

Religion and Politics

Michaelmas 2022

Dr Tomas Larsson
E-mail: thl33@cam.ac.uk

Course Description

Religion and politics are controversial topics, and the nature of their intersection has in recent decades become a hotly debated issue across the social sciences. What is the role of religion in shaping politically relevant ideas, actions, identities, and institutions? This is the overarching empirical question with which the course is concerned. We will explore it in relation to a variety of substantive topics in comparative politics and international relations, including but not limited to political mobilization, violence, and governance. The course aims to provide students with conceptual and analytical tools for studying the role of religion in processes of political contestation, cooperation, and change.

The course reflects a commitment to the idea that the study of religion and politics is best informed by a broad interdisciplinary approach. It will therefore introduce students to a diversity of theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and an equally varied set of religious, regional, and historical contexts. The course is structured around different ways of conceptualizing religion. We will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of approaches that treat religion as (1) a byproduct of innate features of human cognition, (2) a social imaginary, (3) an identity marker, (4) a market, (5) discourse, (6) practices; and (7) a social field.

Throughout the term, we will explore the interactions between religious and political life in relation to three central theoretical and conceptual issues. The first concerns the relationship between top-down (elite) and bottom-up (popular) processes to reproduce or manipulate religious communities, discourses, and organizations—and their relationship to the polity. Religions can, like language and culture more broadly, for our purposes be thought of as “spontaneous orders” (Hayek). While rulers, groups, and organizations may try to fashion and refashion such orders, it is ultimately beyond their capacity to create or control them. The question is therefore: To what extent, and how successfully, do the theoretical frameworks we encounter in the readings integrate top-down (intentional) and bottom-up (mostly unintentional) drivers of religio-political change? The second issue is whether it might be possible to reconcile the different approaches and arguments we encounter into an integrated theoretical framework. If so, what might it look like? The third conceptual issue concerns the meaning and use of “religion” in social scientific explanations and arguments. As we will see, agreement on a universal, substantive definition has so far eluded scholars. Some, furthermore, argue that the idea of religion as a distinct category, in contradistinction to “the secular,” reflects a modern and specifically Western and Protestant Christian understanding which resulted from historical experiences unique to Europe. If so, then it may in other cultural contexts be difficult to separate a religious sphere of activity from politics (and economy, science, etc.). In light of this critique, are social scientists nevertheless justified in using “religion” as a category of analysis? Can they, for instance, treat religion as a causal factor or explanatory variable, that, in conjunction with

other factors (economic, social, historical, etc.), influences political behaviour and produces political outcomes?

Course Organisation and Expectations:

In the reading list below, readings are divided into three categories. *Required* readings are compulsory. *Recommended* readings may be helpful if you wish to explore a topic further or when you write your assessment essay. *Further* readings are primarily intended to serve as a resource if you are interested in writing a dissertation on some aspect of religion and politics.

Students are expected to participate actively in discussion. As you do the required readings in preparation for the seminar, please keep the following questions in mind:

- 1) What is the central argument of each reading?
- 2) What is the weakest point in the argument? Why?
- 3) To what extent and in what ways do the arguments in different readings diverge with respect to basic assumptions? Basic assumptions may pertain, for example, to (a) the meaning of religion and other key concepts, (b) the direction of the causal arrows, (c) the motivations of actors, and (d) the connection between different levels of analysis (such as individuals and social structures). As the term proceeds, we will also be able to look back and reflect on questions of divergence, and potential reconciliation, in relation to arguments encountered in previous weeks.
- 4) What questions would you like to bring up in the seminar? For example, was there anything in the readings that you found particularly provocative, creative, or confusing?

Students will be invited to serve as discussants for at least one seminar session.

For assessment you are asked to write a 3,000-word essay which is due at the end of term.

Background Reading:

Jonathan Haidt. *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion* (Penguin, 2013).

Anna Grzymala-Busse. "Why comparative politics should take religion (more) seriously." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15 (2012): 421-442.

Mona Kanwal Sheikh. "How does religion matter? Pathways to religion in International Relations." *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 365-392.

First Session: The Evolutionary Origins of Religion and Politics

Discussion questions:

In this first seminar, we explore the cognitive basis of human religiousness and the demographic forces that underpin the evolution of religious and political orders. One of the fundamental puzzles in human evolution concerns the emergence of large-scale societies. The human brain is adapted to a manageable group size of around 150 people (Dunbar's number), but today most of us live in societies where membership is counted in the millions. What enabled us to make the leap from small-scale groups such as family and clan to larger-scale social groups? The answer may, as Norenzayan et al argue, lie in cognitive features of the human brain that allowed for the emergence of prosocial religions which in turn conferred groups who adopted such religions with a competitive advantage in the struggle for survival. This suggests that belief in a moralizing "big god" is a cultural adaptation that evolved through group selection. If religion played a key role in making large-scale cooperation possible, what is its role today? Can advanced capitalist social orders be sustained if they, as argued by Norris and Inglehart, become more secularized as a consequence of their prosperity? And what are the political implications of the continuing demographic advantage of some religious groups for the future trajectory of political orders? Frydenlund's study of the politicization and securitization of religious demography in Burma/Myanmar illuminates one possible scenario.

