

**The Graduate School
of Political Management**

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs

First Summer Semester

May 16th – June 23th

Religion and Politics

LGAF 6240.LH [CRN91802]

3.00 Credits

Tuesday/Thursday

Hall of States

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Quardricos Bernard Driskell, Morehouse College (BA); Harvard University (M.T.S.); The George Washington University (M.P.S, Legislative Affairs, PACs & Political Management)

Contact Information

Phone Number: (503) 546-5559

Email Address: qbd@gwu.edu

Communication

I am available via email or phone, though it's best to reach me via email. I will respond within 24 hours. Also note, I am available before/after class, but only by appointment.

THE COURSE

Legislative Affairs Program Objectives

Upon completion of the Master's degree in Legislative Affairs, students will:

1. Gain both theoretical and practical knowledge related to the U.S. Congress, general issues in the legislative arena, and how to effectively advance legislation;
2. Hone their oral and written communication skills in both theoretical and technical aspects of legislative affairs;
3. Be able to conduct cutting-edge research and engage in effective problem solving by learning critical thinking skills;
4. Learn how to work effectively with others, the value of collaborative work, and will understand ethical issues involved in the legislative arena.

Course Description and Overview

This course will give an overview of the influence of religion on politics in the US. America's ongoing debates about religion in public life and politics— whether about gay marriage, Hobby Lobby, Black Lives Matter Movement, the Mormonism of Mitt Romney, the role of political Islam post-9/11, or Religious Right activism, to name just a few—have caused millions to realize that religion may well be the most powerful, yet least understood, force of our times.

“Religion,” as defined in the course, refers not only to formal theological creeds but also to the societal beliefs, organizations, and subcultures associated with various religious communities. The principal aim of the course is to understand how religion affects politics (and vice versa) rather than to explore the moral questions raised by the interaction of these two forces. Several topics will be

addressed that look at this understanding in different ways. The guiding assumption of the course is that the theoretical and practical issues – religious and political questions are best studied in relation to one another. The course will survey historical, constitutional, philosophical, theological and practical issues in relation between democratic polity and religious belief and practice; this includes the ideas that influenced the founders on this topic, the religious freedom clauses of the 1st Amendment and related court cases, the role of religion in US political history, public policies related to religion, and how religion influences political behavior with particular attention paid to certain religious groups.

By the end of this course you are expected to be able to thoughtfully analyze issues regarding religion and politics and be able to cogently express this analysis through written and verbal communication.

But more importantly, students will be able to answer three of the most powerful, even daunting, of those questions. The first is this: whatever your beliefs (or non-beliefs), how should you assess and respond to the political and policy claims of religiously-based groups or issues? The second is: how together might we conceive of, and organize, political and public life in ways that allow for their vibrant and tolerant debate? The third is perhaps the greatest challenge: whether you believe in God (or in humanly-transcendent forces that exercise moral claims, however defined) or not, how can you live and act in public life/politics in concert with your beliefs?

Course Learning Objectives

1. Describe and analyze the historical, constitutional, philosophical, theological and practical issues in relation between democratic polity and religious belief and practice that formed religious liberty.
2. Explore and identify roles of civil religion and how it shaped the country and how such subcultures are mobilized on behalf of political ends.
3. Examine the claims of how Americans' decision-making stems from belief and prove the validity or invalidity of the religious motif of American culture
4. Analyze the intersection of race, gender and other religious minorities and how religion among select groups of people and how they shape voting and political behavior.
5. Explore the role of religion in American culture and, ultimately, in political sources of identities and norms for behavior.

Course Requirements

Politics is a dialogical enterprise, meaning that most of the work completed in politics occurs in dialogue and interacting with others. As students engaging in the study of applied policy, you are expected to come to class to discuss assigned texts *and* engage in class discussions on a regular basis. Participation is a measure of the (voluntarily) contributions students make to the classroom discussions.

Please keep in mind that participation is not the same as attendance. Please also keep in mind that there is a difference between productive and unproductive contributions of which the latter is strongly discouraged. It is an important aspect of my teaching philosophy to create a learning space that welcomes all voices. Therefore, the class will not end without each student contributing something to the discussion. This is a very important aspect of class participation.

