POLI 335 (23298): “Religion in American Politics”  
MW: 3:25 to 4:40 p.m., Maybank 207

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Spring Office Hours: MW, 9 to 11:30 a.m., 26 Coming Street (Room 102)

**Required Books**


**Learning Outcomes**

- Identify and explain key theories including notions of the public vs. private, modernity, religious freedom, and civil religion.
- Gain greater context for arguments about the role of religion in the founding of the United States, particularly its role in the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- Evaluate the paradox of the religious nature of American politics, particularly when it comes to religious minorities.
- Relate historical and religious events to contemporary debates in the United States.
- Develop an analytical, social scientific disposition toward American politics through several writing assignments.

**Assessment**

a) **Deep Thoughts (two points each, 30 points total):** Students will be required to turn in 15 index cards containing a “Deep Thought” at the beginning of class throughout the semester [and a maximum of two per week.] This might be a response to an assigned reading, or analysis of a specific topic, or just a question inspired by debate in class.

b) **Mini-Essays (10 points each, 50 points total):** There will be five, mini-essays due throughout the semester that will range from 200 to 300 words each.

c) **Class Participation (20 points):** Informed and respectful debate will form a key component of this upper-division seminar, and of the class participation grade. Please also download the Kahoot! app to your phones. We will be using Kahoot! at least once a week, sometimes more, for fun, low-stakes quizzes on assigned readings.
d) **Congregation Visit (25 points):** This midterm project will give you the opportunity to attend religious services in a tradition that you currently do not call your own (or was part of your childhood). This 500-word, double-spaced essay should include a detailed discussion of why you chose this site; how your expectations met reality; information gleaned from interviewing a religious leader and a member of the congregation; and a frank and honest observation on how you see this congregation adapting to the contours of American religious practice.

This is not an exhaustive list, so feel free to do your own research:

https://charlestoncommunityguide.com/religious-organizations/

e) **Essay on Moral Panics (75 points):** Using Morone’s (2003) theories on moral panics, you will write a 1,000-word, double-spaced final essay addressing the role of religion (broadly or in a specific tradition) in one of the following political issues in the United States: immigration, abortion, welfare, marriage, vaccination, intimate partner violence, refugee resettlement, gambling, or pornography.

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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**Due Dates**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date Assigned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mini Essay #1</td>
<td>January 16th</td>
<td>January 23rd</td>
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<td>Mini Essay #2</td>
<td>February 6th</td>
<td>February 13th</td>
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<td>Midterm Project</td>
<td>January 9th</td>
<td>February 25th</td>
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<td>Mini Essay #3</td>
<td>March 6th</td>
<td>March 13th</td>
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<td>Mini Essay #4</td>
<td>April 3rd</td>
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<td>Mini Essay #5</td>
<td>April 17th</td>
<td>April 22nd</td>
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<td>Final Essay</td>
<td>March 25th</td>
<td>April 30th</td>
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**Course Schedule**

**January 9th (W):** First Day/ Syllabus and Expectations/ Read Morone (2003) – C1

**January 14th (M):** The Constitution/ Civil Religion/ Lecture + Read Bellah (1967) and Morone (2003) – C2 and C3 (just skim C2)

**January 16th (W):** Slavery and Abolition/ Read Morone (2003) – C4 and C5
January 21st (M): MLK Day – NO CLASS

January 23rd (W): The Black Church/ Lecture + Read Calhoun-Brown (2000)


February 6th (W): Immigration and Nativism/ Read Lopez (2017)

February 11th (M): Catholicism/ Read Masci and Smith (2018) and Read Morone (2003) – C11

February 13th (W): Catholicism/ Read O’Gorman (2018)


February 25th (M): Read Morone (2003) – C14/ Guest Lecture from Dr. Elijah Siegler, Department of Religious Studies, on the White House, religion, and film

February 27th (W): The † Right/ Read Morone (2003) – C15, Pew (2011) and Robinson (2014)/ Midterm Essay Due

March 4th (M): White Supremacy/ † Nationalism/ Read Raushenbush (2018) and SPLC (2018)


March 13th (W): School Prayer/ Lecture

March 18th and March 20th: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

March 25th (M): Anti-Semitism/ Lecture + Read McSweeney and Siegel (2018)

March 27th (W): Guest Lecture from Dr. Joshua Shanes, Department of Jewish Studies, on current controversies surrounding the Hasidim in the United States
April 1st (M): (American) Hinduism and Buddhism/ Read Heuman (2012), listen to PRI (2016), and read Sanneh (2017)

April 3rd (W): Yoga Politics/ Read Kelleher (2018), FiveThirtyEight (2018), and Wong (2018)


April 10th (W): Mormons: Read Boyd (2017), Goodstein (2012), and Pew (2012)

April 15th (M): Islamophobia and Nativism/ Read Chouhoud (2018)/ Watch Rashid et al. (2018)

April 17th (W): Islam and Hijab/ Read Welborne et al. (2018) – C4, C5, and C6

April 19th (F): Special campus event/ panel discussion with “Amazing Muslim Women” [Attendance is mandatory since Dr. Sriram is the organizer 😊]

April 22nd (M): Discuss event and Welborne et al. (2018)/ Course evaluations

Tuesday, April 30th:
Moral Panics essay due in my office between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m.

Course Policies

1. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and gender pronouns of your choice. Please advise me of this early via your college-issued email account or during office hours so that I may make the appropriate notation on my class list.

2. Attendance: Absence from more than fifteen percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive. Students missing more than five class sessions will lose one full letter grade from the participation portion of their total average for each additional absence. Another incentive to come to class: I will not be posting lecture notes to OAKS.

3. Late Work will be severely penalized. Work is considered late (and the clock begins ticking) if it is not handed in at the time requested. You will lose one point for every hour the assignment is late.

4. When you enrolled in the College of Charleston, you were bound by an Honor Code. I expect you to abide by that code. If you are found to have cheated on a quiz or plagiarized any of your written work, you will fail this course and be turned over to the
Honor Board for further disciplinary action. If you have any doubts about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, ask before you act.

5. I have built-up a reputation over the last 15 years as a professor who values students and their personal experiences. If you are going through anything that hinders your ability to do your best, please come and talk to me. I can also refer you to other college resources. I am known to grant extensions for reasonable requests.

6. One underutilized student resource is the Center for Student Learning (CSL), which offers academic support services for assistance in study strategies, writing, tutoring, supplemental instruction, study skills consultations and workshops. For more information on what help is available to you for free as students, visit the CSL website at http://csl.cofc.edu, call (843) 953-5635 or visit the office on the library’s ground floor.

7. Extra Credit: CofC offers a dynamic selection of lectures, film screenings, and other globally-conscious events. From time to time, I will offer extra-credit opportunities that will be predicated on attending an event and submitting a short reflection.

8. Only students with pre-acknowledged disabilities can use laptops in class; however, since we are using Kahoot! this semester, phones are permitted in class.