

**Religion and Politics in the Developing World
HON 294**

Topics in Social and Political Worlds: Individual and Society
Spring 2022; 3 credit hours

Section 10: MW 12:45 – 2pm, Room H147

Section 11: MW 4 – 5:15pm, Room H147

Jakarta's Cathedral (left) and Grand Mosque



Tehran during the Iranian Revolution, December 11, 1978



Contact Information

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Course Prerequisites

HON 190 or
ENG 105 and Honors student group

Office Hours

Sign up via Calendly: calendly.com/rtans/office-hours
Wednesday, 2-3:30pm
Thursday, 3:40-4:40pm
and by appointment

Mode of Instruction

Face-to-Face

Course Description

This writing and reading intensive, topic-based seminar investigates the dynamic relationships between human communities and their ecological context, the systemic components and dynamics of contemporary human societies, relationships between human societies and the global community, and the major dimensions of variation in contemporary human experience. HON 294 engages students in the study of the diversity of human communities and the relationships and interactions between the psychological, historical, social, and political components of human communities. Empirical and theoretical strategies are employed to study human behavior and interaction within social, political, and cultural systems.

For many years, the conventional wisdom among social scientists was that the power of religion would decline as modernization advanced. Yet today, religion seems as important to public life as it has ever been. For example, religious conflict, religious persecution, and religious nationalism have encouraged violence against religious minorities in many parts of the world, even as religious groups in other contexts have opposed authoritarianism and promoted democracy. Thus, the effects of religion on politics are complex, and they vary over time and across countries. This course explores the various political effects of religion in the context of the developing world.

Required Text

There is no required text for this course. All readings are available on BbLearn.

Liberal Studies Information

1. **Mission of Liberal Studies:** The mission of the Liberal Studies Program at Northern Arizona University is to prepare students to live responsible, productive, and creative lives as citizens of a dramatically changing world. To accomplish the mission of Liberal Studies, Northern Arizona University provides a program that challenges students to gain a deeper understanding of the natural environment and the world's peoples, to explore the traditions and legacies that have created the dynamics and tensions that shape the world, to examine their potential contributions to society, and thus to better determine their own places in that world. Through the program students acquire a broad range of knowledge and develop essential skills for professional success and life beyond graduation.
2. **Distribution Block:** HON 294 is in the **Social and Political Worlds** distribution block and therefore we will engage in the study of the patterns that characterize the history of human communities, the relationships between the psychological, social, cultural and political components of human communities, and the dynamics of human behavior in varied contexts. Students will learn how different empirical and theoretical strategies are employed to study human behavior and social, political, and cultural systems. These courses enhance student understanding of the dynamic relationships between human communities and their ecological context, the systemic components and dynamics of contemporary human societies, relationships between human societies and the global community, and the major dimensions of variation in contemporary human experience.
3. **Essential Skills:** In this course you will acquire a broad range of knowledge and develop essential skills for professional success and life beyond graduation. In general, this course strengthens your critical reading, writing, speaking, and thinking skills, as well as your Honors community. Specifically, this course emphasizes **critical thinking and effective writing skills**, essential skills defined in the University's Liberal Studies Program.

Student Learning Expectations/Outcomes for this Course

Students who have successfully completed the course will know and be able to:

1. Examine how diverse experiences lead to different approaches to solving problems that face humankind.
2. Apply appropriate perspectives to understand and analyze a significant human problem.
3. Analyze the interdependence of humans and their natural and social environments.
4. Identify ways in which cultures evolve, particularly as social and/or political systems.
5. Describe variation in the effects of religion on politics.
6. Compare and contrast religious politics across countries and across religions.
7. Formulate explanations for political phenomena that are consistent with empirical variation.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

1. Examine how diverse experiences lead to different approaches to solving problems that face humankind: Formal opinion and or research papers will assess students understanding of a given topic; longer papers will provide opportunities for students to make connections and draw conclusions among multiple concepts.
2. Apply appropriate perspectives to understand and analyze a significant human problem: In class discussion and in-class projects as a whole class or as small groups are expected in any Honors course.
3. Analyze the interdependence of humans and their natural and social environments: Group projects provide an opportunity for students to work with each other and gain experience in working with others.
4. Identify ways in which cultures evolve, particularly as social and/or political systems: Issues and problems relevant to the course topic will be presented and discussed and students' understanding will be assessed through assignments and short projects.

Methods of Assessment

Grading will be based on the following:

- 5% of total grade: attendance;
- 5% of total grade: participation. This portion of your grade will include some or all of the following: active and informed class discussions; an awareness of and respect for differing opinions; and other miscellaneous assignments.
- 3% of total grade: map quiz;
- 8% of total grade: puzzles;
- 20% of total grade: two argumentative essays (3 pages each);
- 10% of total grade: paper proposal;
- 10% of total grade: annotated bibliography;
- 4% of total grade: peer review (including research paper rough draft);
- 25% of total grade: one research paper comparing religious politics across religions or countries (10 – 15 pages);
- 10% of total grade: one oral report (or participation in the NAU Undergraduate Symposium);
- Total: 100%

Class Policies

Attendance: Seminars such as this are joint enterprises, and it is crucial that we come to speak, to listen, and to contribute. Students who learn the most do so, among other reasons, because they participate and involve themselves consistently and earnestly in class discussions with their instructor and with other students. Therefore, attendance is extremely important:

Please notify me in advance if you will miss class because of illness, religious observance, participation in university-sponsored events, or other university-approved reasons for absence. I will calculate your attendance grade as the percentage of classes that you attended, excluding excused absences. I will overlook one unexcused absence.