A Note on Classroom Etiquette: *Since we will discuss sensitive and often controversial topics; to create a healthy and productive environment conducive to proper class discussion students are asked to do the following: (1) think through the thought before you voice the thought, this does not mean that you are prohibited from asking “stupid” questions but that you should tailor your contributions in a way that prevents people from becoming easily offended; (2) be respectful to all views shared by others--this class should be a safe environment for students to express their ideas openly, even if they oppose majority opinions; (3) be a sensitive speaker – students should not interrupt other students nor should they personally attack students.*

Reading Summaries and Evaluations

You will be required to hand-in **TWO** two-page (single-spaced) critical assessments of the course readings. In these two-pagers, you should answer three questions, first, **very** briefly synthesize and summarize the main point, position, or argument of the material. Second, offer your analysis and evaluation of the readings. How, if any, does it relate to you? Do you agree or disagree with the author’s thoughts? Why or Why not? What impact does it have regarding politics and religion now or in the future? Third, how do the readings support the course objective, and what do they mean for society in understating the intersection of religion and politics? Fourth, what do you recommend for the future, should we read them, or is there something else that would be better? Other voices, authors/scholars outside of course readings on this issue are welcomed and encouraged as a comparative analysis. For this assignment, you should either analyze all readings, etc. in one section or you analyze, compare and contrast a one reading in one section with another. An analysis on one reading is not sufficient. **These TWO two-pagers can either be done at any time during the course; before the 25th. Please note:** Style: 12pt. Times New Roman; single spaced; Chicago/Turabian format; • References: academic references (e.g., Wikipedia and similar sources do not count) • Analysis: Thorough, graduate-level comparative analysis of the issue.

Paper 1: Political-Religious Narrative (3-5 pages)

What are your political-religious experiences (past and/or present)? How has your religious experiences influenced your political views? Or how has your politics influenced your religion or views on religion in politics, public policy or public life? I want you to reflect on how that influence has taken place in your own life and/or how it ought to take form in the legislative process and/or public life, if at all? There is no right or wrong answer here nor will you be judged on your religion or a lack of religion, but rather on your reflective analysis. But you must be reflective and analytical. Though this assignment is short, it needs to show some evidence that you have spent some time reflecting on this question through the readings, class discussion, etc. **This is due June 21, 2016.**

Paper 2: Political-Religious Engagement Project (5-15 pages)

This assignment can take shape in several ways. Below are suggestions; I am open to other ideas. Prior approval is required.

- Write a speech on the intersection of religion and politics and out it should/not play in public life
- A policy memorandum to a Member of Congress on how to engage religion and politics regarding any of the topics discussed in the course (same-sex marriage; race and religion; how to engage a religious community, etc.)
- A messaging campaign memorandum on how to get a candidate to speak to the issues of religion and politics, how to engage religious communities

- A case-study on an advocacy organization engaged in this intersection providing a policy recommendation to improve their efforts. (This should also include an interview with organization’s leaders)
- Lobbying strategy memorandum
- Opening statement or testimony on the subject before Congress
- Ethnographic research in a religious-political event. You are to fully document your experience – with a full critical assessment of thoughts, feelings, recommendations, etc. You can either attend a religious-political event, forums during the semester. These events can be either at a church service, temple, a forum, event, rally, etc. Look for political and religious cues being presented during the experience. Discuss your observations and your reflections. Ideally, I would like to know what event, forum, or service you are attending beforehand. Be sure you are describing and analyzing the full range of political-religious cues that we will be learning and that you reflect broadly on what you have learned from this experience. If there are any questions or concerns, please do let me know. **Ideas for paper are due on June 11th; Papers are due on June 23rd.**

Course Grading

Two-Page papers (two)	200
Paper 1	200
Paper 2	500
Class Participation	100
Total	1000

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Grade*		Grading Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.
B-	80-82	You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

Required Text and Learning Materials

Kenneth D. Wald & Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States 7th Ed. 2014*

Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion 2012*

Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort 2008*

Supplemental Reading:

Robert Putman and David Campbell, *American Grace 2010*

J. Matthew Wilson, Ed, *From Pews to Polling Places 2007*

Kevin Seamus Hasson, *The Right To Be Wrong: Ending the Culture War Over Religion in America, 2005*

Additional Reading/Current Events:

In addition to the text, you will be required to maintain a knowledge and understanding of current religious-political issues and events. There will be articles emailed to the class which will be discussed in the class. I encourage you to also email articles to the class on the subject of religion and politics. This is an essential part of the course that should be taken seriously. In addition to reading the newspaper, you will benefit from following other sources of religious-political news while taking this course. Some of the better sources that I recommend are:

- Faith in Public Life: A Strategy Center for the Faith Community, <http://www.faithinpubliclife.org/newsroom/>
- The Pew Forum on Religious Life, <http://www.pewforum.org/> <http://www.people-press.org/>
- Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/>
- NPR, All Things Considered Section and Religion, <http://www.npr.org/sections/religion/>
- Religion New Service, <http://www.religionnews.com/>

Other Resources:

[The Pluralism Project](#): Follows stories related to its mission: "to help Americans engage with the realities of religious diversity through research, outreach, and the active dissemination of resources."

[The Revealer](#): A daily review of religion and the press edited by journalist Jeff Sharlet.