Required readings:

Friedrich A. von Hayek. "Religion and the guardians of tradition," in *The fatal conceit: The errors of socialism* (Routledge, 1988), pp. 135-140.

Norenzayan, Ara, Azim F. Shariff, Will M. Gervais, Aiyana K. Willard, Rita A. McNamara, Edward Slingerland, and Joseph Henrich. "The cultural evolution of prosocial religions." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 39, E1 (2016).

Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. "Are high levels of existential security conducive to secularization? A response to our critics." In *The changing world religion map: Sacred places, identities, practices and politics*, edited by SD Brunn. Springer, 2015, pp. 3389-3408.

Eric P. Kaufman. *Shall the religious inherit the earth? Demography and politics in the twenty-first century* (Profile Books, 2010), pp. ix-xxi (corresponding to "Introduction" in the ebook).

Frydenlund, Iselin. "Protecting Buddhist women from Muslim men: 'Love Jihad' and the rise of Islamophobia in Myanmar." *Religions* 12, no. 12 (2021): 1082.

Recommended readings:

Scott Atran. "The devoted actor: Unconditional commitment and intractable conflict across cultures" *Current Anthropology* 57:S13 (2016): S192-S203.

Maurice Bloch. "Why religion is nothing special but is central," in *In and out of each other's bodies: Theory of mind, evolution, truth, and the nature of the social* (Routledge, 2016), pp. 23-40.

Joseph Henrich. *The WEIRDest people in the world: How the West became psychologically peculiar and particularly prosperous* (Penguin UK, 2020).

Richard Sosis and Eric R. Bressler. "Cooperation and commune longevity: A test of the costly signaling theory of religion" *Cross-cultural research* 37, no. 2 (2003): 211-239.

Further readings:

Pascal Boyer and Nicolas Baumard. "The diversity of religious systems across history: An evolutionary cognitive approach," in James R. Liddle and Todd K. Shackelford (eds.), *Oxford handbook of evolutionary psychology and religion* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Jared Diamond. *Guns, germs, and steel: The fates of human societies* (W. W. Norton, 1997), pp. 265-292.

Mircea Eliade. *The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion* (Harcourt, 1959).

Jack Goody. "The word of God," in *The logic of writing and the organization of society* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 1-44.

Jonathan Haidt. *The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion* (Penguin, 2013).

Friedrich A. von Hayek. *Law, legislation and liberty* Vol. 1: Rules and order (Routledge, 2012), pp. 9-52.

David Hume. "The natural history of religion" in A. Wayne Colver and John Valdimir Price (eds.), *David Hume: The Natural History of Religion and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 25-95.

Alex Mesoudi. *Cultural evolution: How Darwinian theory can explain human culture and synthesize the social sciences* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Olivier Morin. *How traditions live and die* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Jonathan F. Shulz, Duman Bahrami-rad, Jonathan P. Beauchamp, and Joseph Henrich. "The church, intensive kinship, and global psychological variation" *Science* 366: eaau5141 (8 November 2019).

Rodney Stark. *For the glory of God: How monotheism led to reformation, science, witch-hunts, and the end of slavery* (Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 1-13, 367-376.

Konrad Talmont-Kaminski. *Religion as magical ideology: How the supernatural reflects rationality* (Routledge, 2014).

Jonathan H. Turner, Alexandra Maryanski, Anders Klostergaard Petersen, and Armin W. Geertz. *The emergence and evolution of religion: By means of natural selection* (Routledge, 2018).

Second Session: Religious and Political Imaginaries

Discussion questions:

The readings for this week are concerned with the emergence and transformation of religious and political imaginaries, which we may think of as shared frames of imagination and interpretation, or worldviews. What are these religious and political imaginaries, and by whom, more precisely, are they shared? How are they reproduced over time, and how do they change? To what extent can the transformations of these ideational constructs, and the social and political consequences that flow from them, be viewed as the result of rational action by powerful social actors in pursuit of well-defined goals? And why is it that controversies over religious texts and doctrines—i.e., theological debates—loom so large in the analyses we encounter in this week's readings?

Required readings:

Mark Juergensmeyer and Mona Kanwal Sheikh. "A sociotheological approach to understanding religious violence." In *The Oxford handbook of religion and violence*, edited by Michael Jerryson, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Margo Kitts. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Brad S. Gregory. *The unintended reformation: How a religious revolution secularized society* (Harvard University Press, 2012), especially pp. 1-24, 180-234.

