (portion assigned for that week), in the class in a 10- to 15-minute presentation (no more than 20 minutes), as well as taking a leadership role in discussion for that text. (C) **Roundtable Discussions of Research-in-Progress (three):** Each student will also participate in three roundtable discussions about student research papers (e.g., each student presents his or her own research in progress, including research strategies and materials, as well as research design and its presentation in written form).

NOTE: Attendance. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in .05 points off the final grade on a 100-point scale (per absence after 2).

10% Peer Reviews (two) Written and Verbal. Students will be given a template in class to use for written peer reviews. Verbal peer reviews will also be offered in second and third paper round tables (not in the first round table).

15% Extended Abstracts (two). In 1-1.5 pages, explain the central argument/contention (take-home message) of the assigned readings. Each paragraph must be 5-7 sentences (strict limit), drawing upon three (3) major pieces of evidence used in the reading to support that argument/contention. In this assignment, you are working to develop analytical distance and analytical neutrality or clarity. In some ways, it is the opposite of personal engagement. Please use footnotes and give a reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements in Canvas. Double space.

15% Journal Entry (two) 2 pages. This assignment is your opportunity to engage with the course readings on a personal level. Include only information that would be appropriate for me to read. I encourage you to keep a wider journal of your experience of the course for your own posterity. Please use footnotes and give a reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements in Canvas. Double space.

50% Final Paper (of which, Draft 1, 5 pages - 10%; Draft 2, 8 pages - 10%; Draft 3, 12-15 pages, 30%) 12-15 pages. Write a research proposal or a term paper on a research topic. In either case, must use the categories from a proposal in scientific method (provided in class). Topics must be approved by week V of the semester. It is recommended that you use the course to write something that you might expand into a chapter, or into a research proposal. Please use footnotes and give a reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements. Can draw from writing in abstracts and journals as drafted coherently. Double space.

READING SCHEDULE

Responsibility for discussion of required Reserve Desk and E-reserves readings will be divided among the students semi-informally. Averaging one to two (1.65) readings per week from required Reserve Desk or E-reserves readings, and ½ of a book per week most weeks. (Optional resource material is not required but can be included in extended abstracts, etc.)

Weeks I and II

The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion by Mircea Eliade

Reserve Desk: Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, chapters 1 and 4; Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, chapter 3 (“authorized language: the social conditions for the effectiveness of ritual discourse”)

Week III

The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure by Victor Turner Reserve Desk: Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, chapter 5. E-reserves: Bourdieu, *Distinction*, chapter 8 (“culture and politics”)

Weeks IV and V

Making the Arab World: Nasser, Qutb, and the Clash That Shaped the Middle East by Fawaz Gerges
E-reserves: Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, chapter 3; Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, chapter 1; Wilfred Cantwell Smith, presidential address (JAAR 52:1 1984, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1463686>); and Mark Tessler (“Islam and democracy in the middle east: the impact of religious orientations on attitudes toward democracy in four Arab countries” in *Comparative Politics* 34:3 2002, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4146957>); **week V, round table one, draft one due**

Weeks VI and VII

Catholicism in Modern Italy by John Pollard

E-reserves: Buber, *I and Thou* (“first part”); Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, chapters 5 & 6; and Talal Asad (“reading

a modern classic: w.c. smith's 'the meaning and end of religion' in *History of Religions* 40:3 2001, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3176697>); [week VI written peer reviews due](#)

Weeks VIII and IX

[Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China](#) by Yoshiko Ashiwa and David Wank
E-reserves: Said, *Orientalism* (chapter II, "orientalizing the oriental"); Michael Walsh, *Stating the Sacred*, chapter 3; and Dan Smyer Yu ("redeeming a stigmatized Tibet: virtual Tibet as an emerging public space of Tibetans in China" in *The Tibet Journal* 35:4 2010, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/tibetjournal.35.4.3>)

