Religious Outsiders and the American State

JWST 300.03/POLI 335/RELS 298  Prof. Shari Rabin
Tu/Th 3:05 PM-4:20 PM  Jewish Studies Center 222
Jewish Studies Center 222  phone: 843-953-2036
Office Hours: Tu/Th, 1-2:30 pm  rabinsl@cofc.edu
(sign up at tinyurl.com/profrabin)

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

- 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

Week 2 – Religious Insiders and Outsiders
Tu Aug 29

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

Th Sep 7

Week 4 – The Army and the Courts
Tu Sep 12

Th Sep 14

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

Th Sep 28

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

**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**


**Th Oct 26 – FBI and Religion Response Paper Due**


**Week 11 – Free Exercise**

**Tu Oct 31**


**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**


**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