Ladwig, Patrice. "The Indianization and localization of textual imaginaries: Theravada Buddhist statecraft in mainland Southeast Asia and Laos in the context of civilizational analysis." In *Anthropology and Civilizational Analysis: Eurasian Explorations*, edited by JP Arnason and C Hann. SUNY Press, 2018, pp. 155-191.

Dale F Eickelman. "Mass higher education and the religious imagination in contemporary Arab societies." *American Ethnologist* 19, no. 4 (1992): 643-655.

Recommended readings:

José Casanova. "The secular, secularizations, secularisms." In *Rethinking secularism*, edited by Calhoun, Craig, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen. (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 54-74.

Clifford Geertz. "Religion as a cultural system," in *The interpretation of cultures* (Basic Books, 2000), pp. 87-125.

Carlo Ginzburg. *The cheese and the worms: The cosmos of a sixteenth-century miller* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

Peter J Katzenstein. "Civilizational states, secularisms, and religions." In *Rethinking secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen. (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 145-165.

Andrew Phillips. *War, religion and empire: The transformation of international orders* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 1-56.

Marshall Sahlins. "The original political society," *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7:2 (2017): 91-128.

Charles Taylor. *A secular age* (Harvard University Press, 2007), especially pp. 1-22, 159-211.

Further readings:

Jóhann Páll Árnason, Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, and Bjorn Wittrock (eds.). *Axial civilizations and world history* (Brill, 2004).

Adam Ashforth. *Witchcraft, violence, and democracy in South Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 1-19, 311-318.

William Bain. *Political theology of international order*. Oxford University Press, 2020, especially pp. 1-26.

Lisa Blaydes, Justin Grimmer, and Alison McQueen. "Mirrors for princes and sultans: Advice on the art of governance in the medieval Christian and Islamic worlds" *Journal of Politics* 80:4 (2018): 1150-67.

Randall Collins. *The sociology of philosophies: A global theory of intellectual change* (Harvard University Press, 1998).

Steven Collins. *Nirvana and other Buddhist felicities: Utopias of the Pali imaginaire* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-117, 414-496.

Louis Dumont. *Homo hierarchicus: The caste system and its implications* (University of Chicago Press, 1980).

S. N. Eisenstadt. "Religion and the civilizational dimensions of politics," in Said Amir Arjomand, *The political dimensions of religion* (State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 13-41.

Marcel Gauchet. *The disenchantment of the world: A political history of religion* (Princeton University Press, 1999).

Clifford Geertz. *Negara: The theatre state in nineteenth-century Bali* (Princeton University Press, 1980), especially pp. 11-25, 98-120.

Ernest Gellner. *Muslim society* (Cambridge University Press, 1981), Chapter 1.

Emilio Gentile. *Politics as religion* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

Philip S. Gorski. *The disciplinary revolution: Calvinism and the rise of the state in early modern Europe* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

Jürgen Habermas. "Religion in the public sphere" *European Journal of Philosophy* 14:1 (2006): 1-25.

Ian Harris. "Buddhism and politics in Asia: The textual and historical roots," in Ian Harris (ed.), *Buddhism and politics in twentieth century Asia* (Bloomsbury, 2010), pp. 1-25.

Albert O. Hirschman. *The passions and the interests: Political arguments for capitalism before its triumph* (Princeton University Press, 1977).

Samuel P Huntington. "The clash of civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (1993): 22-49.

- Reynaldo Clemeña Ilet. *Pasyon and revolution: Popular movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Ateneo de Manila Press, 1979).
- Ira Katznelson and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.). *Religion and the political imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- Charles F. Keyes, Laurel Kendall, and Helen Hardacre. "Contested visions of community in East and South East Asia," in Charles F. Keyes, Laurel Kendall, and Helen Hardacre (eds.) *Asian visions of authority: Religion and the modern states of East and South East Asia* (University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 1-16.
- Eric Kurlander. *Hitler's monsters: A supernatural history of the Third Reich* (Yale University Press, 2017).
- Ruth Marshall. *Political spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- Karl Marx. "A contribution to the critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction" and "On Feuerbach," in Joseph J. O'Malley (ed.), *Marx: Early political writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 57-70, 116-118.
- Ebenezer Obadare. *Pentecostal republic: Religion and the struggle for state power in Nigeria* (Zed Books, 2018).
- Daniel Philpott. "The religious roots of modern international relations." *World Politics* 52, no. 2 (2000): 206-245.
- Mona Kanwal Sheikh and Mark Juergensmeyer (eds.). *Entering religious minds: The social study of worldviews* (Routledge, 2019).
- Alan Strathern. "Transcendentalist intransigence: Why rulers rejected monotheism in early modern Southeast Asia and beyond." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 2 (2007): 358-383.
- Ann Swidler. "Culture in action: Symbols and strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 2 (1986): 273-286.
- Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America* (English edition edited by Eduardo Nolla, translated from the French by James T. Schleifer, Vol. 1, Liberty Fund, 2012), pp. 466-488.
- Max Weber. *Sociology of religion* (Beacon Press, 1993).
- Max Weber. *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (Routledge, 2001).
- Robert D. Woodberry. "The missionary roots of liberal democracy" *American Political Science Review* 106:2 (2012): 244-274.
- Robert Wuthnow. *Communities of discourse: Ideology and social structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European socialism* (Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 14-35.