Weeks X and XI

[Political Secularism, Religion, and the State](#) by Jonathan Fox
E-reserves: Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom*, chapter 2 ("two faces of faith"); Jose Casanova ("the secular and secularisms" in *Social Research* 76:4 2009, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40972201>); and Peter Berger ("secularism in retreat" in *The National Interest* 47 1996/97, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42895127>); [week X, round table two \(includes verbal peer reviews/feedback\), draft two due; week XI written peer reviews due](#)

Weeks XII and XIII

[Messianic Religious Zionism Confronts Israeli Territorial Compromises](#) by Mordechai Inbari
E-reserve readings: Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, chapter 3; Durkheim, *Division of Labor in Society*, chapter 2 ("mechanical solidarity, or solidarity by similarities"); Claude Lévi-Strauss ("the structural study of myth" in *The Journal of American Folklore* 68:270 1955, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/536768>); and Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, chapter 1 ("religion and world construction")

Week XIV and XV

[Beyond the Death of God: Religion in 21st Century International Politics](#), edited by Simone Raudino and Patricia Sohn. See especially commentary by Mark Tessler. E-reserves: Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*, chapter 11; Huntington ("religion and the third wave" in *The National Interest* 24 1991, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42894744>); and Tamsin Shaw, *Nietzsche's Political Skepticism* (Chapter 4, "Nietzsche as a moral antirealist"); [week XV, round table three \(includes verbal peer reviews/feedback\)](#)

Final papers due Tuesday of finals week by 11:59 p.m. on Canvas.

For "Notes on Inclusiveness, and the Epistemological Orientation of the Professor," please see my webpage (click link): [Teaching/Pedagogy: Notes on inclusiveness, and the epistemology of the professor | Patricia J. Sohn](#)

PROSE EXPLANATION OF GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

(For table/graph form, see Canvas course page)

Your grades for your written assignments are made up primarily of three components: research, writing, and ideas. The three are weighted in that order.

You can go a long way with meticulous **RESEARCH** into our readings, perfectly formed footnotes, and perfectly formed reference lists. No outside sources for abstracts or final essay, and minimal outside sources are allowed for journal entries (more details in class). I provide a style guide to help with footnotes, reference list, and some basic comma issues. But that will not take you to an A or A+.

Your **WRITING** should be well organized, coherent, grammatically correct, and follow a certain political science model. The political science model entails writing in a way that is to the point, direct, succinct, active voice, avoids passive voice wherever possible, avoids generalizations, and stays very grounded in the readings (and their details, where appropriate). You will learn and develop writing skills in this model as we move through the semester. You are not expected to know it in advance.

IDEAS means that, once you have effectively and accurately explained the main argument or take-home message of our reading(s) using the political science model just mentioned, you can then move to the third step, which is to develop your own analytical ideas about what really matters in the readings. That is, what should the reader of your abstract/journal/essay take home as the central point from your essay about the readings? (Journals include personal engagement; more details in class.)

When you have effectively achieved strong skills in all three areas, research, writing, and ideas, you can expect an A+ grade on written assignments in this class.

I do not grade on a curve. If you put the time and effort in and learn these skills, you can get a good grade in this class.

Note: If you have writing issues that you know about with regard to grammar, syntax, style, English language, etc., I recommend going to the Writing Lab (address at end of syllabus) with your first few written assignments to get comments from the lab before turning them in to me. You are also welcomed to bring them to office hours for feedback.

-- *Dr. Sohn*

UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES

- 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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.
- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies.
- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center. 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.
- Grading for this course follows University policies and guidelines; see, [this link](#).
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. 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, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.
- Materials and fees: texts; some optional video rentals. E-reserves readings are free with Gatorlink account and/or use of UF-VPN.
- All electronic communication in this should must use internal Canvas email.
- For discussion in class, please limit yourself to course readings unless specifically requested to speak regarding personal experience, etc. Appropriate decorum and respect for a wide variety of opinions amongst your fellow classmates is asked and requested. Your cooperation in this effort will be greatly appreciated.

CAMPUS RESOURCES

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.

General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.](#)

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.