

Politics and International Relations 2024

POL17: Politics and Religion

Definitive paper guide is on course Moodle

Course organiser

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Lecturers

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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. The course will introduce students to a variety of different analytic 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-orientated approaches that view religion as a challenge to and an instrument for governance, and interpretivist and poststructuralist approaches that seek to question religion as a social scientific concept. The second half of the course will address these issues through a comparative exploration of religion and politics in a variety of contexts.

Teaching & Examination

The course will be taught by a combination of lectures and supervisions, running through Michaelmas and Lent terms, with a revision session in Easter term. In Michaelmas, lectures cover a range of debates and analytic questions in the study of religion and politics. In Lent, students indicate their preferences and **take 2 modules** that explore these debates further, through readings and discussions on a thematic case study.

During the course students will have 4 **supervisions**, two each in Michaelmas and Lent. The **examination** will consist of 16 questions divided into two sections: Section A, which covers themes introduced in Michaelmas term, and Section B, which contains at least two questions per module. Students will choose at least one question each from Section A and B, and answer a third from either section.

Readings

Readings are divided into two groups: essential readings will form the main basis for essays and discussion. Recommended readings are provided as a guide for students who wish to explore topics in further depth.

The majority of articles and book chapters can be accessed electronically through the University Library's electronic resources, including through the LEAN Library (<https://www.libraries.cam.ac.uk/eresources/access-full-text-anywhere>).

The SPS/Seeley library and the UL will assist students with access to readings.

Lecture list

Lectures, readings and supervisions will be finalised shortly before the beginning of each term, and announced on the course Moodle.

Michaelmas term

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	
15 October	Questioning Religion and Politics: The Context	Dr Hussin
22 October	Debating secularism and politics	Dr Hussin
29 October	Religion and the State	Dr Hussin
5 November	Religion and Empire	Dr Hussin
12 November	Analytic approaches: Religion and Law	Dr Hussin
19 November	Analytic approaches: Religion and capitalism	Dr Hussin
26 November	Analytic approaches: Religion and violence	Dr Hussin
3 December	Discussion Seminar	Dr Hussin

Lent term

Note that lecture times may be amended based on student module selections

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	
tba	Comparative Approaches to Religion and Politics <i>Lecture</i>	Dr Hussin
28 January	Module 1: Religion and Politics in Europe, <i>Lecture</i>	Dr Silvestri
4 February	Module 1: Religion and Politics in Europe, <i>Lecture</i>	Dr Silvestri
11 February	Module 2: Islam and Gender Activism <i>Seminar,</i>	Dr Hussin
18 February	Module 2: Islam and Gender Activism <i>Seminar,</i>	Dr Hussin
25 February	Module 3: Religion in the Courts <i>Seminar,</i>	Dr Hussin
4 Mar	Module 3: Religion in the Courts <i>Seminar,</i>	Dr Hussin
11 March	Module 4: Buddhism and Politics in Southeast Asia, <i>Lecture</i>	Dr Larsson
18 March	Module 4: Buddhism and Politics in Southeast Asia, <i>Lecture</i>	Dr Larsson
tba	Concluding Lecture and Exam discussion	Dr Hussin

Questioning Religion and Politics: The Context

Essential

Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49.

Ajami, Fouad. "The Summoning: 'But They Said, We Will Not Hearken'," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993): 2-9.

Shakman Hurd, E. 2015. *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion*, Princeton University Press, pp. 1-21.

Recommended

Smith, C. 2017. *Religion: What it Is, How it Works, and Why it Matters*, Princeton University Press, Chapter 1.

Mahmood, S. 2006. "Secularism, Hermeneutics, and Empire: The Politics of Islamic Reformation." *Public Culture* 2006 18(2): 323-347.

Berkley Centre for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, "Islam and Western Secular Modernity: A Conversation with Nilüfer Göle,"
<https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/events/islam-and-western-secular-modernity>

Debating secularism and politics

Essential

Casanova, J. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 2, 8.

Shakman-Hurd, E. 2004. 'The Political Authority of Secularism in International Relations,' *European Journal of International Relations*, vol 10, no. 2

David Scott and Charles Hirschkind, eds. 2006. *Powers of the Secular Modern*. Stanford. Chapters 1, 2, 3.

Recommended

Norris, P. and Inglehart, R., *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press 2004. Part I, Chapters 6, 10.

Bowen, John R. *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*, Princeton University Press 2011.

Daniel Philpott and Timothy Samuel Shah, "In Defense of Religious Freedom: New Critics of a Beleaguered Human Right," *Journal of Law and Religion*, 31:3 (2017), 380-395.

Sullivan, Winnifred Fallers. *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, Princeton University Press 2018.

