

RELIGION AND POLITICS

COURSE INFORMATION

Number: RS 220
Semester: Spring 2012
School: Marymount Manhattan College
Room: MAN 509
Days: Monday and Wednesday
Time: 2:30PM-3:50PM

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Dr. Elizabeth (Betsy) Barre
Position: Assistant Professor of Religious Studies
Office: MAN 516R
Office Phone: 212.774.0783
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Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00PM-4:00PM; Wednesday, 4:00PM-6:00PM; and By Appointment

COURSE MATERIALS* †

Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence
Mark Juergensmeyer
ISBN: 9780520240117

*This text has been ordered at [Shakespeare & Co. Booksellers](#) on Lexington Avenue. You are welcome to purchase it elsewhere, but you are required to have a copy of the book by the end of the second week of classes.

†Readings from additional texts will be available on-line via <http://marymount.blackboard.com>. Students must have a valid MMC-ID to log into Blackboard, and are required to do so daily to participate in this course. Please note, you are REQUIRED to print these texts and bring them with you to class (iPads, Kindles, and laptops are fine, as well).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

GOAL/RATIONALE

This course will introduce students to the various ways religion has influenced (and been influenced by) politics throughout history and across cultures. To do so, this course will address five specific issues. 1) How religion has influenced the most prominent theories about the nature and function of government; 2) The various ways individuals have conceptualized the relationship between religion and law; 3) The role religion has played in elections and political participation, more generally; and 4) The historical and ideological relationship between religion and violence. Prerequisite: WRIT 101 (3).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the semester you will be able to:

1. Identify and explain terms, concepts, and distinctions central to the study of religion and politics;
2. Reconstruct and present various theological arguments about the nature and function of government, law, political participation, war, and terror;
3. Compare and contrast various theological arguments about the nature and function of government, law, political participation, war, and terror within and across religious traditions;
4. Critically evaluate empirical and normative arguments about the relationship between religion and politics.

Insofar as this course meets the "Studies in Psychology, Philosophy, and Religious Studies" general education requirement, you should also be able to:

1. Identify, describe and explain key terms, concepts and distinctions central to the discipline of religious studies.
2. Reconstruct and explain (in speaking and writing) various arguments concerning the foundations and applications of theories of human nature, knowledge and/or value.
3. Critically evaluate (in speaking and writing) various arguments (including one's own) concerning the foundations and applications of theories of human nature, knowledge and/or value.

ASSIGNMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

READING

Assigned readings are to be completed by the date indicated on the syllabus. If I call on you or ask you to participate in an activity in class, I will expect that you have read the assignment for the day. You don't have to "get" everything the first time you read it, but you should be fairly familiar with the material. If you don't understand something, feel free to e-mail me with a question, or to come to class with a knowledgeable question about what we've read for that day.

POP-QUIZES

To ensure that you keep up with the reading, I will give five in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Each of these quizzes will be administered within the first five minutes of the class period and worth 10 points. Overall, your quiz grade will count for 5% of your final grade (50 points).

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Thoughtful participation in class discussions is the basis of 12% of your final grade (120 points). During class, there will be frequent opportunities to contribute to class discussion. If you make a contribution that is both reflective of the readings and relevant to the discussion, I will award you 8 points. To receive full credit for participation in the course, you must participate at least 15 times throughout the semester (to secure the required 120 points).

FACEBOOK PARTICIPATION

Because our 90-minute class period is unlikely to provide enough time for us to cover all the material we would like to discuss, students are encouraged to continue (and initiate) class conversations via Facebook. To facilitate that process, I set

up a group page for the class. This group is “secret” so that neither the public nor your friends can see your activity, but that means you must request to join by following this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/263740813697082/>

You are required to post three substantive messages/links/responses throughout the semester. Each message will be worth 10 points, for a total of 30 points. If your messages consistently exceed my expectations (in both number and content), I will raise your in-class participation grade. If you do not have a Facebook account, you can make up these points by sending three e-mails to the entire class via Blackboard’s group e-mail function.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

You will be required to write two essays in this course, which combine to form the basis of 40% of your final grade (400 points). Each essay counts for 20% of your final grade (200 points) and must be at least 1,500 words. Detailed information on these assignments (including the rubric I will use to grade the essays) will be distributed at least two weeks in advance of the due date.

