

# Religion and Politics in the United States:

**POS 4291/Fall 2019/FAC 0127**  
**T | Period 2-3 (8:30am-10:25am)**  
**R | Period 3 (9:35-10:25am)**

Instructor: Dr. Angela F. McCarthy

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00pm-3:00pm; Thursday 11:00am- 2:00pm; (or) by appointment

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with the (complex) relationship between religion and politics in the United States. Students 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 student's knowledge and understanding of the salience of religion in America—both past and present.

## **COURSE FOCUS**

To reach the course objective students 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 READINGS**

1. There are two required books for this course. These texts are available in print and as an e-book. Please note that there are older editions available for the Hertzke et al. (2019) text. If you accidentally purchased the older edition, then email me immediately. The editions are similar but there are differences regarding chapter order.
  - **Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices (6<sup>th</sup> edition).**  
**Hertzke et al. (2019)**
  - **The Oxford Handbook of Religion and American Politics**  
**Eds. Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth (2009)**
2. Please note that there are additional readings. These readings include journal articles, websites, blogs, and survey reports. Additional readings are listed/linked on the course website. During

the first lecture students will learn the appropriate way to read/skim these materials. Students are not expected to read each document in entirety.

3. There are several religion and politics websites that we will use throughout the semester. Students should bookmark the following:

[Public Religion Research Institute](#)

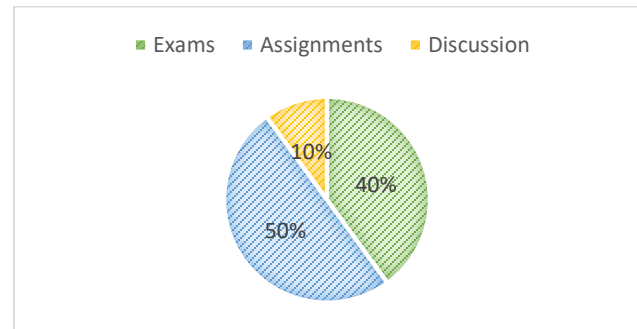
[Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life](#)

[Association of Religion Data Archives](#)

[Religion in Public: exploring the mix of sacred and secular](#)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Exams: 40%. There are *two* exams. Each exam is worth 20% of your final grade.
2. Assignments: 50%. There are *ten* weekly assignments. Each assignment is worth 5% of your final grade.
3. Online/Class discussion: 10%. Each class is an opportunity to participate in discussion!



## COURSE REQUIREMENT DESCRIPTION

1. Exams: 40%. There are two non-cumulative scheduled exams in this course. See the course schedule for the exam dates. Prior to the exam, students will receive a list of approximately 15 broad topic terms. I will select 5 terms that students are required to answer during the exam. Students will write a one or two paragraph response for each term. Term tests allow students to critically analyze relevant issues in the course.
2. Assignments: 50%. Please note that the assignment portion of the class is worth more than the exams. This should be good news! Each (selected) week, I provide students with a prompt that they must answer. Students must complete the task by **Friday @ 5pm**. All assignments are submitted via the course website and are time stamped. Do not send in late assignments—they will not be graded.

Overall, assignment topics pertain to the readings and our class discussion during the week. The purpose of the assignments is not to stress you out, cause panic, or add difficulty to your semester. If you are reading the material and engaging in class discussions, then you are in a very good position to earn a high score.

3. Online/Class discussion: 10%. Discussion grades are based on your contribution to the class. Students are expected to come to class ready and willing to participate. To ensure your participation, complete all readings and assignments. Occasionally, there will be an opportunity for students to participate via online blogs and forums.

## COURSE SPECIFICS/DETAILS

*Grading scale:* 93.0 to 100 A, 90.0 to 92.9 A-, 87.0 to 89.9 B+, 83.0 to 86.9 B, 80.0 to 82.9 B-, 77.0 to 79.9 C+, 73.0 to 76.9 C, 70.0 to 72.9 C-, 67.0 to 69.9 D+, 63.0 to 66.9 D, 60.0 to 62.9 D, below 60.0 F.

*Office Hours:* Students are welcome to attend the scheduled office hours. My office is (almost) always open for student to inquire about their grades, discuss weekly assignments, or chat about religion and politics. If the scheduled office hours do not fit your schedule, then let's make an appointment. I am happy to accommodate.

*Lecture (Tuesday):* Tuesday courses are designed to be lectured centered. However, students should expect organically formed group discussion.

*Enrichment (Thursday):* Thursdays are designated enrichment days. We will use the 1-hour block of time to enrich our understanding of the materials. Thursday meetings will be heavy discussion days. Students should come to class prepared to contribute something of value.

*Late work:* **Late work is not accepted.** If you find yourself unable to complete your assignments on time, email me as soon as possible. I reserve the right to make an exception, provided there is valid documentation. Of course, students are allowed make up exams and assignments due to a university obligation, illness, death of a family member, or civic duties. Students who miss an exam without a valid excuse are given three days to arrange a makeup exam. There is a one-letter grade penalty.