Talal Asad and Abdullahi an-Naim in conversation:

<https://tif.ssrc.org/2009/11/09/religion-law-and-human-rights/>

<https://tif.ssrc.org/2009/11/09/video-talal-asad-and-abdullahi-an-naim-in-conversation/>

Religion and the state

Essential

- Gorski, P. S. 1993. "The Protestant ethic revisited: Disciplinary revolutions and state formation in Holland and Prussia." *American Journal of Sociology* 99(2): 265-316.
- Kuru, A. T. 2007. "Passive and Assertive Secularism: Historical Conditions, Ideological Struggles, and State Policies toward Religion," *World Politics* 59(4): 568-594.
- Hussain, Jamila, "More than one law for all: Legal Pluralism in Southeast Asia," *Democracy and Secularity* 7 (2011): 374-389.
- Redding, J. 2020. *A Secular Need: Islamic Law and State Governance in Contemporary India*. University of Washington Press. Introduction, Ch 2, Conclusion.
- Greitens, S., Lee, M. and Yazici, E. 2020. "Counterterrorism and Preventive Repression: China's Changing Strategy in Xinjiang," *International Security* 2020 44:3, 9-47

Recommended

- John Locke, "A Letter Concerning Toleration," (various editions):
<https://ebookcentral-proquest.com.ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/lib/cam/detail.action?docID=3420119>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xILFxFkF3E>
- Casanova, J. 2012. "Rethinking Public Religions," in Shah, Stepan and Toft (eds.), *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, Oxford University Press.
- Loveman, Mara. 2005. "The Modern State and the Primitive Accumulation of Symbolic Power," *American Journal of Sociology* 110(6): 1651-1683.
- Loos, Tamara. 2008. "A History of Sex and the State in Southeast Asia: Class, Intimacy and Invisibility." *Citizenship Studies* 12, 1.

Religion and empire

Essential

- Said, Edward. 2003. *Orientalism*. Penguin.
- Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger. 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press (2012 edition). Chapters 1, 4, 5.
- Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History*. Harvard 2017.

Recommended

- Iza Hussin, *The Politics of Islamic Law: Local Elites, Colonial Authority, and the Making of the Muslim State*. Chicago 2016.
- DuBois, Thomas David, ed. *Casting Faiths: Imperialism and the Transformation of Religion in East and Southeast Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan 2009.
- Cohn, Bernard. 1996. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*. Princeton University Press.
- Rafael, Vicente. 1992. *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*. Duke University Press.
- Kolsky, Elizabeth. 2005. "Codification and the Rule of Colonial Difference." *Law and History Review* 23:3, pp 681-683.

Said, Edward.1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. Knopf.

Cannadine, David. 2002. *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*. Penguin.

Supervision I Essay topics:

Select from the readings and lectures above to prepare an essay, which must be emailed to the supervisor at least 24h in advance of every supervision.

1. Comparing two definitions of 'secular,' explain: their major differences, the assumptions that underlie these differences, and the kinds of analytic questions raised. What is at stake in these definitions of secular?
2. What is the relationship between secularism (and/or 'the secular') and the power of the state? How does this relationship vary across time and space?
3. In what ways has the category of 'religion' been shaped by empire?

Analytic approaches: Religion and law

Essential

- Rajah, Jothie. 2013. "Policing Religion," in *Authoritarian Rule of Law: Legislation, Discourse and Legitimacy in Singapore*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Menchik, Jeremy. 2014. "Productive Intolerance: Godly Nationalism in Indonesia," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 56(3):591-621.
- Fernando, Mayanthi. "Reconfiguring Freedom: Muslim Piety and the Limits of Secular Law and Public Discourse in France." *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 1 (2010): 19-35
- Massoud, M. 2021. *Shari'a, Inshallah: Finding God in Somali Legal Politics*. Cambridge University Press

Recommended

- Mona Oraby and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "Law and Religion: Reimagining the Entanglement of Two Universals," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 2020 16:1, 257-276.
<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-020520-022638>
- Crouch, Melissa. 2012. "Law and Religion in Indonesia: The Constitutional Court and the Blasphemy Law," 7(1) *Asian Journal of Comparative Law*.
- Thio, Li-Ann, 2005. "Control, Co-Optation and Co-Operation: Managing Religious Harmony in Singapore's Multi-Ethnic, Quasi-Secular State," *Hastings Constitutional Law Quarterly*, 197-220.
- Bowen, John. 2003. *Islam, Law, and Equality in Indonesia: An Anthropology of Public Reasoning*. Cambridge University Press.
- Case: *Titular Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kuala Lumpur v Menteri Dalam Negeri*, 31 December 2009.

Analytic approaches: Religion and capitalism

Essential

- Rudnykyj, Daromir. 2010. *Spiritual Economies: Islam, Globalization, and the Afterlife of Development*. Cornell University Press.
- Housteroy, James B. 2015. *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*. Stanford University Press.
- Fischer, Johan. 2011. *The Halal Frontier: Muslim Consumers in a Globalized Market*. Palgrave.

