

## **POLS 562: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

**San Diego State University**  
**Spring 2016**  
**T 4.00-6.40**  
**GMCS 305**

**Prof. Ahmet Kuru**  
**akuru@mail.sdsu.edu**  
**Nasatir Hall 125**  
**Off. hrs: M 8.30-10.30**

### **Description**

This course will contribute to students' capacity of critical thinking on socio-political phenomena about religion and politics, in addition to their ability to ask appropriate questions, develop well-grounded arguments, and discuss alternative approaches. The lectures will be interactive, in a sense that students will be active by asking and answering questions, and participating class discussions. To do so, they have to read the material in the syllabus *before* coming to the class.

The topic of the course, religion and politics, is particularly controversial. In this regard, students will encounter readings that may challenge their personal opinions. They should keep in mind that in highly politicized issues there are multiple ways of answering questions. Students are encouraged to criticize the books and articles assigned in the syllabus. It is important to note that a scholarly critique requires a reasonable understanding of the material and fairness in terms of giving some credits to the author's work.

### **Student Learning Objectives:**

In this course, students will:

- Utilize basic approaches, perspectives, theories, and methods on religion and politics
- Define, explain, and illustrate by contemporary examples various theories on religions and how they interact with politics, addressing the origins and transformations of these interactions
- Compare and contrast key concepts of religion-state relations
- Exercise skills in critical thinking, close reading of texts, verbal and written communication, organization and integration of ideas, and problem-solving

### **Textbooks**

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, ed. by Stephen Kalberg (Routledge).

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge University Press).

Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (University of California Press).

Ahmet T. Kuru. *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press).

Christian Smith, ed., *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life* (University of California Press).

Anthony Gill, *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty* (Cambridge University Press).

Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (University of Chicago Press).

Anthony Gill. *Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and State in Latin America* (University of Chicago Press).

Jeffrey T. Kenney and Ebrahim Moosa, eds., *Islam in the Modern World* (Routledge).

Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan, eds., *Democracy, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey* (Columbia

University Press).

### **Grading**

Class participation: 20% (Presentation for MA students)

Response papers: 10% (Weekly for MA students; biweekly for undergrads)

Annotated bibliography: 10% (Deadline: April 27)

Research Paper: 60% (Deadline: May 11)

### **Disability Accommodation**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Students caught engaging in plagiarism will receive an F for the course and will be reported to the university authorities. "Plagiarism includes but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another...and (f) submitting as one's own work papers purchased from research companies." <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html#cheating>)

## **SCHEDULE**

### **January 20 Introduction**

### **PART I: SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES**

#### **January 27 – Culturalist / Ideational Approach**

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Routledge).

#### **February 3 – Secularization Theory**

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide* (Cambridge University Press).

Recommended: Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations* (Ashgate).

#### **February 10 – Rational Choice Theory**

Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion* (University of California Press).

Recommended: Lawrence A. Young, *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment* (Routledge).

## **PART II: POLITICAL THEORIES**

### **February 17 – Historical / Ideational Approach**

Ahmet T. Kuru. *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press).

Recommended: Recommended: Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* (Cambridge University Press).

Denise Spellberg, *Thomas Jefferson's Qur'an: Islam and the Founders* (Knopf)

### **February 24 – Secularization Theory**

Christian Smith, ed., *The Secular Revolution: Power, Interests, and Conflict in the Secularization of American Public Life* (University of California Press) (especially “Preface,” “Introduction,” and “Chapter 1”).

Recommended: Stephen Monsman and Christopher Soper, *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies* (Rowman & Littlefield).

### **March 2 – Rational Choice Theory**

Anthony Gill, *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty* (Cambridge University Press).

## **PART III: THEMES**

### **March 9 – Catholicism in European Political History**

Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe* (Cornell University Press).

### **March 16 – Secularization and Christianity in the Modern World**

Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (University of Chicago Press).

### **March 23 – Catholics and Protestants in Latin America**

Anthony Gill. *Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and State in Latin America*. (University of Chicago Press).

### **March 30 – Spring Break**

### **April 6 – Religion and Violence**

John Esposito, “Islam and Political Violence,” *Religions* 6, 3 (2015): 1067-1081.

Arie Perliger, “Comparative Framework for Understanding Jewish and Christian Violent Fundamentalism,” *Religions* 6, 3 (2015): 1033-1047.

Recommended: Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence* (Knopf).

### **April 13 -- Islam and Politics: An Overview**

Jeffrey T. Kenney and Ebrahim Moosa, eds., *Islam in the Modern World* (Routledge).

Ahmet T. Kuru, “Authoritarianism and Democracy in Muslim Countries: Rentier States and Regional Diffusion,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Summer 2014.

Recommended: Miriam Kunkler and Alfred Stepan, *Democracy & Islam in Indonesia* (Columbia University Press).

**April 20 -- Islam and Politics in Turkey**

Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan, *Democracy, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey* (Columbia University Press).

**April 27 – Review of Papers I**

**May 4 – Review of Papers II**

**May 11 – Paper Submission**