Course Sessions (May 16- June 25) (Readings are listed each week and are expected to be read before each class):

Before class Tuesday, test yourself in five minutes by taking the quiz here bring result to class: [<http://features.pewforum.org/quiz/us-religious-knowledge/>]

Watch Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-YQXRrNo70>

May 17: Session 1: Religion, Politics and Democracy in Historical Perspective

Readings: John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*,

<http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm>

Jefferson, “Letter to the Baptist Association of Danbury”

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>

James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments”

http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI_religions43.html

Federalist 10, http://memory.loc.gov/const/fed/fed_10.html

Watch and Listen: Look Back in 2015 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2015/12/22/december-25-2015-look-back-2015/28440/>

Watch and Listen: “Look Ahead in 2016”: <http://www.pbs.org/video/2365632738/>

The Right to Be Wrong, Chapter 1 (Blackboard)

Religion and Politics in the United States, Chapters 1 & 2

May 19: Session 2: Religion in the Courts and the Separation of Church and State

Religion and Politics in the United States, Chapter 4

“What do Americans know about religion?” <http://www.pewforum.org/2010/09/28/u-s-religious-knowledge-survey-who-knows-what-about-religion/>

“Here are the key excerpts on religious liberty from the Supreme Court’s decision on gay marriage”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/06/26/here-are-the-key-excerpts-on-religious-liberty-from-the-supreme-courts-decision-on-gay-marriage/>

Secondary Reading: <http://www.hobbylobbycase.com>

“Scalia’s Son Delivers Closing Argument”

<http://blogs.rollcall.com/opinion-analysis/scalias-son-delivers-closing-argument/?dcz=>

May 24: Session 3: Religion and American Political Culture

Religion and Politics in United States, Chapters 3, 6 and 7

The Big Sort

The Righteous Mind, Chapters 7, 10, & 11

Listen: “Politics, Tragedy And Religion In The Public Sphere”

<http://onpoint.wbur.org/2015/07/06/god-public-life-united-states-scotus-charleston>

May 26: Session 4: Religion and the American Presidency

Read: <http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/god-in-the-white-house/>

Harvard Professor David Gergen’s Discussion in on the American Presidency
<http://hds.harvard.edu/news/2015/04/17/video-religion-public-life>

Watch: Obama Delivers Eulogy in Charleston
<http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000003767801/obama-delivers-eulogy-in-charleston.html>

“Obama’s Grace”
<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/grace/397064/>

Pres. Obama’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based Initiatives, “A New Era of Partnerships: Recommendations on Poverty Reduction and Community Building”, at
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ofbnp-council-final-report.pdf>

Pres. Bush’s Advisory Council, “Innovations in Compassion: a Final Report to the Armies of Compassion,” http://www.vaservice.org/uploads/public/Resource_Library/Faith-based_Community_Organizations/Innovations_In_Compassion_FBCI_Report.pdf

Chaves and Wineberg, “Did Faith-Based Initiatives Change Congregations?”
http://www.soc.duke.edu/natcong/Writings/Chaves_Wineburg_FaithBasedInitiative&Congregations.pdf

2016 Presidential Election Coverage Religion & Politics:

“Pope: Donald Trump ‘is not Christian’ if he wants to build a border wall”
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2016/02/18/pope-trump-is-not-christian-if-he-wants-to-build-a-wall-on-the-u-s-mexico-border/>

“What kind of fool is Trump? (COMMENTARY)”
https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/what-kind-of-fool-is-trump-commentary/2016/02/19/ca37ca44-d744-11e5-a65b-587e721fb231_story.html

“Trump, South Carolina, and Evangelicals”
<http://hds.harvard.edu/news/2016/02/22/trump-evangelicals-and-south-carolina>

Clinton and Trump: A tale of two Corinthians
<http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/27/politics/clinton-and-trump-two-corinthians/index.html>

“Donald Trump Is a Scam. Evangelical Voters Should Back Away” (CP Editorial)
<http://www.christianpost.com/news/donald-trump-scam-evangelical-voters-back-away-cp-editorial-158813/>

“There’s nobody left’: Evangelicals feel abandoned by GOP after Trump’s ascent”
https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/theres-nobody-left-evangelicals-feel-abandoned-by-gop-after-trumps-ascent/2016/05/08/a133991e-130f-11e6-8967-7ac733c56f12_story.html?wpmm=1&wpisrc=nl_politics

May 31: Session 5: Religion, Politics, and Political Behavior

Religion and Politics in the United States, Chapter 5

The Righteous Mind, Chapters 8, 12 and conclusion

Jones and Cox, “*Religion and the Tea Party*”

<http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Religion-and-the-Tea-Party-in-the-2010-Election-American-Values-Survey.pdf>

June 2: Session 6: Religion, Politics, and Race

Religion and Politics in United States, Chapter 10

American Grace, Chapter. 9, 265-319 (Blackboard)

From Pews to Polling, “From Liberation to Mutual Fund: Political Consequences of Differing

Conception of Christ in the American Church” (Blackboard)

Watch and Listen to President Obama’s a “More Perfect Union”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWe7wTVbLUU>

Pew Forum Report, “Young White Evangelicals Less Republican, Still Conservative”

<http://www.pewforum.org/2007/09/28/young-white-evangelicals-less-republican-still-conservative>

“Do Black Lives Matter to evangelicals?”