Recommended

- Beng Huat, Chua. 2003. *Life is Not Complete without Shopping*. National University of Singapore Press.
- Rodan, Garry and Richard Robison. 2006. *Political Economy of South-East Asia: Markets, Power and Contestation*. Oxford University Press.

Analytic approaches: Religion and violence

Essential

- Cavanagh, W. 2006. 'Does Religion Cause Violence?' on Moodle.
- Kinnvall, Catarina. 2004. "Globalization and religious nationalism: Self, identity, and the search for ontological security," *Political Psychology* 25:5 (2004): 741-767.
- Darryl Li, "Jihad in a World of Sovereigns: Law, Violence, and Islam in the Bosnia Crisis," *Law & Social Inquiry* 41:2 (2016): 371-402.
- Hussin, Iza. "'The New Global Politics of Religion': Religious Harmony, Public Order, and Securitisation in the post-colony," 4:1 (2018), *Journal of Religious and Political Practice*, 93-106.
- Northwestern University: Politics of Violent Extremism Project,
<https://canopyforum.org/2020/07/15/racist-security/>
<https://canopyforum.org/2020/07/13/defund-the-border-police-racial-justice-and-the-american-border/>
<https://canopyforum.org/2020/07/16/from-breath-to-voices/>

Recommended

- Cavanaugh, W. 2014. 'Religious Violence as Modern Myth', *Political theology*, 15: 6, November, pp.486–502
- Hickman, M, Thomas, L, H. Nickels, S. Silvestri 2012. "Social Cohesion and the Notion of 'Suspect Communities'", *Critical Terrorism Studies*, 5: 1
- Gunning, J. and Jackson, R. 2011. "What's so 'religious' about 'religious terrorism'?", *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, vol.4, no.3
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2001 (or more recent edition). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. University of California Press
- Alireza Doostdar, "How Not To Understand ISIS," University of Chicago 2014.
<https://divinity.uchicago.edu/sightings/how-not-understand-isis-alireza-doostdar>

Discussion Seminar

Selected Readings

- Noah Salomon and Jeremy Walton, "Religious criticism, secular critique, and the "critical study of religion": lessons from the study of Islam," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Robert Orsi ed. Cambridge University Press 2011.
- Leigh Schmidt, "On sympathy, suspicion, and studying religion: historical reflections on a doubled inheritance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies*, Robert Orsi ed. Cambridge University Press 2011.
- Nilufer Gole, "The Making and the Unmaking of Europe in its Encounter with Islam: Negotiating French Republicanism and European Islam," in *Varieties of World Making: Beyond Globalization*, Nathalie Karagiannis and Peter Wagner, eds. Liverpool University Press 2015.

Supervision 2 Essay topics:

Select from the readings and lectures above, drawing from MT readings, to prepare an essay, which must be emailed to the supervisor at least 24h in advance of every supervision.

1. Is the law of the state primarily an expression of majority interests, or an instrument for minority protection?
2. To what extent can newer religious movements be understood as a response to global capitalism?
3. How have scholars of religion defined violence in their work, and what is the role of religion in these definitions?

Lent Term

Students will indicate preferences for **2 out of 4 modules** in early MT, and will be assigned to modules in mid-MT.

Modules 1 and 4 consist of 2 lectures and one supervision.

Modules 2 and 3 offer 2 discussion based seminars of 1.5h each, with a supervision essay to be submitted before the first seminar.

Lent Lecture List

Lecture timings, readings and supervision essays will be confirmed shortly before the beginning of Lent term. Please contact each module leader if you have questions about readings, lectures, or supervisions.

Comparative Approaches to Religion and Politics

Essential

Künkler, M., J. Madeley, S. Shankar. 2018. *A Secular Age Beyond the West: Religion, Law, and the State in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa*, Cambridge University Press.

Menchik, J. 2017. "The Constructivist Approach to Religion and World Politics," *Comparative Politics* 49(4): 561-581.

Recommended

Hurd and Sullivan, "Theologies of American Exceptionalism: An Introduction, *The Immanent Frame*. <http://tif.ssrc.org/2017/02/13/american-exceptionalism-introduction/>

The Immanent Frame, 'A Universe of Terms,'
<https://tif.ssrc.org/category/a-universe-of-terms/>
'Enchantment, Disenchantment'; 'Belief'; 'Race'

Module 1: Religion and Politics in Europe

Taking stock of the concepts and dynamics analysed earlier in the paper, this module focuses on the region of Europe and specifically onto European Union (EU) member states and EU institutions in order to examine how religion as a concept as well as faith communities are addressed through laws and policies by European governments and institutions. Such exercise will also require identifying key political, social and religious actors, and unpacking ideas at the heart of the European integration project. Awareness of the past and recent history of Europe will be necessary in order to understand the present. A case study about Muslim communities in Europe will examine the dilemmas that European democracies, religious minorities, and individual people of faith are facing while seeking to simultaneously maintain peace, security, and protect individual freedoms in societies that are increasingly multicultural and diverse.