Third Session: Religious Identity and Politics

Discussion questions:

Religion is a multidimensional phenomenon. In comparative politics and international relations, the greatest attention has probably been paid to religion as a marker of social identity. By some accounts, religion is functionally equivalent to other possible markers of identity, such as language, race, caste, tribe, kinship, region, indigeneity, and nation. The specifically religious aspects of identity can therefore be abstracted from, folded in under the rubric of ethnicity and nation, and given no further analytical attention. The central questions for this week are therefore whether religious belonging matters in processes of social and political change, whether and why it may do so in ways that are distinct from other forms of belonging, and how religious belonging interacts with other aspects of religion (such as belief and organization).

Required readings:

Rogers Brubaker. "Language, religion and the politics of difference" *Nations and Nationalism* 19:1 (2013): 1-20.

Barbara-Ann J Rieffer. "Religion and nationalism: Understanding the consequences of a complex relationship." *Ethnicities* 3, no. 2 (2003): 215-242.

Anna Grzymala-Busse. "Weapons of the meek: How churches influence public policy" *World Politics* 68, no. 1 (2016): 1-36.

Corwin E Smidt. "Measuring religion in terms of belonging, beliefs, and behavior." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, 2019.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.675>

Haddad, Fanar. "Sectarian identity and national identity in the Middle East." *Nations and Nationalism* 26, no. 1 (2020): 123-137.

Recommended readings:

Michael C. Horowitz. "Long time going: Religion and the duration of crusading" *International Security* 34, no. 2 (2009): 162-193.

Catarina Kinnvall. "Globalization and religious nationalism: Self, identity, and the search for ontological security" *Political Psychology* 25:5 (2004): 741-767.

John F. McCauley and Daniel N. Posner. "The political sources of religious identification: Evidence from the Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire border" *British Journal of Political Science* 49:2 (2017):421-444.

Brent F. Nelsen, James L Guth, and Brian Highsmith. "Does religion still matter? Religion and public attitudes toward integration in Europe" *Politics and Religion* 4, no. 1 (2011): 1-26.

Daniel Philpott. "Explaining the political ambivalence of religion" *American Political Science Review* 101, no. 3 (2007): 505-525.

Frances Stewart. "Religion versus ethnicity as a source of mobilization: Are there differences?" in *Understanding collective political violence*, edited by Yvan Guichaoua (Palgrave, 2011), pp. 196-221.

Philip S. Gorski, *American covenant: A history of civil religion from the Puritans to the present* (Princeton University Press, 2017), especially pp. 1-36, 173-234.

Further readings:

Uriel Abulof. "The Roles of Religion in National Legitimation: Judaism and Zionism's Elusive Quest for Legitimacy." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53, no. 3 (2014): 515-533.

Robert N. Bellah. "Civil religion in America" *Daedalus* 96:1 (1967): 1-21.

Gregorio Bettiza. "Civilizational analysis in international relations: Mapping the field and advancing a 'civilizational politics' line of research" *International Studies Review* 16, no. 1 (2014): 1-28.

Rogers Brubaker. "Religion and nationalism: Four approaches" *Nations and Nationalism* 18:1 (2012): 2-20.

Rogers Brubaker. "Between nationalism and civilizationism: The European populist moment in comparative perspective" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 8 (2017): 1191-1226.

Émile Durkheim. *Elementary forms of religious life*, translated by Carol Cosman (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 25-46.

Mark Juergensmeyer. *Global rebellion: Religious challenges to the secular state, from Christian militias to Al Qaeda* (University of California Press, 2008).

David D. Laitin. *Hegemony and culture: Politics and religious change among the Yoruba* (University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Arend Lijphart. "Religious vs. linguistic vs. class voting: The 'crucial experiment' of comparing Belgium, Canada, South Africa, and Switzerland" *American Political Science Review* 73:2 (1979): 442-458.

Anthony W. Marx. *Faith in nation: Exclusionary origins of nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 3-32, 73-164.

Stein Rokkan. "Nation-building, cleavage formation and the structuring of mass politics," in *Citizens, elections, parties* (David McKay, 1970), pp. 72-142.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau. "Of the social contract," in *Rousseau: The Social Contract and other later writings*, edited by Victor Gourevich, (Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 146-155.

