

Religious Outsiders and the American State

JWST 300.03/POLI 335/RELS 298
Tu/Th 3:05 PM-4:20 PM
Jewish Studies Center 222
Office Hours: Tu/Th, 1-2:30 pm
(sign up at tinyurl.com/profrabin)

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This course will explore the relationship between outsider religions and the American state from the beginnings of the nation until the present day. In a country that is premised on the separation of church and state but that also includes diverse religious groups, the place of religion in public life and of the government's role in regulating and defining religion have long been contested. What do church-state relations look like if we focus on groups outside of the Protestant mainstream? What are the scope and limits of "religious freedom"? In this course, we will explore how these questions are worked out in the realms of immigration, education, national security, first amendment jurisprudence, and more, focusing on Jews, Muslims, and other case studies. You will come away with the ability to engage with scholarship in the fields of history and religious studies and to connect it to contemporary public policy issues through discussion and in writing.

Required Text:

Sylvester Johnson and Steven Weitzman, *The FBI and Religion: Faith and National Security Before and After 9/11*

Assignments:

Participation (20%):

You will be excused for up to **FOUR (4)** absences during the semester. If you miss more than four classes, you should not expect to pass this course. I do not require you to submit paperwork when you do miss a class, but please be aware that I will enforce this policy strictly. This class is a seminar, which means that you must do the reading and actively join in discussions and activities with good faith and generosity. I expect that each student offer a substantive contribution to the discussion at least once per class session.

A Note on Written Assignments: Papers must be written in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced with standard margins and using APA citation style. They should be submitted as Microsoft Word or PDF files to the designated OAKS Dropbox by class time.

Public Engagement (10%):

You will write a 2-page critical response discussing a relevant public lecture or podcast episode from the perspective of our course. I will provide a list of suggestions, but you can get alternatives approved by the professor (15%). Due September 26.

Discussion Leader (15%):

Once during the course of the semester you, along with a partner, will be in charge of leading class discussion on a scholarly article. This will involve creating a handout about the article and preparing a list of discussion questions.

Midterm Assignment (15%):

Read one of the following chapters from *The FBI and Religion* and write three pages summarizing its argument and connecting it to one other assigned course reading (20%).

Due Oct. 26.

- Sylvester Johnson, Moorish Science Temple, 55-66
- Regin Schmidt, Catholic Church, 108-120
- Sarah Imhoff, Jews, 121-133
- Karl Evanzz, Nation of Islam, 148-167
- Matthew Bowman, Mormonism, 191-202
- Junaida Rana, Kashmiri Americans, 256-268

Final Assignment:

-Find a reliable news article identifying an issue of public policy related to one outsider religious group and one area of public policy. Submit a two-page document 1) describing the issue and 2) summarizing one course reading that it relates to. **(10%)**. Due Nov. 7.

Groups: Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Mormons, or Native Americans

Issues: Immigration, Education, National Security, Healthcare, Military, Prison, Free Exercise, Establishment, or another issue approved by me.

-Give a brief in-class summary of your issue and its history on November 28 (5%).

-Write 5-7 pages analyzing the issue in historical context, using course readings and other relevant research. **(25%)**. Due Date TBD.

Grading Scale

- A = 93-100
- A- = 90-92
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 83-86
- B- = 80-82
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 73-76
- C- = 70-72
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 63-66
- D- = 60-62
- F = 0-60

Policies and Resources:

Honor Code

You are expected to abide by the Honor Code of the College of Charleston. **The Honor Code of the College of Charleston forbids cheating, attempted cheating and plagiarism.** A student found guilty of any of these offenses will receive a grade of “XF” in the course, and may be subject to additional penalties such as suspension or expulsion from the College, at the discretion of the Honor Board. See the *College of Charleston Student Handbook*, for definitions of these offenses (www.cofc.edu/generaldocuments/handbook.pdf).

Disability Accommodations

If you have a documented disability and have been approved to receive accommodations through the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, please come and discuss this with me during my office hours.

To see how many of you are reading the syllabus, if you see this, please email me a photo of an adorable puppy at rabnisl@cofc.edu

Writing Lab

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

PART I – Orientations

Week 1 – Introduction

Tu Aug 22

Th Aug 24

Winnifred Sullivan, “Introduction,” *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, 1-13

Week 2 – Religious Insiders and Outsiders

Tu Aug 29

David Sehat, “Introduction: The Myth of American Religious Freedom,” and “The Moral Establishment,” *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*, 1-10, 51-69

Th Aug 31

R. Lawrence Moore, “Postscript,” *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, 201-210

PART II – Identifying Religion

Week 3 – Mobility and Immigration

Tu Sep 5

Shari Rabin, “Wandering Sons of Israel: Europe, America, and the Politics of Jewish Mobility,” *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America*, 21-43.

Th Sep 7

Libby Garland, “Not-quite-closed Gates: Jewish Alien Smuggling in the Post-Quota Years,” *American Jewish History* (September 2008), 197-224.

Week 4 – The Army and the Courts

Tu Sep 12

Ronit Stahl, “Dog Tags: Religious Toleration and the Politics of American Military Identification,” in *The Lively Experiment*, 209-221.

Th Sep 14

Annalise E. Glauz-Todrank, “Judging and Protecting Jewish Identity in Shaare Tefila Congregation v. Cobb,” in *Who is a Jew?*, 43-60.

Week 5 – Identifying Muslims

Tu Sep 19

Th No Class – Rosh Hashannah

PART III – Defining/Defending America

Week 6 – Elected Office

Tu Sep 26 - Public Engagement Response Due

Morton Bordon, “There is No God but Liberty, No Gospel but the Constitution,” *Turks, Jews, and Infidels*, 23-52.

Th Sep 28

Finbarr Curtis, “The Fundamental Faith of Every True American: Al Smith and Loyalty,” *The Production of Religious Freedom*, 87-112.

Week 7 – Education

Tu Oct 3

Tracy Fessenden, “From Disestablishment to ‘Consensus’: The Nineteenth Century Bible Wars and the Limits of Dissent,” *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature*, 60-83.

Th Oct 5

Week 8 – National Security

Tu Oct 10

Johnson and Weitzman, "Introduction," in *The FBI and Religion*, 1-16.

Th Oct 12

Week 9 – Defining Islam

Tu Oct 17 - Fall Break, No Class

Th Oct 19

Michael Barkun, "The FBI and American Muslims after September 11," in *The FBI and Religion*, 244-255.

PART IV – Contesting Religious Freedom

Week 10 – Mormons and Native Americans

Tu Oct 24

Sarah Barringer Gordon, "The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Supreme Court History* (2003), 14-29.

Th Oct 26 – FBI and Religion Response Paper Due

Tisa Wenger, "Indian Dances and the Politics of Religious Freedom, 1870-1930," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (2011), 850-78.

Week 11 – Free Exercise

Tu Oct 31

Sarna and Dalin, *Religion and State in the American Jewish Experience*, 271-281.

Th Nov 2 – Conference, No Class

Week 12 – Establishment

Tu Nov 7 - News Article Selection Due

Sarna and Dalin, *Religion and State in the American Jewish Experience*, 281-300.

Th Nov 9

Week 13 – Contesting Islam

Tu Nov 14

Isaac Weiner, "Calling Muslims – and Christian – to Pray," *Religion Out Loud*, 158-194.

Th Nov 16

Week 14

Tu Nov 21 – Conference, No Class

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 – Conclusions

Tu Nov 28 - *Student Presentations*

Th Nov 30 – **Conclusions**