Lecture 1: How the relationships between EU member states and EU institutions determines which laws and policies exist and which actors have competence over religious matters

Essential

Foret, F. (2014), *Religion and Politics in the European Union: The Secular Canopy*, Cambridge: CUP.

And one of these:

Byrnes, Timothy and Katzenstein, Peter, eds. (2006) *Religion in an Expanding Europe*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

McRea, R. (2010), *Religion and the Public Order of the European Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Recommended

Davie, Grace (2000) *Religion in Modern Europe*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Doe, N. (2011), *Law and Religion in Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Habermas, J. (2006), "Religion in the Public Sphere", *European J of Philosophy*, 14: 1- 25.

Leustean, L (ed.) (2012), *Representing Religion in the European Union: Does God Matter?*, Routledge Studies on Religion and Politics

Leustean, L. and Madeley, John. (2009), "Religion, Politics and Law in the European Union: an Introduction", *Religion State and Society*, 37 [the whole issue is of interest actually and was republished as a Routledge book in 2010]

Mandaville, P. and S.Silvestri. 2015. "Integrating Religious Engagement into Diplomacy: Challenges & Opportunities", *Issues in Governance Studies*, no.67, Washington DC: Brookings Institution. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2015/01/29-religious-engagement-diplomacy-mandaville-silvestri>

Monsma, S and C. Soper (2009), *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Perchoc, Philippe (2020), *Religion and the EU External Policies: Increasing Engagement*, Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2020/646173/EPRS_IDA\(2020\)646173_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2020/646173/EPRS_IDA(2020)646173_EN.pdf)

Silvestri, Sara (2009), "Islam and Religion in the EU Political System", *West European Politics*, vol.32, no.6

Thomas, Scott (2005), *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Lecture 2: The position of Religious Minorities in Europe: a case study of Muslim communities

Essential

Banchoff, T. ed. *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. [Introduction + at least one chapter of your choice]

Dobbernack, J., Meer, N. & Modood, T. (2015), "Misrecognition and political agency: The case of Muslim organizations in a General Election", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 17 (2), 189-206.

March, Andrew (2006), "Liberal Citizenship and the Search for Overlapping Consensus: The Case of Muslim Minorities", *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 34: 4, pp. 373-421,

Recommended

Bowen, J. (2016) *On British Islam. Religion, Law, and Everyday Practice of Shari'a Councils*, Princeton University Press.

Bowen, J. (2011) *Can Islam Be French? Pluralism and Pragmatism in a Secularist State*, Princeton University Press.

Gilliat-Ray, S. (2010), *Muslims in Britain*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green, T. (2010), "The Resistance to Minarets in Europe", *Journal of Church and State*, 52.

Hargreaves, J. and Staetsky, L.D. (2019), "Antisemitism and Islamophobia: Measuring Sensitivity in the UK", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2019.1682177>.

Hickman, M. Thomas, L., Nickels, H. and Silvestri, S. (2012) "Social cohesion and the notion of 'suspect communities': a study of the experiences and impacts of being 'suspect' for Irish communities and Muslim communities in Britain", *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, vol.5.

Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (2005), special issue "Mosque Conflicts in European Cities", 31: 6.

Kazmi, Z. (2016), "Islamophobia and the New Britishness", *Foreign Affairs*, August

Klausen, Jytte. 2005. *The Islamic Challenge. Politics and Religion in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Koenig, Matthias. (2007), "Europeanising the Governance of Religious Diversity: An Institutional Account of Muslim Struggles for Public Recognition", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33:6, 911

Laegaard, S. (2007), "The Cartoon Controversy: Offence, Identity, Oppression?", *Political Studies*, 55

Laurence, Jonathan (2012), *The Emancipation of Europe's Muslims*, Princeton University Press.

March, Andrew (2009) *Islam and Liberal Citizenship: The Search for an Overlapping Consensus*, Oxford University Press

Modood, T., Triandafyllidou, A., Zapata-Barrero, R. Eds. (2006), *Multiculturalism, Muslims and citizenship: a European approach*, London: Routledge.

Nickels, H., Thomas, L., Hickman, M. and Silvestri, Sara (2012), "Constructing 'suspect' communities and Britishness: Mapping British press coverage of Irish and Muslim communities", 1974–2007, *European Journal of Communication*, 27: 2.