Olivier Roy. *Holy ignorance: When religion and culture part ways* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Anthony D. Smith. *Chosen peoples: Sacred sources of national identity* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Willfried Spohn. "Multiple modernity, nationalism and religion: a global perspective" *Current Sociology* 51, no. 3-4 (2003): 265-286.

J Christopher Soper and Joel S Fetzer. *Religion and nationalism in global perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), especially pp. 1-31, 225-230.

Peter van der Veer. *Religious nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (University of California Press, 1994).

Fourth Session: Religious Markets and Politics

Discussion questions:

Modern economics has for the most part been happy to leave the study of religion to theologians, sociologists, and anthropologists. Since the 1990s, however, a growing number of economists have turned their attention to religion. Many political scientists have also found the economic (or rational choice) approach to religion productive in their quest to better understand how the interactions of religious and political actors generate important political outcomes.

Among the questions we may want to discuss this week are the following: In what ways are markets for religious goods different from markets for widgets, and what are the implications of those differences? What *is* a religious good? What room, if any, is there for a consideration of the significance of religious doctrine and belief in the economic approach to religion and politics?

Required readings:

Rodney Stark. "Economics of religion," in *The Blackwell companion to the study of religion*, edited by Robert A Segal (Blackwell, 2006), pp. 47-67.

Laurence R Iannaccone. "Rational choice: Framework for the study of religion," in *Rational choice theory and religion: Summary and assessment*, edited by Lawrence A Young (Routledge, 1997), pp. 25-44.

Anthony J. Gill. "Rendering unto Caesar? Religious competition and Catholic political strategy in Latin America, 1962-79" *American Journal of Political Science* (1994): 403-425.

Yang, Fenggang. "The red, black, and gray markets of religion in China." *The Sociological Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2006): 93-122.

Recommended readings:

Karrie J. Koesel. "The political economy of religious revival" *Politics and Religion* 8, no. 2 (2015): 211-235.

Tomas Larsson. "Monkish politics in Southeast Asia: Religious disenfranchisement in comparative and theoretical perspective" *Modern Asian Studies* 49:1 (2015): 40-82.

Eli Berman and David D. Laitin. "Religion, terrorism and public goods: Testing the club model" *Journal of Public Economics* 92, no. 10-11 (2008): 1942-1967.

Jean-Philippe Platteau. *Islam instrumentalized: Religion and politics in historical perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), especially pp. 1-32.

David Siddhartha Patel. "Concealing to reveal: The informational role of Islamic dress" *Rationality and Society* 24:3 (2012): 295-323.

Jared Rubin. *Rulers, religion, and riches: Why the West got rich and the Middle East did not* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), especially pp. 1-46.

Amy Erica Smith. *Religion and Brazilian democracy: Mobilizing the people of God* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), especially pp. 1-45.

Further readings:

Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary. "Which countries have state religions?" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120:4 (2005): 1331-1370.

Lisa Blaydes and Drew A. Linzer. "The political economy of women's support for fundamentalist Islam" *World Politics* 60:4 (2008): 576-609.

Steve Bruce. *Choice and religion: A critique of rational choice theory* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

Eric Chaney. "Revolt on the Nile: Economic shocks, religion and political power" *Econometrica* 81:5 (2013): 2033-2053.

Paul Froese. *The plot to kill God: Findings from the Soviet experiment in secularization* (University of California Press, 2008).

Brian J Grim and Roger Finke. "International religion indexes: Government regulation, government favoritism, and social regulation of religion." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 2 (2006).

Saumitra Jha, "Trade, institutions and ethnic tolerance: Evidence from South Asia" *American Political Science Review* 107:4 (2013): 806-832.

Noel D Johnson and Mark Koyama. *Persecution and toleration: The long road to religious freedom* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 25-93, 123-152, 245-261.

David Lehmann. "Rational choice and the sociology of religion," in *The new Blackwell companion to the sociology of religion*, edited by Bryan S. Turner (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 181-200.

Richard A Nielsen. *Deadly clerics: Blocked ambition and the paths to Jihad* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Rodney Stark and Roger Finke. *Acts of faith: Explaining the human side of religion* (University of California Press, 2000).

Julie Taylor. "Prophet sharing: Strategic interaction between Muslim clerics and Middle Eastern regimes" *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 10:1 (2008): 41-62.

Guillermo Trejo. "Religious competition and ethnic mobilization in Latin America: Why the Catholic Church promotes indigenous movements in Mexico" *American Political Science Review*, 103:3 (2009): 323-342.

