MPhil in International Relations and Politics, 2019-20

Comparative Politics of Religion

Course organisers
Dr Tomas Larsson (MT), Iza Hussin (ET, LT)

Seminar leaders
Dr Tomas Larsson thl33@cam.ac.uk
Dr Iza Hussin ih298@cam.ac.uk
Dr Sara Silvestri ss384@cam.ac.uk
Dr Judd Birdsall jbb44@cam.ac.uk

Time and Location: Tuesdays 10 am - 12 noon, Room 138 (Alison Richard Building)

Course Outline
Politics and Religion covers a broad range of issues and concerns of interest to the student of Comparative Politics and International Relations: political theology, institutional formation and change, state power and authority, legitimacy and resistance, nationalism, as well as the shifting and productive boundaries between the sacred and the profane, the religious and the secular. This seminar will address these issues through a comparative exploration of religion and politics in Asian, European, North American and international contexts. The course will introduce students to a variety of different approaches to religion, exploring the tensions between them. These include but are not limited to positivist approaches that posit religion as a causal factor, public policy-oriented approaches that view religion as a challenge to and an instrument for governance, and interpretivist and poststructuralist approaches that seek to undermine “religion” as a social scientific concept.

The course will begin with an introduction to rival approaches to the study of religion in relation to politics. It will proceed to cover themes in the development of the relationship between religion and politics, including in relation to state formation and economic development, nationalism, and democratization; migration, foreign policy, security; imperialism, law, new religious movements, capitalism and neo-liberalism.

Teaching
Students will attend 14 seminars in the course of the year (2 hours each). Students are expected to participate actively in the seminar discussions, including taking leadership of at least one critical discussion of the readings.

Sessions
Michaelmas term

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Seminar leader</th>
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<tr>
<td>15 October</td>
<td>Debating Religion and Politics</td>
<td>Dr Larsson</td>
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<td>22 October</td>
<td>Religion and the State</td>
<td>Dr Larsson</td>
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<td>29 October</td>
<td>Religion and Nationalism</td>
<td>Dr Larsson</td>
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<td>5 November</td>
<td>Religion and Democratization</td>
<td>Dr Larsson</td>
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<td>12 November</td>
<td>Islam and Religious Pluralism in European Countries</td>
<td>Dr Silvestri</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>19 November</td>
<td>EU Engagement with Faith Groups and Religious Issues</td>
<td>Dr Silvestri</td>
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<td>26 November</td>
<td>Religion and American Identity and Politics</td>
<td>Dr Birdsall</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 December</td>
<td>Religion in International Affairs and U.S. Foreign Policy</td>
<td>Dr Birdsall</td>
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**Lent term**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Seminar leader</th>
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<tr>
<td>21 January</td>
<td>Debating Secularism and Politics</td>
<td>Dr Hussin</td>
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<td>28 January</td>
<td>Religion and Empire</td>
<td>Dr Hussin</td>
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<td>4 February</td>
<td>Religion and Law</td>
<td>Dr Hussin</td>
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<td>11 February</td>
<td>Religion and the City</td>
<td>Dr Hussin</td>
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<td>18 February</td>
<td>Religion and Capitalism</td>
<td>Dr Hussin</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>New Questions in Religion and Politics</td>
<td>Dr Hussin</td>
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**Assessment**

Students are expected to write one 5,000-word essay that explores a question of relevance to the core themes and topics of the course. The essay is worth 100% of the final grade. Questions will be set by the seminar leaders and released in mid December 2019. Please ensure that essays are appropriately formatted, citations are consistent, and bibliography attached; it is the student’s responsibility to familiarise themselves with the University’s guidelines on academic honesty and plagiarism. The essay is due at 12 noon on 13 March 2020. Please submit two hard copies to the POLIS Admin Office and an electronic copy via Moodle.

**Practice essay**

Students must write one practice essay for this course. The essay should be approximately 2,000 words. Essay questions will be circulated early in Michaelmas term. The deadline for the essay is either 8 November 2019 or 29 November 2019. You should submit a hard copy of your essay to the POLIS Admin Office (room 142) and submit an electronic copy via Moodle.

**Readings**

Under each seminar, readings are divided into two groups. Essential readings will form the main basis for discussion in the seminars. Recommended readings are provided as a guide for students who wish to explore topics in further depth.

The SPS/Seeley library will have most of the readings assigned for the seminars; others will be available at the UL and the library of the Centre of South Asian Studies, which is located in the Alison Richard Building. Many articles and book chapters can be accessed electronically through the course website on Moodle or the University Library’s electronic resources.

No background knowledge of the country cases are needed for this course. However, for those wishing to read into the background, the following may provide general introductions to the themes and debates of the course:


1. Debating religion and politics

**Essential**


**Recommended**


2. Religion and the state

**Essential**


**Recommended**
3. Religion and nationalism

Essential

Recommended
4. Religion and democratization

Essential

Recommended

5. Islam and religious pluralism in European countries

Essential (at least 3 from these)
Modood, T., Triandafyllidou, A., Zapata-Barrero, R. Eds. 2006, Multiculturalism, Muslims and citizenship: a European approach, London: Routledge (choose a chapter of your choice, includes a chapter by Silvestri on models of Muslim-Government relations)

Recommended
(NOTE: this list seems long but you can choose readings focused on specific countries, e.g. France, UK or can go by issues of controversy, e.g. mosques, terror)


Haynes, J. ed. (2009 or more recent) Religion and Politics in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Routledge

Hickman, M, Thomas, L, H. Nickels, S. Silvestri 2012. ‘Social Cohesion and the Notion of ‘Suspect Communities’’, Critical Studies on Terrorism, 5: 1


Monsma, Dulk and Soper (2017) The Challenge of Pluralism. Church and State in Six Democracies, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield. ch.1 (also previous edition can be ok)


6. EU Engagement with Faith Groups and Religious Issues

Essential


Recommended


7. Religion and international affairs and US foreign policy

Essential


Recommended


Preston, Andrew, Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and


8. Religion and American identity and politics

Essential


Three chapters in The Review of Faith & International Affairs, 10:2 (Summer 2012):

Recommended


9. Debating secularism and politics

Essential


**Recommended**


**SSRC The Immanent Frame**: [https://tif.ssrc.org/exchanges/](https://tif.ssrc.org/exchanges/)

**10. Religion and empire**

**Essential**

**Recommended**

**11. Religion and law**

**Essential**


Recommended


Loos, Tamara. 2008.“A History of Sex and the State in Southeast Asia: Class, Intimacy and Invisibility.” Citizenship Studies 12, 1.


12. Religion and the City

Essential

Recommended

### 13. Religion and capitalism

#### Essential


#### Recommended


### 14. New questions in religion and politics

#### Essential


#### Recommended