O'Toole, T., Meer, N., DeHanas, D., Jones, S., and Modood, T. (2015), "Governing through Prevent? Regulation and Contested Practice in State-Muslim Engagement", *Sociology*, 1-18.

Patterns of Prejudice (2014), special issue on Islamophobia, 48: 5.

Roy, O. (2004), *Globalised Islam: The Search for a new Ummah*, London: Hurst (alternatively published in USA with Columbia UP).

Supervision Essays:

1. Should the governments of European democracies step up their involvement in the management of religion?
2. The EU has been a vocal actor in condemning religious discrimination and in promoting intercultural relations. How useful and effective do you think this effort has been?
3. To what extent can the public display of religious symbols threaten democratic freedoms in Europe?
4. What could be considered the key factors affecting the emancipation of Muslim communities in Europe?

Module 2: Religion and Gender Activism (Seminar)

This module considers contemporary movements for gender equality and the role played by religious institutions, ideas, and histories, both in support and opposition to the goals of activist movements. It begins with readings which support the writing of independent seminar essays on the claims and strategies of women's movements in Muslim contexts, and how Islam figures into their activism. These form the basis of discussion in Seminar 1. Seminar 2 broadens the focus to consider gender activism with and against religion, in a range of contexts.

Seminar essays are due by email *before* the seminars meet, in order to facilitate discussion. They are supervision length essays based on the essential readings, and students will be expected to discuss their seminar essays during sessions, during which feedback will be provided. In order to write these essays, it is recommended that students begin with Leila Ahmed's *Women and Gender in Islam* (and consult the 2021 version for Ali's Foreword) for background, and then read Abu-Lughod 2002 and Mahmood 2001, followed by the Mir-Hosseini lecture.

Seminar 1: Women's Movements and Strategies

Seminar Essay Questions: choose one, submit by email 48h before Seminar 1

1. To what extent is 'equality' the goal of women's movements in Muslim contexts?
2. How have sacred texts been used for and against women's rights?
3. Has Western feminism been an asset or a liability for gender activism in Muslim-majority contexts?

Essential Readings

Leila Ahmed. 1992. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. Yale UP. 2021 Foreword by Kecia Ali.

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women really need saving?" *American Anthropologist* 104(3) 2002). 783-790.

Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival," *Cultural Anthropology* 2001. 202-236.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini, 'Recovering Gender Equality in Islam: Conversations with Reformist Thinkers'. 2020 BRISMES Annual Lecture, 21 October 2020.

Lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMqb4gOj7kw>

Seminar 2: Case Studies, with linked readings

Malaysia: <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/religion-context/case-studies/gender/malaysias-sisters-islam>

Egypt: <https://tif.ssrc.org/2022/02/18/religious-publicity-and-transnational-minority-politics/>

Shehabuddin, Elora. *Sisters in the Mirror: a History of Muslim Women and the Global Politics of Feminism*, 2021.

Palazzo, N., and Redding, J., eds. *Queer and Religious Alliances in Family Law Politics and Beyond*, Anthem 2022. Intro.

Module 3: Religion in the Courts (Seminar)

This module provides deeper exploration of the entanglements between religious texts, institutions, and ideas, and the working of national courts and regimes of law. It begins with readings that support the writing of independent seminar essays on how these entanglements work: through institutional and colonial history, the making of the nation state, democratic institutions and constitutions, nationalism, ethnicity, and distributions of political resources. These form the basis of discussion in Seminar 1; Seminar 2 further elaborates these through case studies.

Seminar essays are due by email *before* the seminars meet, in order to facilitate discussion. They are supervision length essays, and students will be expected to discuss their seminar essays during sessions, during which feedback will be provided. In order to write these essays, it is recommended that students begin with the Introduction to Hefner 2011 for background, choose one or two chapters from the rest of the book, and then read Quraishi-Landes 2013, followed by Mikdashi and Moustafa (choose one to skim and one to read more closely).

Seminar 1: Courts and the Problem of Religion

Seminar Essay Questions: choose one, submit by email 48h before Seminar 1

1. What difficulties do courts encounter when they arbitrate 'religious' questions?
2. Why do 'secular' courts arbitrate religious questions?
3. To what extent are courts and judges independent decision-makers in matters of religion?

Essential Readings

Hefner, Robert W. 2011. *Shari'a Politics: Islamic Law and Society in the Modern World*. Indiana University Press.

Quraishi-Landes, Asifa, "Rumors of the Sharia Threat are Greatly Exaggerated: What American Judges Really Do with Islamic Family Law in Their Courtrooms," *New York Law School Law Review*, Vol. 57, No. 245, 2013, SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2409154>

Mikdashi, M. 2022. *Sextarianism: Sovereignty, Secularism, and the State in Lebanon*. Stanford University Press.