Fifth Session: “Religion” and Politics

Discussion questions:

This week introduces a deconstructionist approach which offers a challenge to social scientists who treat “religion” and religions (“Islam,” “Buddhism,” etc.) as universal, reified categories. Genealogies which historicize these categories, predominantly tracing their origins to Christian contexts and European colonial endeavours, demonstrate, it is argued, the implausibility and inappropriateness of such a treatment. The “invention” of religion is, furthermore, constitutive of the modern state, in which secularism is both a legitimating ideology and a form of governmentality.

One of the questions we may reflect on this week is whether the scholarship on religion and politics that is influenced by the genealogical turn is internally consistent. Is the call for the abandonment of reified notions of religion and associated categories compatible with the invocation of categories like “lived religion”? Or is the logical conclusion that “religion” and the associated taxonomy should be abandoned altogether?

Required readings:

Philip C Almond. *The British Discovery of Buddhism* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 1-32.

William Arnal and Russell T. McCutcheon. *The sacred is the profane: The political nature of ‘religion’* (Oxford University Press, 2013), especially pp. 1-30.

William T Cavanaugh. “The invention of the religious-secular distinction,” in *At the limits of the secular: Reflections on faith and public life*, edited by William A Barbieri and Charles Taylor (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), pp. 105-128.

Elisabeth Shakman Hurd. *Beyond religious freedom: The new global politics of religion* (Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 1-64.

Recommended readings:

Talal Asad. “The construction of religion as an anthropological category,” in *Genealogies of religion: Discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 27-54.

Robert Ford Campany. “On the very idea of religions (in the modern West and in early medieval China).” *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (2003): 287-319.

Saba Mahmood. “Can secularism be other-wise?” In *Varieties of secularism in a secular age*, edited by Michael Warner, Jonathan VanAntwerpen, and Craig Calhoun (Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 282-299.

- Saba Mahmood. *Religious difference in a secular age: A minority report* (Princeton University Press, 2016), pp. 31-65.
- Martin Riesebrodt. "Religion as discourse: On the critique of the concept of religion," in *The promise of salvation: A theory of religion* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 1-20.
- Benson Saler. *Conceptualizing religion: Immanent anthropologists, transcendent natives, and unbounded categories* (Berghahn, 2000), ix-xvi.
- Noah Salomon. *For love of the prophet: An ethnography of Sudan's Islamic state*. Princeton University Press, 2016, especially pp. 29-55.

Further readings:

- Jonathan C Agensky. "Recognizing religion: Politics, history, and the 'long 19th century'" *European Journal of International Relations* 23, no. 4 (2017): 729-755.
- Aziz al-Azmeh. *Islams and modernities* (third edition, Verso, 2009), pp. 196-222.
- Talal Asad. "What might an anthropology of secularism look like?" in *Formations of the secular: Christianity, Islam, modernity* (Stanford University Press, 2003), pp. 21-66.
- Talal Asad. "The idea of an anthropology of Islam" *Qui Parle* 17:2 (2009): 1-30.
- Émile Benveniste. "Religion and superstition," in *Dictionary of Indo-European concepts and society* (HAU Books, 2016), pp. 525-537.
- William T. Cavanaugh. *The myth of religious violence: Secular ideology and the roots of modern conflict* (Oxford University Press, 2009).
- David Chidester. *Empire of religion: Imperialism and comparative religion* (University of Chicago Press, 2014).
- Daniel Dubuisson. *The Western construction of religion: Myths, knowledge, and ideology*, translated by William Sayers (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).
- Hadi Enayat. *Islam and secularism in post-colonial thought: A cartography of Asadian genealogies* (Palgrave, 2017).
- Timothy Fitzgerald. *The ideology of religious studies* (Oxford University Press, 2003), especially pp. 3-32, 159-180.
- W. B. Gallie. "Essentially contested concepts" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society of London* 56 (1955-1956): 167-198.
- Richard King. *Orientalism and religion: Post-colonial theory, India, and 'the mystic East'* (Routledge, 1999).
- Saba Mahmood. *Politics of piety: The Islamic revival and the feminist subject* (Princeton University Press, 2005).
- Tomoko Mazuzawa. *The invention of world religions: Or, how European universalism was preserved in the language of pluralism* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- Robert A. Orsi. *Between heaven and earth: The religious world people make and the scholars who study them* (Princeton University Press, 2004).

- Kevin Schilbrack. "Religions: Are there any?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 4 (2010): 1112-1138.
- Kevin Schilbrack. "What isn't Religion?" *The Journal of Religion* 93, no. 3 (2013): 291-318.
- Jonathan Z. Smith. *Imagining religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (University of Chicago Press, 1982).
- Gregory Starrett. "The varieties of secular experience" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52:3 (2010): 626-651.
- John Obert Voll. "Islam as a community of discourse and a world-system," in Akbar S. Ahmed and Tamara Sonn (eds.), *The SAGE handbook of Islamic studies* (Sage, 2010), pp. 3-16.