*Attending class:* Class attendance is required and expected. You will need to fulfill your commitment and obligation to be in class and on time every day that class is held. **Please do not come to class ill.** If you think that you are ill then stay home, get some rest, go to the doctor, and recover. We will make arrangements on how to accommodate your missing class.

*Recordings:* Please see the [Student Honor Code](#). Students are not allowed to record or video record lectures without my permission.

*Electronics:* Feel free to use laptops and tablets during lectures. However, if social media proves to be disruptive to the learning environment, then I will limit the use of electronic devices in the course.

*Evaluations:* Evaluations are part of our course. To ensure the highest quality of education for the entire UF student body, students are expected to provide feedback on their satisfaction with the course.

*Tentative:* Life is often unpredictable. This syllabus is subject to change. This is to protect the needs of both the instructor and the students.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

*Students with Disabilities.* The University of Florida is committed to providing accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability which may require accommodation, contact the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565). You can find more information at [www.dso.evl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.evl.edu/drc/).

*Academic Honesty.* It is your responsibility to refrain from cheating, academic misconduct, and/or plagiarism. If you are uncertain about your responsibilities or you are questioning your academic integrity, then contact me immediately. Visit the [Dean of Students Office](#) for an explanation of plagiarism, student conduct, and conflict resolution.

*Counseling and Wellness Center.* If you feel that you need emotional support, then contact information for the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#).

### University Calendar

August 20	Classes begin
August 20-23 & 26	Last day to add or drop a course
September 2	Labor Day, no class
October 4&5	Homecoming, no class
November 11	Veterans Day, no class
November 25	Last day to drop with a "W"
November 26	Course evaluations open
November 27-28	Thanksgiving, no class
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 & 6	Reading days
December 6	Course evaluations close
December 18	Final grades due

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is a tentative outline of the semester. Readings may be omitted or added depending on the nature of class discussions and weekly progress. Please note that readings should be completed prior to the beginning of the assigned class period. Rule of thumb: complete all readings for Tuesday's class meetings.

Week 1	August 20	<p>Topic: Introduction/Course Resources</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Religion Research Institute</li> <li>• Pew Research Center: Religion &amp; Public Life</li> <li>• Religion in Public</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore websites</li> <li>• Begin skimming "religious landscape" readings</li> </ul>
	August 22	<p>Topic: Religious Landscape</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gallup: 2017 Update on Americans and Religion</li> <li>• Pew: Feelings Toward Religious Groups</li> <li>• Pew: Politics from the Pulpit</li> <li>• Pew: Religion in Everyday Life</li> <li>• Pew: Religious Typology</li> <li>• Pew: Why Americans Go (and Don't Go) to Religious Services</li> <li>• PRRI: Changing Religious Identity</li> <li>• PRRI: Exodus</li> <li>• PRRI: Partisan Polarization</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skim resources; we will return to these throughout the semester</li> </ul>
Week 2	August 27	<p>Topic: History of Religion in the United States</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA(Ch1): Religion and Political Culture in America: From Historical Legacy to the Present Day</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch2): Religion and the American Founding</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	August 29	<p>Topic: History of Religion in the United States, cont'd.</p> <p>Readings: None</p> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch: PBS: "God in America"</li> <li>• Assignment 1</li> </ul>
Week 3	September 3	<p>Topic: History of Religion in the United States, cont'd.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford(Ch3): Religion and American Voting Behavior, 1830s to</li> </ul>

		1930s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reichley (2002): The Religious Factor</li> <li>• Reichley (2002): Religion and Political Action, 1790 to 1963</li> <li>• Reichley (2002): Time of Turmoil, 1964, 1985</li> <li>• Reichley (2002): Faith in Action, 1986 to 2002</li> </ul> Task List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skim Oxford(Ch3)</li> <li>• Read Reichley(2002)</li> </ul>
	September 5	Topic: History of Religion in the United States, cont'd. Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford(Ch3)</li> <li>• Reichley (2002)</li> </ul> Task List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 2</li> </ul>
Week 4	September 10	Topic: Theories in Religion and Politics Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA(Ch2) Theories of Religion ,Culture, and American Politics</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch1) The Role of Religion in American Politics: Explanatory Theories and Associated Analytical and Measurement Issues</li> <li>• Smidt(2019) Measuring Religion in Terms of Belonging, Beliefs, and Behavior</li> </ul> Task List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	September 12	Topic: Theories in Religion and Politics, cont'd Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA(Ch2)</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch1)</li> <li>• Smidt(2019)</li> </ul> Task List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 3</li> </ul>
Week 5	September 17	Topic: Religious Groups Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRRI: The American Values Atlas</li> <li>• The ARDA</li> <li>• RPA(Ch3) Christianity and Its Major Branches</li> <li>• RPA(Ch4) Judaism, Islam, and Other Expressions of Religious Pluralism</li> </ul> Task List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore American Values Atlas</li> <li>• Explore The ARDA: Religion Family Trees, Religious Groups, Compare Members</li> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>