Moustafa, T. 2018. *Constituting Religion: Islam, Liberal Rights, and the Malaysian State*. CUP.

Seminar 2: Case Studies, with linked readings

<https://sites.northwestern.edu/lawreligion/project/egyptian-law-and-human-rights/>
<https://sites.northwestern.edu/lawreligion/project/religion-sexuality-value/>
<https://sites.northwestern.edu/lawreligion/project/legal-title-to-sacred-places/>
<https://sites.northwestern.edu/lawreligion/project/jews-free-school/>
Arzoo Osanloo, "Islamico-civil 'rights-talk': Women, subjectivity, and law in Iranian family court," *American Ethnologist* 33(2) 2006. Pps. 191-209.

Berger, B. Law's Religion: Introduction, <https://tif.ssrc.org/2016/07/07/laws-religion-an-introduction/>

Module 4: Buddhism and Statecraft in Southern Asia

In the classical states of Buddhist Southern Asia, political authority was heavily Buddhistized. Rulers and the ruled shared a political culture in which Buddhist idioms, symbols, and rituals played a central, legitimating role. Before the advent of European colonialism, rulers in the territories that we today refer to as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Sri Lanka typically styled themselves as *dharmaraja* (righteous Buddhist ruler). The relationship between political authority and religious authority, the latter resting with the *sangha* (Buddhist monkhood), has been characterized as one of antagonistic symbiosis.

In this module, we will explore the continuing significance of this historical legacy, as a frame for political interpretation and imagination, and repertoire of statecraft. We will do so with a focus on two of the challenges inherent in Weber's conception of the state as a "human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory." In light of the common, and also Weberian, understanding of Buddhism as a uniquely non-political and tolerant religion, the teachings of the Buddha would seem to be particularly ill suited for sanctioning (a) political order and (b) political violence. Rulers (and rebels) in modern South and Southeast Asia have nevertheless often sought to legitimize the centralization of power and exercise of violent coercion by appealing to the Buddhist tradition.

Contextual Materials

- *In Our Time*, "Ashoka the Great": <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0511tm1>.
- Mon Mon Myat, "Is politics Aung San Suu Kyi's vocation?" *Palgrave Communications* 5, 50 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0258-1>.
- Doug Saunders, "Kingship-in-the-making," in John Clifford Holt (ed.), *The Sri Lanka reader: History, culture, politics* (Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 731-733.
- *Burma's lost royals*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWFOr47_dao.
- *An unholy alliance: Monks and the military in Myanmar* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF1GZ0094qk>.
- *Thailand's tainted robes* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=382VkJGpDal>.
- *Thailand: In the footsteps of the king* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEdvgpoCPkc>.

Lecture 1: Righteous Rule? Buddhist Kingship in Theory and Practice

A spectre is haunting Theravada Asia—the spectre of Buddhist kingship. Nineteenth and twentieth century efforts by imperialists, radicals, and republicans to exorcise this spectre have, arguably, failed. While imperial intervention and domestic revolutions have relegated the absolute monarchies of the *dharmarajas* to history, collective memories of them have continued to exercise a profound influence on modern politics. Indeed, following the perceived failures of military, democratic and communist regimes,

elites and publics across South and Southeast Asia have sought to revive the ideals and symbols of righteous Buddhist rule.

The readings this week introduce the pre-modern religious and textual sources of political culture centered around utopian Buddhist visions of political authority (Collins, Goh), and explore their modern transformations and contemporary manifestations.

Required Readings

- Steven Collins, *Nirvana and other Buddhist felicities: Utopias of the Pali imaginaire* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-117, 414-496.
- Charles F. Keyes, "Buddhists confront the state," in John Whalen-Bridge and Pattana Kitiarsa (eds.), *Buddhism, modernity, and the state in Asia: Forms of engagement* (Palgrave, 2013), pp. 17-39.
- Patrick Jory, *Thailand's theory of monarchy: The Vessantara Jātaka and the idea of the perfect man* (SUNY Press, 2016), pp. 1-22, 173-188.
- Ingrid Jordt, *Burma's mass lay meditation movement: Buddhism and the cultural construction of power* (Ohio University Press, 2007), pp. 1-14, 170-204.
- Ananda Abeyesekara, *Colors of the robe: Religion, identity, and difference* (University of South Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 67-107.
- Patrice Ladwig, "Worshipping relics and animating statues: Transformations of Buddhist statecraft in contemporary Laos" *Modern Asian Studies* 49:6 (2015): 1875-1902.
- Astrid Norén-Nilsson, "Performance as (re)incarnation: The Sdech Kân narrative" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44:1 (2013): 4-23.