Sixth Session: Religious Practices and Politics

Discussion questions:

Religious traditions offer rich menus of practices, such as prayer, pilgrimage, preaching, prostration, possession, procession, and penance. Dissatisfied with the emphasis, in much of the literature, on religion as belief and identity, a growing number of scholars in comparative politics and international relations have turned their attention to the political significance of these and similar religious practices. What happens when people “do” religion and how does it matter for politics? The fundamental methodological challenge for these studies is to connect the “micropolitics” of everyday religious life with macro-level political outcomes. How, and how successfully, do they go about doing that?

Required readings:

- Christian Smith. *Religion: What it is, how it works, and why it matters* (Princeton University Press, 2017) pp. 20-76.
- Ron E. Hassner. *Religion on the battlefield* (Cornell University Press, 2016), pp. 1-28, 110-134.
- Gwyneth McClendon and Rachel Beatty Riedl. “Using sermons to study religions’ influence on political behavior” *Comparative Political Studies* 54:5 (2021): 779-822.
- Daniel W Kent. “Preaching in a time of declining dharma: History, ethics and protection in sermons to the Sri Lankan army.” *Contemporary Buddhism* 16, no. 1 (2015): 188-223.

Recommended readings:

- Mikhail A Alexseev and Sufian N Zhemukhov. “From Mecca with tolerance: religion, social recategorisation and social capital” *Religion, State & Society* 43, no. 4 (2015): 371-391.
- Pradeep K. Chhibber. *Religious practice and democracy in India* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-58, 141-184.
- Joel Day. “Everyday practices of toleration: The interfaith foundations of peace accords in Sierra Leone” *Politics and Religion* (2021).
- David B. Edwards. *Caravan of martyrs: Sacrifice and suicide bombing in Afghanistan* (University of California Press, 2017).
- Iselin Frydenlund. “Buddhist militarism beyond texts: The importance of ritual during the Sri Lankan civil war” *Journal of Religion and Violence* 5:1 (2017): 27-48.
- Robert D. Putnam. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community* (Simon and Schuster, 2000), pp. 65-79.
- Tanya Schwartz. “Challenging the ontological boundaries of religious practices in international relations scholarship” *International Studies Review* 20:1 (2018): 30-54.

Further readings:

- Randall Collins. *Ritual interaction chains* (Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 3-46, 102-140.
- Anne T. Mocko. *Demoting Vishnu: Ritual, politics, and the unraveling of Nepal's Hindu monarchy* (Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Katarina Plank. "Living torches of Tibet: Religious and political implications of the recent self-immolations" *Journal of Religion and Violence* 1:3 (2013): 343-362.
- Ananda Rajah. "Political assassination by other means: Public protest, sorcery and morality in Thailand" *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 36:1 (2005): 111-129.
- Erik Ringmar. "Muslim calls to prayer in the Swedish welfare state" *Review of Faith and International Affairs* 17:1 (2019): 104-116.
- 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.
- Erin K. Wilson. "Theorizing religion as politics in postsecular International Relations" *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 15:3 (2014): 347-365.

Seventh Session: Political Power and the Religious Field

Discussion questions:

We conclude the course by familiarizing ourselves with Bourdieu's notion of fields and with some of the ways in which social scientists have sought to make productive use of it in their efforts to analyse religion and politics in different contexts. Could the concept of the "religious field" serve as the foundation for a unified analytical framework that incorporates insights from previous weeks? In other words, is it compatible with the other elements in our conceptual toolbox (i.e., religion as evolved cognition, imaginary, identity, discourse, market, and practice)?

Required readings:

Pierre Bourdieu. "Genesis and structure of the religious field" *Comparative Social Research* 13, no. 1 (1991): 1-44.

Philip S. Gorski and Gülay Türkmen-Dervişoğlu. "Religion, nationalism, and violence: An integrated approach" *Annual Review of Sociology* 39 (2013): 193-210.

Sezgin, Yüksel, and Mirjam Künkler. "Regulation of 'religion' and the 'religious': The politics of judicialization and bureaucratization in India and Indonesia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 2 (2014): 448-478.

Bénédicte Brac de la Perrière. "An overview of the field of religion in Burmese studies." *Asian Ethnology* (2009): 185-210.

Peter Stamatov. "The religious field and the path-dependent transformation of popular politics in the Anglo-American world, 1770–1840." *Theory and Society* 40, no. 4 (2011): 437-473.

Recommended readings:

Thongchai Winichakul. "Buddhist apologetics and a genealogy of comparative religion in Siam" *Numen* 62, no. 1 (2015): 76-99.

Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer. *The religious question in modern China* (University of Chicago Press, 2011), especially pp. 1-16, 139-98.

Mirjam Künkler, John Madeley, and Shylashri Shankar (eds.). *A secular age beyond the West: Religion, law and the state in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2018). [Explore one or more of the case studies.]

