GODS & GOVERNMENTS
Political Science 377, WINTER 2015, 4 credits
Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30-9:50 AM, 111 LIL

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Course Summary
God is dead or so claimed Nietzsche. Yet, religion remains a powerful political force across the globe. In this course we explore the relationship, and often tension, between religion and politics. This course is not a class on theology or belief systems; but rather an attempt to describe, write about, and explain how religious beliefs and organizations affect political outcomes and vice-versa. The course will focus on various major religions/civilizations of the world, with particular attention given to the relationship between religion and regime type, the role of religion in inciting violence, encouraging revolution and popular protest, and challenging and defining political systems. The course is organized around weekly themes of religion in contemporary global politics with empirical examples and readings drawn from several countries, including Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, and the United States.

Course Materials
All required books are available at the bookstore and other course readings will be on the Blackboard (http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/) and through the library E-reserves. Copies of the required books are also on reserve at the Knight Library.


Expectations
I have high expectations of my students. This course integrates lectures, in-class discussion and a moderately heavy reading load. Throughout the term I expect you to come to class already having read thoroughly and critically, and ready to demonstrate understanding of the material. During class I expect you to actively participate in discussions, which includes both making contributions and being a good listener.

Your attendance and participation is essential to your learning and to succeeding in the course. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, complete all assignments and submit work on time. Exceptions to this rule for medical, religious or personal reasons, or for official university business excusing an absence or late submission require proper documentation. Students must notify me as soon as possible (preferably, in advance) of the reason for the absence.

Assignments are due at the beginning of class. An assignment is a day late if you bring it in after class. Late assignments are marked down one grade per day (that is, a B becomes a C after one day).

Please check your UO email and the course Blackboard daily. I will frequently send you information regarding lectures, links to additional readings, questions to help guide discussion, and other important messages. When you e-mail the GTF and me regarding course matters, please include “PS 377” and your name in the subject line.

Academic Integrity
Any form of plagiarism or cheating will not be tolerated and students will receive a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism, or academic theft, is passing off someone else’s work as your own. When you hand in an assignment, make sure that
everything in it is your own work and that you have made the appropriate references where necessary. Please review the following UO websites for clarification: http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/ http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/ConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx.

Accessible Education Center
The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Classroom Etiquette
Laptops – You may bring your laptops to class for taking notes. However, please refrain from sending emails, IM-ing, playing games and surfing the Net (including social networking sites) during lecture.

Cell phones – Please remember to silence your cell phone before class. If you need to take an important call or make a text please leave the room so as not to disrupt the classroom environment.

Respect – Given the contentious nature of the topics we are exploring I expect our discussions to be lively affairs. Please treat everyone in the class with respect—when participating in a discussion listen with an open mind and speak with prudence. Stay focused on the ideas being offered and never make ad hominem arguments or other personal attacks.

Learning Goals
The basic objective of this course is to provide a working knowledge of the politics of religion around the globe. Students will learn to analyze the intersection of political issues and religious phenomena by using political science concepts, theories, and methodologies.

Assessment
Your grade will have four main components: quizzes (10%) + response paper (10%) + midterm (40%) + final (40%)

1. Quizzes: Three to four classes will begin with unannounced quizzes, which will cover readings and lectures since the previous quiz. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes. Your grade will include only your top two or three scores, so missing one will not affect your grade. Those taking all quizzes will have their lowest score dropped.


3. Midterm exam: The in-class midterm will include essay, short-answer and IDs. Feb. 10

4. Final exam: The in-class final will include essay, short-answer and IDs. 8:00 am Friday, Mar. 20.

LECTURES AND READINGS

Week 1: Orientation and Overview
Tuesday, Jan. 06 – no reading


Thursday, Jan. 08 – What is religion? What is politics?


Pew Forum, “Religious Hostilities reach a 6-year high.” Available at: http://www.pewforum.org/2014/01/14/religious-hostilities-reach-six-year-high/
**Week 2: Social Science Approaches to Religion and Politics**

Tuesday, Jan. 13 – The Secularism Debate – Is secularism dead? Is secularism relevant?

Thursday, Jan. 15 – Religious Economies and Cultural Explanations

Recommended:

**Week 3: God and Cesar – Religion and Democracy**

Tuesday, Jan. 20 — Religion and Politics in the US

Assigned: Preview Election Ads on Course Blackboard before next class

Thursday, Jan. 22 – Religion in Courts and Campaigns

Browse the following websites for an overview of faith in the 2012 campaign:

**Week 4: State Atheism**

Tuesday, Jan. 27 – Religion under Communism
Marx, Karl. 1844. Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law, “Introduction on Religion.”

Thursday, Jan. 29 – Religion in China

Assigned: Review Persepolis Discussion Questions before next class (Blackboard)

Recommended:
Week 5: Religion and Revolution
Tuesday, Feb. 03 – The Iranian Revolution

Thursday, Feb. 05 – Theocratic Authoritarianism

Recommended:

Week 6: Religion and Regimes
Tuesday, Feb. 10 — In-class midterm examination

Thursday, Feb. 12 — Religion and Regime Debate
Huntington, Samuel P. "The Clash of Civilizations?" Foreign Affairs 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

Recommended:

Week 7: Fundamentalism
Tuesday, Feb. 17 – Religion as a political tool

ASSIGNMENT: Preview discussion questions for Jesus Camp film for next class (Black Board)

Recommended:
Read speeches from JFK, Obama and Romney on Blackboard

Thursday, Feb. 19 – Fundamentalism
Film: portions of “Jesus Camp” and discussion

ASSIGNMENT: Preview discussion questions of the Madrassah Challenge (Black Board)

SHORT RESPONSE PAPERS DUE in class

Week 8: Fundamentalism, Militancy and Extremism
Tuesday, Feb. 24 – The Madrassah Challenge

Thursday, Feb. 26 – Religious Violence
Week 9: Religion and Social Change
Tuesday, Mar. 03 – Religious Social Movements

Thursday, Mar. 05 – The Catholic Church and Regime Change

Week 10: Summary and Conclusions
Tuesday, Mar. 10 — Religion and Science

Thursday, Mar. 12 — Catch-up and Review

Final Examination: 8:00 am Friday, Mar. 20