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-do-black-lives-matter-to-evangelicals-20160107-story.html>

“South Carolina Church Bridges Racial Gap, but Not Political Divide”

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/16/us/south-carolina-church-bridges-racial-gap-but-not-political-divide.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&smid=nytcore-ipad-share&_r=2

Watch: “America’s Original Sin”

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2016/01/29/january-29-2016-americas-original-sin/28859/>
AND

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/video/page/2/#28906>

“White Christians need to act more Christian than white”

https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/01/15/white-christians-need-to-act-more-christian-than-white/?postshare=4991453318635197&tid=ss_mail

Secondary Reading: Martin Luther King, “A Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

June 7: Session 7: The Politics of Religious Groups

Religion and Politics in America, Chapter 8 and 9

From Pews to Polling Places: “Dry Kindling: A Political Profile of American Mormons” (Blackboard)

American Grace, Chapter 12 especially pgs. 430-442

Secondary Reading: American Grace, Chapter 10

June 9: Session 8: Religion, Politics, Women, and Gay Rights

Religion and Politics in America, Chapter 11

American Grace, Chapter 8 231-246

“Is There Room for a 'Southern Point of View' on Gay Marriage?”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/07/south-gay-marriage-clarence-thomas/398936>

“Gay marriage ruling leaves debate about religious liberty wide open”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2015/0705/Gay-marriage-ruling-leaves-debate-about-religious-liberty-wide-open>

“About those 'anti-gay' bathroom bills”

<http://money.cnn.com/2016/03/26/news/anti-lgbt-bills-north-carolina-georgia/index.html>

“North Carolina files lawsuit against the federal government over ‘bathroom bill’”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2016/05/09/north-carolina-justice-dept-face-monday-deadline-for-bathroom-bill/>

“How Southern states are now challenging gay marriage”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Society/2016/0220/How-Southern-states-are-now-challenging-gay-marriage>

Watch: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2015/05/01/may-1-2015-supreme-court-sex-marriage-cases/25927/>

Watch: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2015/04/24/april-24-2015-russell-moore-evangelicals-lgbt-issues/25860/>

Watch: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2015/04/24/matthew-vines-god-gay-christian/25857/>

Secondary Reading: American Grace, Chapter 7

Ideas on Paper 2 are due; submit a brief paragraph

June 14: Session 9: Guest Speaking

June 16: Session 10: Religion, Politics, and the Global World

The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections

www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/

“A political awakening for Buddhists? 125 U.S. Buddhist leaders to meet at the White House.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/05/12/125-u-s-buddhist-leaders-to-meet-at-the-white-house/>

Jocelyne Cesari, “Obama, Islam, and the American Religious Landscape”

<http://hds.harvard.edu/news/2016/02/03/obama-islam-and-american-religious-landscape>

Bernard Lewis, “The Revolt of Islam”

www.newyorker.com/magazine/2001/11/19/the-revolt-of-islam?currentPage=all

Pew, “Muslim Americans,” pgs. 1- 75

<http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/Muslim%20American%20Report%2010-02-12%20fix.pdf>

Zain Abdullah, *A Muslim’s Search for Meaning*

<http://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/articles/winterspring2014/a-muslims-search-for-meaning>

“President Obama at Maryland mosque: 'You fit in here'”

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-obama-mosque-visit-20160203-story.html>

Secondary Reading:

“Nobody wants to erase India from textbooks. Here’s the real deal.”

<http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-edu-india-textbook-20160401-snap-htlstory.html>

Paper 1 is due

June 21: Session 11: Religion and Public Policy: The Future

Religion and Politics in the United States, Chapter 12

Secondary Reading: American Grace Chapter 14 pgs. 501-515

June 23: Final Session; Paper 2 Due. Evaluations

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

Final Note

You are in a graduate seminar, and I expect graduate students to have mastered research skills, and argumentative writing already. Much of what you learn in graduate school, and in this will depend on you. I expect you to take an active part in the class, using your personal experiences and interests to contribute to our discussions. I also expect you to be able to make strong cases for your recommendations in all the written work for class, and to be able to do it clearly, with correct reference to the experts. Finally, I expect all course work to be submitted on time.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW's Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at www.gwu.edu/~dss.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at Union Station in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Steven Billet

Director, Legislative Affairs Program

sbillet@gwu.edu | 202-994-1149

Dr. Jack Prostko

Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development

College of Professional Studies

jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand

Director of Academic Administration, GSPM

sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.