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**


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

February 3 – Secularization Theory
Recommended: Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas, Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations (Ashgate).

February 10 – Rational Choice Theory
Recommended: Lawrence A. Young, Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment (Routledge).
PART II: POLITICAL THEORIES

February 17 – Historical / Ideational Approach
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

March 2 – Rational Choice Theory

PART III: THEMES

March 9 – Catholicism in European Political History

March 16 – Secularization and Christianity in the Modern World

March 23 – Catholics and Protestants in Latin America

March 30 – Spring Break

April 6 – Religion and Violence

April 13 – Islam and Politics: An Overview
Recommended: Miriam Kunkler and Alfred Stepan, Democracy & Islam in Indonesia (Columbia University Press).
April 20 – Islam and Politics in Turkey

April 27 – Review of Papers I

May 4 – Review of Papers II

May 11 – Paper Submission