EXAMS

In this class, you will take two exams worth 200 points (20%) each. These exams will use short answer questions to test your knowledge of important terms and concepts, as well as essay questions to determine whether you can reflect on the material at a more general level.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

GRADING SCALE*

100%-93%: A	89%-87%: B+	82%-80%: B-	76%-73%: C	69%-60%: D
92%-90%: A-	86%-83%: B	79%-77%: C+	72%-70%: C-	60% and below: F

*Grades will be rounded to the nearest integer.

GRADE COMPONENTS (OUT OF 1,000 TOTAL POINTS)

Writing Assignments, 400 total points (40%)

- Essay One, 200 points (20%)
- Essay Two, 200 points (20%)

Exams, 400 total points (40%)

- Midterm, 200 points (20%)
- Final, 200 points (20%)

Reading and Participation, 200 total points (20%)

- 5 Pop Quizzes, 10 points each (50 total points, or 5%)
- 15 substantive in-class comments, 8 points each (120 total points, or 12%)
- 3 substantive facebook posts, 10 points each (30 total points, or 3%)

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE

While much of your learning will occur while you read, write, and study for the exams, being present in class is the best way to ensure that you truly learn and understand the course material. As a result, class attendance is required. One incentive for meeting this requirement will be to receive credit for class participation, which cannot be made up. Yet, I will also take attendance on a regular basis. You will be allowed **two** unexcused absences throughout the semester, but *each additional unexcused absence will result in the deduction of 10 points (1%) from your final course average*. All judgments about excused and unexcused absences will be at my discretion. However, if you wish to receive an excused absence, you must receive approval from me *before* the missed class period. The only exceptions to this rule are medical emergencies affecting yourself or your family. In all cases, I may or may not ask for supporting documentation for excused absences.

MAKE-UP WORK

In the interest of fairness, students must be present for exams on the dates given. The only circumstances under which make-up exams will be offered are (1) death in the family, (2) unforeseeable medical emergencies affecting you or your family, or (3) participation in an official Marymount Manhattan College-sponsored event. In the case of (1) or (3), you must give me at least 24 hours advance notice that you will miss the exam or it may not be made up. Documentation will be required in each of these cases. Complete disasters that require extended periods away from school should be referred immediately to the office of Student Services/Academic Advising so I can work out the best plan of action in conjunction with the MMC staff.

All essays must be submitted in electronic form (via Blackboard's "Dropbox" feature) by 5:00PM on the due date. Essays that are submitted late will lose 20 points (10%) for each day the paper is late (including Saturday and Sunday). **NOTE:** if any of your electronic submissions are "lost in cyber space," it is not my responsibility! If you are worried about whether an essay has made it to me in time, you can either submit a hard copy in person or ask for an e-mail verification.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At the most general level, I will uphold the stipulations of the Marymount Manhattan College Academic Honesty Policy—a policy with which you should become familiar. This policy outlines the College's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. The full policy can be found in the Student Handbook/Griffin Guide on pages 113-117 or at <http://www.mmm.edu/study/academicpolicies/mmcacademichonestypolicy.pdf>.

Beyond this college wide policy, my own policy is the following: All work submitted in this course must be your own. If I detect plagiarism in an essay, you will be given a 0 on the assignment and be reported to the college. Unintentional errors in citation will also be penalized. In these cases (to be determined at my discretion), students will be required to revise their essays and their grades on that assignment will be lowered by 10%.

COURTESY

To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn without undue distraction, please turn off your cell phone (or put it into silent mode). Stop. Read that first sentence again. I am serious. I don't care how sneaky you think you are, **TEXTING IN MY CLASSROOM IS NEVER ACCEPTABLE**. If I see you texting, I will ask you to leave for the remainder of the course

period. If it becomes a consistent problem, I reserve the right to lower your participation grade. If you bring a laptop to class, I expect you to be taking notes and only taking notes (you can give up facebook, twitter, jcrew.com, etc. for at least an hour!). If I discover you doing anything else, I reserve the right to bar your individual laptop use for the remainder of the semester. To help you avoid temptation, if you want to use a laptop, **you must always sit in the front row of the classroom**. Most importantly, **do not enter class late or leave early** unless it is an emergency and/or you've cleared it with me in advance. If you are consistently late (i.e., noticeably, more than twice or so) or regularly moving in and out of class while it is in session, I will stop marking you present. Reading questions will be collected within the first five minutes of class. If you are late, the questions cannot be made up.

