PLSC 640
(special Topics in Political Science)
Religion and Politics in America
section 001

Fall 2011

Instructor: Dr. Scott Huffmon
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email: huffmons@winthrop.edu
Web Page: http://faculty.winthrop.edu/huffmons/
Office Hours:

  Wednesdays 10am – 11:30am at Political Science Office (344 Bancroft Hall)
  Thursdays 11am – 12noon at Social & Behavioral Research Lab office (10 Dinkins Center) and by appointment

Course Goals
The purpose of this course is to examine the influence of religion on politics and government from the settling of the colonies through contemporary times. We examine how religious attitudes shaped founding documents and influenced early political debates, how religion intersected with major historical events in our Republic’s history, and how religion in America (including primarily Christianity, but also Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, atheism, and others) and religious attitudes shape the political debates and electoral landscape in the United States today.

Student Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate an understanding of how religion and religious attitudes impacted the colonization and founding of this country, how religion has shaped historical debates, and how religion continues to impact the debate over political issues and change the electoral map in modern times.

Texts: The following texts are required


By Robert Booth Fowler, Allen D. Hertzke, Laura R. Olson, Kevin R. den Dulk
ISBN-10: 0813344360


By Andrew Kohut, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, Robert C. Toth ISBN-10: 081575017X

By Clyde Wilcox, Carin Robinson ISBN-10: 0813344530
Student Learning Activities

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

Short Paper (MINIMUM 4-5 pages) = 10%
Midterm Examination = 20%
Book Review = 20% (80% Book Review; 20% in-class presentation)
Final Paper (MINIMUM 10 pages) = 20%
Participation = 15%
Readings Journal = 15%

This course employs Winthrop’s +/- grading system. The distribution along the number line which triggers a plus or minus will be, roughly, a normal distribution (slightly skewed to the students’ favor). Note: grades themselves will NOT be artificially forced into a normal distribution. The “0” grade will move into the next highest letter grade range. By way of explanation, the following will be the cut points for the “C” grade range:
70 - 72.4999 = C- ; 72.5 – 77.4999 = C ; 77.5 – 79.9999 = C+

Short Paper and Final Paper: these assignments will be described in class

Book Review: You will be assigned a book to review for class. Depending on your book, you will either present your book report on a day set aside for book reviews or you will present on the day we cover the topic specifically related to your book. You will present your book review to the class. This will include some type of visual presentation as well as providing your classmates an outline with key points from the book.

Midterm Examination: The in-class midterm exam will be open notes and open Readings Journal. You may NOT use the actual readings and photocopies (of notes or readings or anything else) are not allowed. Only hand written or typed notes will be allowed.

Participation: You are expected to participate in the class and contribute in meaningful ways. Talking just to talk is NOT participation. In fact, making it painfully obvious by your participation that you have not done the readings will hurt your participation grade. Being disrespectful, dismissive, rude, or scornful toward the participation of others will also have a negative impact on your grade. Keep in mind that “dominating” class discussions shows disrespect for your classmates.

Readings Journal: You must purchase a composition notebook. For every chapter from a book or article that is assigned for reading, you must take written notes in your journal. The notes for each will be graded on a 0, 1, 2 scale where 0 = no (or virtually no) notes, 1 = poor to fair quality notes, 2 = good to excellent quality notes. The number of readings may vary from the list below, so your grade will be determined by the percentage of total possible points you receive where total number of possible points = ([number of chapters and articles assigned] x 2)

Class announcements will be made via the class listserv. If you have an active winthrop.edu email account, you should be automatically added to the listserv, otherwise you must add yourself to the listserv. You are EXPECTED to regularly check your email for class announcements! Announcements made over the listserv are considered "official" class announcements. If you are not on the class listserv, go HERE for instructions on how to sign up (the course designator to sign up is: PLSC640001).

This syllabus may be revised throughout the semester.

