

# **Religion 360. 001/ GOVT 319.002 Religion and Politics.**

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Office: Robinson B 445

Office Hours : MW 4:30-5:30 pm or by appointment

Class times: MW 1:30-2:45 pm

Room AQ 213

## **Course Overview**

Religion and Politics is a look at the role of religion in history and in contemporary public life. It looks at questions of both “church and state” and “religion and culture,” attempting to relate historical, sociological, and political analysis to broader cultural, religious, and theological analysis. This year, we return to the historical texts that are classical sources of political theory in the hope that they can provide a foundation for any analysis of contemporary issues.

## **Course Goals**

To acquaint students with particular analytical models for determining the role of religion in contemporary political life.

To introduce students to specific issues regarding the interaction of politics and religion in contemporary Western society.

To present classical historical sources to students as a starting point for discussion of contemporary issues.

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## **Honor Code**

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See [honorcode.gmu.edu](http://honorcode.gmu.edu) for more detailed information.

## **Classroom Etiquette**

This is a discussion based course that will require your complete participation in class. Any use of computers, cell phones, watches, etc. to send or receive any form of electronic communication during class is strictly prohibited as is any web surfing, tweeting, Facebook viewing, etc. Also, you *must* bring texts to class. This means when we are discussing a text, you have a copy of it in hand.

## **Enrollment**

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments

should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.

### **Readings**

All the books in the GMU bookstore under this course **are required**. You can see the list on the GMU bookstore website. They are low cost, and you *must* bring them to class when we are discussing them. Other texts will be available through the Blackboard system and will be marked as “BB” in the syllabus.

#### **Required Texts**

1. Plato, *The Republic*. Dover Edition, 2000.
2. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*. Dover Edition 2006.
3. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*.
4. John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government and A Letter Concerning Toleration*.
5. Niccolo Macchiavelli, *The Prince*.
6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*.
7. Orestes Brownson, *The American Republic*.
8. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*.

### **Criteria for Evaluation**

You will be evaluated on the basis of the following factors:

#### **Class Discussion of Readings and Oral Presentations**

You will be responsible for making a formal presentation of readings. Assignments will be made in class. In addition you will be expected to have read all assigned texts and to be able to discuss them in class. It will be impossible to do well if you don't attend class regularly. The material tested will come from lectures, discussions, and readings. One goal of the course is to give you critical tools for evaluating issues of religion and politics. Discussion and Socratic dialog are some of the ways we will meet that goal. Class participation and discussion will count for 35% of your grade.

#### **Written Question Sets**

There will be several question sets based on the readings, each approximately 750 words, due at different times during the course. Your grades on those questions will be 25% of your grade.

#### **Exam**

There will be a final examination based on lectures, discussions, and readings. The final will count for 40% of your grade. It will be a take-home exam. It must be typed and submitted to the Religious Studies Office in Robinson B by 1:30 pm December 19.

### **Important Dates**

First Day of Class:	August 29
Labor Day no class:	Sept. 5
Last Day to Drop:	September 6
Cristoforo Columbo	
Holiday no class:	October 10. Class meets on Oct. 11
Thanksgiving	
Thanksgiving	
Holiday	
no class:	November 25
Last Day of Class:	December 10

Final Exam: December 19

### **Class Meetings and Assignments**

#### **Part One: Contemporary Understandings of Civil Society.**

1. August 29. Introduction. Samuel Huntington, "Religion and the Third Wave." BB
2. August 29. Introduction. Lawrence Harrison and Samuel Huntington, "Culture Matters." BB
3. August 31. Peter Berger, "Pluralism, Protestanization and the Voluntary Principle. BB
4. August 31. Jurgen Habermas, and Joseph Ratzinger, excerpts from *The Dialectics of Secularization*. BB

#### **Part Two: Classical Writers on Religion and Society.**

1. September 7 and September 12. Plato, *The Republic*, see BB for pages.
2. September 14 and September 19. St. Augustine, *The City of God*, see BB for pages.  
September 21. Student presentations.
3. September 26 and September 28. Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, see BB for pages.  
October 3. Student presentations.
4. October 5 and October 11 Niccolo Macchiavelli, *The Prince*, pages 39-68.  
October 12. Student presentations.
5. October 17 and October 19 Jean Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, pages 1-97.  
October 24. Student Presentations.
6. October 26 and October 31. John Locke, *The Second Treatise on Government* and *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, pages 1-153  
November 2. Student presentations.
7. November 7, November 9, November 7. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, pages TBA.  
November 14. Student presentations.
9. November 16 and November 21. Orestes Brownson, *The American*

*Republic*, see BB for pages.

November 28. Student presentations.

10. November 30 and December 5. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, see BB for pages.

December 7. Student presentations.

11. December 7. Final Class. Distribution of final exam.