That said, please be cautious about attending class if you are feeling ill. If you are experiencing flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms, you should not attend class in person. I will excuse any absence related to illness, no questions asked.

Late assignments: Students, like faculty, juggle many responsibilities, which is why it's so important to meet your deadlines! Nevertheless, I am willing to negotiate extensions, but you must approach me before the assignment is due, not after. Otherwise, late work will incur penalties worth one-sixth of a letter grade per day (e.g. the grade is reduced from a B+ to a B after two days).

Electronic devices: Laptop computers are powerful tools for learning if used appropriately. However, I reserve the right to ask students to put them away if I believe that they are distracting students from classroom activities. Smart phones, by contrast, have less functionality for typing and research, and more potential for distraction. Please leave them at home.

NAU Policy Statements

COVID-19 Requirements and Information: Our class will follow University policies as outlined (and updated) in the Jacks are Back! web page, where the University's response to COVID-19 is available: <https://nau.edu/jacks-are-back>.

Specific university policies including Safe Working and Learning Environment, Accessibility, Institutional Review Board, and Academic may be accessed by the following URL: <https://nau.edu/university-policy-library/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Syllabus-Policy-Statements.docx>

Course Schedule
(Subject to change)

Week 1: Course introduction

Monday, January 10

Introductions

Wednesday, January 12

Puzzle #0: Religion and politics (No meeting)

- Gill, Anthony. 2001. "Religion and Comparative Politics", pp. 117-130.

Week 2: Approaches to religious politics

Monday, January 17

MLK Day; no class

Wednesday, January 19

Approaches to the study of religious politics

Week 3: Religious riots in India

Monday, January 24

Puzzle #1: Riots in India

- Gargan, Edward. 1992. "Hindu-Muslim Riots Intensify; Troops Fire at Crowds," *New York Times*, December 10.

Wednesday, January 26

Riots and the city of Kanpur

- Brass, Paul. 1997. *Theft of an Idol*, pp. 214-219, 226-237.

Week 4: Contrasting two riots

Monday, January 31

Two riots

- Brass, Paul. 1997. *Theft of an Idol*, pp. 240-253, 284-288.

Wednesday, February 2

Writing workshop

Friday, February 4

Essay 1 due

Week 5: Religious tolerance in Nigeria

Monday, February 7

Puzzle #2: Religious tolerance and the Yoruba

- Laitin, David. 1986. *Hegemony and Culture*, pp. 1-11.

Wednesday, February 9

The sources of religious identity

- Laitin, David. 1986. *Hegemony and Culture*, pp. 16-20, 150-160.

Week 6: Comparing India and Nigeria

Monday, February 14

Explaining variation

- Von Tunzelmann, Alex. 2017. "Who Is to Blame for Partition, Above All, Imperial Britain," *New York Times*, August 18.

Wednesday, February 16

Map quiz

Week 7: Persecution in Myanmar

Monday, February 21

Puzzle #3: Persecuting the Rohingya

- Beech, Hannah. 2017. "'No Such Thing as Rohingya': Myanmar Erases a History," *New York Times*, December 2.
- "How the Rohingya Escaped," *New York Times*, Interactive Feature, December 21, 2017; <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/21/world/asia/how-the-rohingya-escaped.html> (This interactive multimedia feature includes disturbing images and is therefore *OPTIONAL*.)

Wednesday, February 23

Why the Rohingya?

- International Crisis Group. 2017. "Buddhism and State Power in Myanmar," Asia Report No. 290, September 5, pp. i-ii, 3-15, 20-24.

Week 8: Comparing Myanmar and India

Monday, February 28

Why now?

- Jones, Lee. 2017. "A better political economy of the Rohingya crisis," *New Mandala*, September 26.

Wednesday, March 2

Writing workshop

Friday, March 4

Paper proposal due

Week 9: Church, mosque, etc. and state relations

Monday, March 7

Puzzle #4: Dictators and the Catholic Church

- Sims, Calvin. 1995. "Argentina tells of dumping 'Dirty War' captives into sea," *New York Times*, March 13.

Wednesday, March 9

"Complicity with the devil"

- Gill, Anthony. 1998. *Rendering Unto Caesar*, Chapter 6.

Spring Break

March 14-18

Week 10: El Salvador's civil war

Monday, March 21

Puzzle #5: Romero (film)

Wednesday, March 23

El Salvador's civil war

- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*, pp. 1-10 and 20-30.

Week 11: Comparisons across Latin America

Monday, March 28

Explaining variation

Wednesday, March 30

Writing workshop

Friday, April 1

Essay #2 due

Week 12: Islam and democracy

Monday, April 4

Puzzle #6: Islam and democracy

- Masoud, Tarek. 2015. "Has the Door Closed on Arab Democracy?" *Journal of Democracy*, pp. 74-83.

Wednesday, April 6

Secular dictators, religious opposition

- Kalyvas, Stathis. 2000. "Commitment problems in emerging democracies: The case of religious parties," *Comparative Politics*, pp. 379-390.

Week 13: Iranian Revolution

Monday, April 11

Puzzle #7: Iran and the West (film)

Wednesday, April 13

Writing workshop

Friday, April 15

Annotated bibliography due

Week 14: Indonesian Reformasi

Monday, April 18

Iranian Revolution

- Misagh Parsa. 2011. "Ideology and Political Action in the Iranian Revolution," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (pages TBA)

Wednesday, April 20

Indonesian Reformasi

- Hefner, Robert. 2000. *Civil Islam*, Chapter 7, pp. 185-213.

Week 15: Conclusions
Monday, April 25
Wednesday, April 27

Comparing Iran and Indonesia
Peer review

Week 16: Finals week
Wednesday, May 4

Research paper due (no meeting)