Mara Loveman. "The modern state and the primitive accumulation of symbolic power" *American Journal of Sociology* 110:6 (2005): 1651-1683.

John T Sidel. "On the 'anxiety of incompleteness': A post-structuralist approach to religious violence in Indonesia." *South East Asia Research* 15, no. 2 (2007): 133-212.

Further readings:

- Peter Beyer. "The modern emergence of religions and a global social system for religion" *International Sociology* 13:2 (1998): 151-172.
- Pierre Bourdieu. "Legitimation and structured interests in Weber's sociology of religion," in Sam Whimster and Scott Lash (eds.), *Max Weber: Rationality and modernity* (Allen and Unwin, 1987), pp. 119-36.
- Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc JD Wacquant. "The logic of fields," In *An invitation to reflexive sociology* (Polity Press, 1992), pp. 94-115.
- John R Bowen. "Does French Islam have borders? Dilemmas of domestication in a global religious field." *American Anthropologist* 106, no. 1 (2004): 43-55.
- Rogers Brubaker. "Religious dimensions of political conflict and violence" *Sociological Theory* 33:1 (2015): 1-19.
- José Casanova. *Public religions in the modern world*. University of Chicago Press, 1980.
- Sam Cherribi. *In the house of war: Dutch Islam observed*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Toby Dodge. "Beyond structure and agency: Rethinking political identities in Iraq after 2003." *Nations and Nationalism* 26, no. 1 (2020): 108-122.
- Sarah K Dreier. "Resisting rights to renounce imperialism: East African churches' strategic symbolic resistance to LGBTQ inclusion" *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2018): 423-436.
- Magnus Echtler and Asonzeh Ukah. "Introduction: Exploring the dynamics of religious fields in Africa." In *Bourdieu in Africa: Exploring the dynamics of religious fields*, edited by Magnus Echtler and Asonzeh Ukah (Brill, 2015), pp. 1-32.
- Dale F. Eickelman and James P. Piscatori. *Muslim politics* (Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 3-45.
- Paul Freston. "Evangelical Protestantism and democratization in contemporary Latin America and Asia." *Democratization* 11, no. 4 (2004): 21-41.
- Roger Friedland. "Religious nationalism and the problem of collective representation." *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, no. 1 (2001): 125-152.
- Stéphane Lacroix. *Awakening Islam: The politics of religious dissent in contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Yale University Press, 2011).
- Patrice Ladwig. "The genesis and demarcation of the religious field: Monasteries, state schools, and the secular sphere in Lao Buddhism (1893-1975)." *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 26, no. 2 (2011): 196-223.
- David Lehmann. "The religious field in Latin America: Autonomy and fragmentation." In *Latin America 1810-2010: Dreams and Legacies*, edited by Claude Auroi and Aline Helg (World Scientific, 2012), pp. 419-455.
- John Madeley. "Unequally yoked: The antinomies of church-state separation in Europe and the USA." *European Political Science* 8, no. 3 (2009): 273-288.
- Terry Rey. "Marketing the goods of salvation: Bourdieu on religion." *Religion* 34, no. 4 (2004): 331-343.

- Terry Rey. *Bourdieu on religion: Imposing faith and legitimacy*. Routledge, 2014.
- Sadia Saeed. "Religion, classification struggles, and the state's exercise of symbolic power." *Theory and Society* 50, no. 2 (2021): 255-281.
- Heinrich Wilhelm Schäfer, Leif Hagen Seibert, Adrián Tovar Simoncic and Jens Köhrsen. "Towards a Praxeology of Religious Life: Tools of Observation," in *Making Religion: Theory and Practice in the Discursive Study of Religion* (Brill, 2016), pp. 175-202.
- Leif H Seibert. "The methadone of the people: not all theodicies are sociodicies." In *Does religion make a difference? Religious NGOs in international development collaboration*, edited by Andreas Heuser and Jens Koehrsen (Nomos, 2020) pp. 169-190.
- Darren E Sherkat. "Religion, politics, and Americans' confidence in science." *Politics and Religion* 10, no. 1 (2017): 137-160.
- George Steinmetz. "Bourdieuian field theory and the reorientation of historical sociology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu*, edited by Thomas Medvetz and Jeffrey J. Sallaz (Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 601-628.
- David L. Swartz. *Symbolic power, politics, and intellectuals: The political sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 47-78, 123-153.
- Bryan S Turner. *Religion and modern society: Citizenship, secularisation and the state*. Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 102-123.
- Manuel A Vásquez. *More than belief: A materialist theory of religion*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Bradford Verter. "Spiritual capital: Theorizing religion with Bourdieu against Bourdieu" *Theory and Society* 21:2 (2003): 150-174.
- Todd H. Weir. *Secularism and religion in nineteenth-century Germany: The rise of the fourth confession* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 1-28.