

RELIGION, POLITICS, AND LAW

REL 130 | Spring 2019

TR 9:30-10:45pm | Graves Hall 213

DR. MICHAEL J. ALTMAN

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KEELEY McMURRAY

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Office Hours: REL 100

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory level course examines the construction of religion through law, politics, and the nation-state. Students are introduced to the role of religion in liberal political theory, secularism, and the modern rise of the nation-state. Beginning with the Enlightenment, “religion” posed a challenge to liberal democracy in the West. This course tracks the history of how states have attempted to answer that challenge and the theories political thinkers have proposed. This course will be particularly helpful to students interested in religious studies, history, political science, law, and philosophy.

As part of the core curriculum, this course addresses the ability of students to deal with questions of values, ethics, or aesthetics as they are represented in the humanistic fields of religious studies and history. The course is broad in scope and takes a global perspective of religion, politics, and law and the relationship between all points of view on these subjects. The emphasis of the course is the history and appreciation of religion, politics, and law.

3 credit hours, HU core credit

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will recall major theories and thinkers in religious studies and political theory.
2. Students will recall an introductory historical narrative of “religion” and “secularism” in Western history.
3. Students will recall key terms in the academic study of religion.
4. Students will interpret primary documents.

REQUIRED BOOKS

- John Witte, Jr. and Joel A. Nichols, *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

RESOURCES

- Religion in the Supreme Court Digital Collection: <http://keeleymcmurray.com/omeka/>
- Oyez: <https://www.oyez.org>

IF YOU HAVE A QUESTION YOU SHOULD...

1. Email your TA: kmmcmurray@crimson.ua.edu
2. Email your professor: michael.altman@ua.edu
3. Come by office hours: see the top of this syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings

Readings are listed underneath each date on the schedule. Complete the readings before you come to class that day. Readings outside of the textbook are available in a UA Box folder: <https://alabama.box.com/v/REL130SP2019>

3 Quizzes (20% each, 60% total)

The quizzes will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and fill-in-the-blank. The focus will be the **key terms, theories, and thinkers from the readings**. Relevant content from class related to these terms, theories, and thinkers, is also testable material. Each quiz is worth 20% of your total grade.

5 SCOTUS Case Analyses (20%)

During the second half of the course students will complete case analysis grids (found in the course Box folder) for five different Supreme Court cases dealing with religion. Readings from the case documents for each case can be found in the course Box folder. The grids are graded on a scale of 1-5 based on how specific and detailed the questions are answered and whether the grid reflects sustained thought about the case and how it relates to larger questions of the course. Case analyses are due on the day listed on the syllabus schedule.

SCOTUS Pecha Kucha (20%)

Over the last few classes of the semester students will make pecha kucha style presentations to the class about a U.S. Supreme Court case involving religion. Students may work in pairs or alone. An assignment and sign-up sheet will be circulated closer to the end of the semester.

GRADEBOOK

I will use the gradebook on Blackboard to record your grades on quizzes and assignments so you can keep up with your progress in the course.

GRADING SCALE

A+	95-100%	C	70-74
A	90-94	D+	65-69
B+	85-89	D	60-64
B	80-84	D-	50-59
C+	75-79	F	below 50

COURSE POLICIES

Syllabus Changes

This syllabus is subject to change. I will inform students of any changes in a timely manner in class and/or via email.

Attendance

Regular attendance and adequate preparation are expected in this course. **You have to be here to do well.** You will need the context I provide in class to make sense of the readings you do on your own. If you don't come to class you will probably do very poorly. You may miss up to 3 class meetings without an excuse, any unexcused absences after that will reduce your final grade by 2 points.

I'm curious who has read this far into the syllabus. If you are reading this then you have a chance to earn 3 bonus points on the first test. Do a Google image search for "The Office" and send me your best animated gif from The Office (British or American).

Missed Tests and Quizzes

Missed quizzes and tests can only be made up if a student provides documentation excusing the absence. Tests and quizzes should be made up promptly.

Academic Misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Code of Academic Conduct](#) provided in the Online Catalog.

Disability Accommodations

Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog. If you require accommodations please speak to me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements.

Severe Weather Protocol

Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.

UAct

The [UAct website](#) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Jan 10: Introductions

PART I. RELIGION

Jan 15: Defining Religion

Russell McCutcheon, *Studying Religion*, Ch. 2

Jan 17: What “Religion” Is

McCutcheon, *Studying Religion*, Ch. 3

Jan 22: What “Religion” Does

McCutcheon, *Studying Religion*, Ch. 4

Jan 24: What “Religion” Resembles

McCutcheon, *Studying Religion*, Ch. 7

Jan 29: What is Belief?

Donald S. Lopez, Jr., “Belief”

Jan 31: From Roman Religion to Wars of Religion

Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment (RACE) Chapter 1

Feb 5: Review Day

Feb 7: Quiz #1

PART II. POLITICS

Feb 12: Religious Toleration

Christopher Hill, “Toleration in Seventeenth Century England: Theory and Practice”

Feb 14: American Experiments with “Religion”

RACE Chapter 2

Feb 19: Nationalism

Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?”

Feb 21: Imagined Nations

Benedict Anderson, “Introduction” from *Imagined Communities*

Feb 26: “Nationalism” or “Civil Religion”?

Robert Bellah, “Civil Religion in America”

Feb 28: Secularism

José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms”

Mar 5: Review Day

Mar 7: Quiz #2

SPRING BREAK

PART III. LAW

Mar 19: The Politics of Religious Freedom

RACE Chapter 3

Mar 21: The First Amendment

RACE Chapter 4

Mar 26: The Free Exercise Clause

RACE Chapters 6-7

Case Analysis: *Reynolds v. United States*

Mar 28: The Establishment Clause

RACE Chapter 8

Case Analysis: *Lemon v. Kurtzman*

Apr 2: Public Schools

RACE Chapter 9

Case Analysis: *Abington School District v. Schempp*

Apr 4: Public Life

RACE Chapter 11

Case Analysis: *Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board v. Pinette*

Apr 9: Religious Organizations

RACE Chapter 12

Case Analysis: *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*

Apr 11: Review Day

Apr 16: Quiz #3

Apr 18: Pecha Kucha Day 1

Apr 23: Pecha Kucha Day 2

Apr 25: Pecha Kucha Day 3