Withdrawal Date: The last day to withdraw from the course with an automatic grade of “N” is October21, 2011
Students with Disabilities

Winthrop University is dedicated to providing access to education. If you have a disability and require specific accommodations to complete this course, contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 323-3290. Once you have your official notice of accommodations from the Office of Disability Services, please inform me as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Winthrop’s Conduct Code defines academic misconduct as:

"Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the professor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation including papers, projects, and examinations; presenting, as one's own, the ideas or words of another for academic evaluation without proper acknowledgment; doing unauthorized academic work for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated; and presenting the same or substantially the same papers or projects in two or more courses without the explicit permission of the professors involved. In addition, academic misconduct involves attempting to influence one's academic evaluation by means other than academic achievement or merit. More explicit definitions of academic misconduct specific to certain academic disciplines may be promulgated by academic departments and schools."

I will prosecute cases of academic misconduct to the fullest extent of university policy, and that can mean expulsion from the university. Obviously, any student caught cheating or plagiarizing, in any manner, on an exam or assignment will receive a zero for that assignment in addition to academic prosecution. Additionally, I reserve the right to award the student an "F" in the course for ANY act of academic misconduct if I feel it is warranted. This is in addition to academic prosecution by the Dean of Students.

**ADDITIONALLY, the Department of Political Science has it's own policies on plagiarism and academic misconduct:** Poli Sci Statement on Plagiarism In the immortal words of Brad Hamilton: "Learn it; Know it; Live it!"

Class Policies:

Please provide a respectful learning environment for your fellow students. Repeated tardiness, cell phone disruptions, reading materials unrelated to the course (such as the student newspaper), and use of communication technologies (e.g., web browsing/ IMing/ texting during class) during class will adversely affect your grade.

Attendance Policy: Beginning with the second time a student is declared absent, the student will lose a full letter grade for each absence. Any student caught IMing, texting, or browsing the web will be declared “Absent” for that class. Obviously, if you are absent, you can’t participate and your participation grade will suffer. Further, Readings Journal notes will not be accepted/graded late unless the absence had been planned and discussed with Dr. Huffmon or was an emergency and is accompanied by suitable documentation.

Please arrive at class on time and **switch off** all pagers, cell phones, and alarms during class. The only exceptions to this rule are if you have children or an emergency family situation (e.g. family member in surgery). For these circumstances, you may leave your phone on **vibrate** and you **must** leave the class to answer a call.

I do not provide lecture notes for students under any circumstances.
Grade Appeals: If you wish to dispute a grade on a particular assignment for any reason other than an obvious arithmetic error on my part, you will need to type a one-page explanation of your position and turn it in, along with the original graded assignment, **at least one week** after the assignment is returned to you. I will then consider your appeal and make a determination.

Appeals must be submitted in hard copy format; no appeals submitted via email will be considered.

For appeals regarding your final grade in the course, please consult the Student Handbook and Catalog for procedures.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>Chpt 1 from Founding Faith</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Were we founded as a “Christian Nation?”</td>
<td>Chpt 2 – 17 from Founding Faith.</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Religion in Civil War and Antebellum period</td>
<td>article by Mathews (online); article by Gienapp (online); article by Bowman (online); article by Guarneri (online); article by Nudelman (online)</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>Religion and the Civil Rights Movement</td>
<td>article by Williams (online); Fowler et. Al pp. 276-284; article by Evans (online)</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>September 22</td>
<td>The Other</td>
<td>Fowler et. al Chpts 3 &amp; 5;</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>October 6</td>
<td>In-class Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Book Reviews</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>Religion &amp; American Parties</td>
<td>The Diminishing Divide Chpts 1 - 7</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Religion and the courts</td>
<td>Fowler et. al Chpts 8 – 9; article by Przybyszewski (online)</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Prayer in Schools</td>
<td>Forerunner article (online); article by McVeigh and Sikkink (online); article by Meyers (online); <em>Lee v. Weisman</em> 1992 on FindLaw (<a href="http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=us&amp;vol=505&amp;invol=577">http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=us&amp;vol=505&amp;invol=577</a>)</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>The Religious Right &amp; American Politics</td>
<td>Onward Christian Soldiers Chpts 1-5</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>Culture Wars</td>
<td><em>Culture War?</em> Chpts 1-8</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving. Class does not meet.</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Now what? Discussion of religion in the current presidential race.</td>
<td>Notes or discussion points for your Final Paper</td>
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The final exam for this course is scheduled for Monday, December 12, 2011 at 6:30pm