	September 19	<p>Topic: Religious Groups, cont'd</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRRI</li> <li>• ARDA</li> <li>• RPA(Ch3) Christianity and Its Major Branches</li> <li>• RPA(Ch4) Judaism, Islam, and Other Expressions of Religious Pluralism</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 4</li> </ul>
Week 6	September 24	<p>Topic: Ethnicity, Race, and Gender</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch5) Latino and African American Religion and Politics</li> <li>• RPA (Ch6) Gender, Sexual Orientation, Religion, and Politics</li> <li>• Emerson et al. (2015) Studying Race and Religion: A Critical Assessment</li> <li>• Holman and Podrazik (2018) Gender and Religiosity in the United States</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	September 26	<p>Topic: Ethnicity, Race, and Gender</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch5)</li> <li>• RPA (Ch6)</li> <li>• Emerson et al. (2015)</li> <li>• Holman and Podrazik (2018)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 5</li> </ul>
Week 7	October 1	<p>Topic: Public Opinion</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford(Ch7) Religion and American Public Opinion: Economic Issues</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch8) Religion and American Public Opinion: Social Issues</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch9) Religion and American Public Opinion: Foreign Policy Issues</li> <li>• Sherkat (2019) "Public Opinion and Religion: Gay Rights in the United States"</li> <li>• Pudlo (2019) "Public Opinion and Religion: Environmental Attitudes"</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	October 3	<p>Topic: Public Opinion</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford(Ch7)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oxford(Ch8)</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch9)</li> <li>• Sherkat (2019)</li> <li>• Pudlo (2019)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 6</li> </ul>
Week 8	October 8	<p>Topic: Voting Behavior</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA(Ch7) Voting and Religion in American Politics</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch12) Religion, Parties, and Voting Behavior: A Political Explanation of Religious Influence</li> <li>• Neiheisel (2019) "Political Participation and Religion: An Overview</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	October 10	<p>Topic: Voting Behavior, cont'd.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA(Ch7)</li> <li>• Oxford(Ch12)</li> <li>• Neiheisel (2019)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 7</li> </ul>
Week 9	October 15	<p>Topic: Exam Review</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review session materials</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin exam preparations</li> </ul>
	October 17	<p>Topic: <b>EXAM</b></p>
Week 10	October 22	<p>Topic: Social Groups/Social Movements</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch8) The Politics of Organized Religious Groups</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch10) Religion and Social Movements</li> <li>• McVicar (2019) The Religious Right in America</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	October 24	<p>Topic: Social Groups/Social Movements</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA(Ch8)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch10)</li> <li>• McVicar (2019)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 8</li> </ul>



Week 11	October 29	<p>Topic: Religion and Elites</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch9) Religion and Political and Cultural Elites</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch13) Clergy and American Politics</li> <li>• Oldmixon (2019) "Political Behavior of Religious Elites"</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch17) Religion and the U.S. Presidency (skim)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch18) Religion and Legislative Politics (skim)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	October 31	<p>Topic: Religion and Elites</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch9)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch13)</li> <li>• Oldmixon (2019)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch17)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch 18)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 9</li> </ul>
Week 12	November 5	<p>Topic: Culture and Society</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch10) Religion, Culture Society, and Political Culture</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch5) Culture, Religion, and American Political Life</li> <li>• Friesen (2019) "Personality, Politics, and Religion"</li> <li>• Curtis and Olson (2019) "Impact of Conceptualization of Religious Identity"</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	November 7	<p>Topic: Culture and Society</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch10)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch5)</li> <li>• Friesen (2019)</li> <li>• Curtis and Olson (2019)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 12</li> </ul>
Week 13	November 12	<p>Topic: The Legal System</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch11) The Politics of Religion in the Legal System</li> <li>• RPA (Ch12) Church and State in the Courts</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch19) Religion and Judicial Politics</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>

	November 14	<p>Topic: The Legal System/Church and State</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch11)</li> <li>• RPA (Ch12)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch19)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assignment 10</li> </ul>
Week 14	November 19	<p>Topic: Special Topic/Big Themes</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch13) Big Themes and Normative Concerns in Religion and Politics</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch20) Religion and American Public Policy: Morality Policies and Beyond</li> <li>• Euchner (2019) "Morality Policy"</li> <li>• Kettell (2019) "Secularism and Religion"</li> <li>• Djupe and Smith (2019) "Experimentation in the Study of Religion and Politics"</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete readings</li> </ul>
	November 21	<p>Topic: Special Topic/Big Themes</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RPA (Ch13)</li> <li>• Oxford (Ch20)</li> <li>• Euchner (2019)</li> <li>• Kettell (2019)</li> <li>• Djupe and Smith (2019)</li> </ul> <p>Task List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bonus Assignment</li> </ul>
Week 15	November 26 <b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	Topic: Special Topic/Big Themes, cont'd.
	November 28 <b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	Topic: Special Topic/Big Themes, cont'd.
Week 16	December 3	<b>Topic:</b> Exam