Recommended Readings

- Maitrii Aung-Thwin, "Remembering kings: Archives, resistance and memory in colonial and post-colonial Burma," in Roxana Waterson and Kwok Kian Woon (eds.), *Contestations of Memory in Southeast Asia* (NUS Press, 2012), pp. 53-82.
- Heinz Bechert, "Sangha, state, society, 'nation': Persistence of traditions in 'post-traditional' Buddhist societies" *Daedalus* 102:1 (1973): 85-95.
- Grant Evans, *The politics of ritual and remembrance: Laos since 1975* (Hawaii University Press, 1998).
- Grant Evans, *The last century of Lao royalty: A documentary history* (Silkworm Books, 2009).
- Geok Yian Goh, "Beyond the world-system: A Buddhist ecumene" *Journal of World History* 25:4 (2015): 493-513.
- Geok Yian Goh, *The wheel-turner and his house: Kingship in a Buddhist ecumene* (NIU Press, 2015), chapter 6.

- Christine E. Gray, "Hegemonic images: Language and silence in the royal Thai polity." *Man* 7:4 (1991): 43-65.
- Robert Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of state and kingship in Southeast Asia" *Far Eastern Quarterly* 2:1 (1942): 15-30.
- Gustaaf Houtman, "Sacralizing or demonizing democracy? Aung San Suu Kyi's 'personality cult'," in Monique Skidmore (ed.), *Burma at the turn of the twenty-first century* (University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 133-153.
- Tomas Larsson, "Monkish politics in Southeast Asia: Religious disenfranchisement in comparative and theoretical perspective" *Modern Asian Studies* 49:1 (2015): 40-82.
- Tomas Larsson, "Royal succession and the politics of religious purification in contemporary Thailand" *Journal of Contemporary Asia* (forthcoming).
- Stephen McCarthy, "The Buddhist political rhetoric of Aung San Suu Kyi" *Contemporary Buddhism* 5:2 (2004): 67-81.
- Eugénie Mérieau, "Buddhist constitutionalism in Thailand: When Rājadharmā supersedes the constitution" *Asian Journal of Comparative Law* 13:2 (2018): 283-305.
- Craig J. Reynolds, "Power," in Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Critical terms for the study of Buddhism* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 211-228.
- Frank Reynolds, "The two wheels of Dhamma: A study of early Buddhism," in Gananath Obeyesekere, Frank Reynolds, and Bardwell L. Smith (eds.), *The two wheels of Dhamma: Essays on the Theravada tradition in India and Ceylon* (American Academy of Religion, 1972), pp. 6-30.
- Juliane Schober, "Buddhist just rule and Burmese national culture: State patronage of the Chinese tooth relic in Myanma" *History of Religions* 36:3 (1997): 218-243.
- Benjamin Schonthal, "Formations of Buddhist constitutionalism in South and Southeast Asia" *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 15:3 (2017): 705-733.
- Herbert L. Seneviratne, *The work of kings: The new Buddhism in Sri Lanka* (University of Chicago Press, 1999).
- Irene Stengs, *Worshipping the great moderniser: King Chulalongkorn, patron saint of the Thai middle class* (NUS Press, 2009), chapter 5.
- Stanley J. Tambiah, *World conqueror and world renouncer: A study of Buddhism and polity in Thailand against a historical background* (Cambridge University Press, 1976).
- Matthew J. Walton, *Buddhism, politics and political thought in Myanmar* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 65-95, 163-191.

Lecture 2: Just Violence? Buddhism and Bloodshed

In the comparative study of religion and politics, Buddhism is often rather good to think with. It provides a productive contrast with the monotheistic Abrahamic religions. Buddhist teachings do not deny the existence of gods. On the contrary: in Buddhist cosmology we find a panoply of deities (alongside a tapestry of demi-gods, fairies, nagas, hungry ghosts, and hell beings). But Buddha's teachings are thought to apply to gods and humans alike. Buddhism therefore lacks much of the powerful drive, inherent in monotheistic traditions, to destroy rival gods and convert their followers. The willingness to accept, at a certain level, religious pluralism is one reason Buddhism often has been portrayed as a "peaceful" religion. However, the differences should not be exaggerated. In the pre-colonial era, the *cakkavatti* ideal of universal Buddhist kingship served as an ideological spur to self-aggrandizing and if need be violent expansion of the polity. Furthermore, it is incumbent on the righteous ruler to preserve and defend the *satsana* (teachings). Claiming that Buddhism is "under threat" has therefore often served as a justification for violence against the perceived enemies of the "triple gem" (Buddha, dhamma, sangha) -- including but not limited to European colonial powers. This discourse was mobilized during the Cold War and, in more recent years, it has reappeared in Myanmar, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, especially, in relation to Muslim and other minorities who are perceived as threats to the "Buddhist" identity of state and society.

Required Readings

- Tessa J. Bartholomeusz, *In defense of dharma: Just-war ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (Routledge, 2002), pp. 136-167.
- Daniel W. Kent, "Onward Buddhist soldiers: Preaching to the Sri Lankan Army," in Michael Jerryson and Mark Juergensmeyer (eds.), *Buddhist warfare* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 157-173.
- Matthew J. Walton and Michael Jerryson, "The authorization of religio-political discourse: Monks and Buddhist activism in contemporary Myanmar and beyond" *Politics and Religion* 9:4 (2016): 794-814.
- Eugene Ford, *Cold War monks: Buddhism and America's secret strategy in Southeast Asia* (Yale University Press, 2017), pp. TBA.
- Ian Harris, *Buddhism in a dark age: Cambodian monks under Pol Pot* (University of Hawaii Press, 2012), pp. 43-63.

Recommended Readings

- Ian G. Baird, "Lao Buddhist monks' involvement in political and military resistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic government since 1975" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71:3 (2012): 655-677.
- Mahinda Deegalle, (ed.), *Buddhism, conflict and violence in modern Sri Lanka* (Routledge, 2006).

- Niklas Foxeus, "The Buddha was a devoted nationalist: Buddhist nationalism, resentment, and defending Buddhism in Myanmar" *Religion* 49:4 (2019): 661-690.
- Iselin Frydenlund, "Buddhism and violence: An oxymoron? Text and tradition in Buddhist just-war thinking," in Lester R. Kurtz (ed.), *The Warrior and the pacifist: Competing motifs in Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Routledge, 2018).
- John Clifford Holt, "A religious syntax to recent communal violence in Sri Lanka" in John Clifford Holt (ed.), *Buddhist extremists and Muslim minorities: Religious conflict in contemporary Sri Lanka* (Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 194-210.
- Michael Jerryson, *Buddhist fury: Religion and violence in Southern Thailand* (Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Michael Jerryson, *If you meet the Buddha on the road: Buddhism, politics, and violence* (Oxford University Press, 2018).
- Bruce Kapferer, *Legends of people, myths of state: Violence, intolerance, and political culture in Sri Lanka and Australia* (Berghahn Books, 2012), pp. 27-118.
- Edoardo Siani, "Purifying violence: Buddhist kingship, legitimacy and crisis in Thailand's ninth and tenth reigns," in Pavin Chachavalpongpun (ed.), *Coup, King, Crisis: A critical interregnum in Thailand* (NUS Press, 2020).
- Martin Stuart-Fox and Rod Bucknell, "Politicization of the Buddhist sangha in Laos" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 13:1 (1982): 60-80.
- Sunait Chutintaranond, "Cakravartin: Ideology, reason and manifestation of Siamese and Burmese kings in traditional warfare (1538-1854)" *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 4:1 (1988): 46-56.
- Suwanna Satha-Anand, "The question of violence in Thai Buddhism," in Vladimir Tikhonov and Torkel Brekke (eds.), *Buddhism and violence militarism and Buddhism in modern Asia* (Routledge, 2012), pp. 175-193.
- Stanley J. Tambiah, *Buddhism betrayed? Religion, politics, and violence in Sri Lanka* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- Matthew J. Walton and Susan Hayward, *Contesting Buddhist narratives: Democratization, nationalism, and communal violence in Myanmar* (East-West Center, 2014).
- <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/sites/default/files/private/ps071.pdf>

Supervision Questions

- (1) How have ideas regarding Buddhist kingship informed strategies of political legitimation in Southern Asia?
- (2) Should we pay attention to Buddhism when trying to understand violent conflict in Southern Asia?

Mock exam questions

16 questions: Answer three questions: a question from each of Section A and Section B, and a third question from either section.

Section A: Answer at least one question from this section

To what extent is the state's definition of 'religion' the only definition that matters?

How, and to what extent, is global capitalism a threat to religious institutions?

To what extent, and under what circumstances, does the law serve the interests of the minority?

How does the concept of religious freedom function in the international arena, and to whose benefit?

What is the role of violence in the relationship between religion and the state?

Why, and to what extent, does secularism vary between states?

To what extent have imperial definitions of religion persisted into the modern nation state?

Is religion a threat to democracy, or essential to its practice?

Section B: Answer at least one question from this section

To what extent can religion facilitate or hinder the project of European integration?

What factors determine the ways in which European countries and institutions engage with religious issues and faith communities?

How have women's movements in Muslim contexts used Islam to their benefit?

Have global human rights movements helped or hindered gender equality in Muslim-majority states?

To what extent are national courts independent arbiters of religion? Compare and contrast two courts in your response.

Under what circumstances, and for what reasons, do secular courts interfere in matters of religion? Compare and contrast two courts in your response.

How has the collective memory of dhammarajas been cultivated in contemporary politics in Southern Asia?

What does it mean to say that some warfare is "Buddhist"?