It is also important to lay down some ground rules about the discussions we will be having in this course. Insofar as this course will require us to discuss sensitive issues about religion, we must work hard to keep our conversations civil and to respect the opinions of our classmates. You are certainly free to express any view you want (if it's on-topic), so long as you support your claim and are willing to hear counter-arguments from others. You are free to question the claims of others and to engage them in scholarly discussion, as long as you don't interrupt them and wait to be recognized by me before speaking (please note: you are free, and in fact encouraged, to interrupt **me**). You may also comment on recent news events of interest to our class, but only if they are relevant. You are not free to engage in name-calling, taunting, harassment, or otherwise non-productive talk. If you violate these rules, I may ask you to leave the classroom.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must either register with the Office of Disability Services or be enrolled in the Program for Academic Access. For any accommodation, the instructor must be presented with a letter signed by the Director for Academic Access & Disability Services during the first week of classes.

SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
January 30-February 3	Syllabus; Intro to Course	The Problems	
February 6-10	The Political	The Political	
February 13-17	The Religious	The Religious	
February 20-24	NO CLASS	Jewish Political Thought	
February 27-March 2	Catholic Political Thought	Islamic Political Thought	FIRST ESSAY DUE
March 5-9	Hindu Political Thought	Buddhist Political Thought	
March 12-16	Pluralism and Public Reason	Pluralism and Public Reason	
March 19-23	Pluralism and Public Reason	NO CLASS	
March 26-30	Pluralism and Public Reason	MIDTERM	
April 2-6	SPRING BREAK		
April 9-13	Religion and Western Law	Religion and Western Law	
April 16-20	Religion and Western Law	Religion and American Politics	
April 23-27	Religion and American Politics	Religion and American Politics	SECOND ESSAY DUE
April 30-May 4	Religion and Political Violence	Religion and Political Violence	
May 7-11	Religion and Political Violence	Religion and Political Violence	
May 14-18	Religion and Political Violence	FINAL EXAM	

READING SCHEDULE (READINGS MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK [*] ARE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD)

INTRODUCING THE PROBLEMS

- 1/30: Syllabus Day; Introduction to the Course
- 2/1: John F. Kennedy, "Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association," September 12, 1960.*
Barack Obama, "Call to Renewal," June 28, 2006.*
Mitt Romney, "Faith in America," December 6, 2007.*
Rick Santorum, "A Charge to Revive the Role of Faith in the Public Square," September 9, 2010.*

RELIGION & POLITICS 101

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY POLITICS?

- 2/6: "Why Do We Need Political Philosophy?" in *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, 1-18.*
"Political Authority," in *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, 19-36.*
"Democracy," in *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, 37-46.
- 2/8: "Democracy," in *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, 46-54.*
"Freedom and the Limits of Government," in *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, 55-73.*
"Justice," in *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, 74-91.*

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RELIGION?

- 2/13: Arnal, William E. "Definition," in *Guide to the Study of Religion*, 21-34.*
- 2/15: John P. Reeder, "What is a Religious Ethic?" *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 25th Anniversary Supplement (1997), pp. 157-181.*

RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY, LAW, AND GOVERNMENT

JEWISH THOUGHT

- 2/22: Edward L. Greenstein, "Biblical Law," in *Back to the Sources*, 83-103.
David Novak, "Halakhah: Structure of Halakhah," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8, 2nd ed., 5325-5332.*

CATHOLIC THOUGHT

- 2/27: "The Political Order," in Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891-present*, 137-159.*
- "Catholicism and Liberalism," in Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891-present*, 219-222.*
- "Religious Freedom," in Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891-present*, 222-235.*
- "Law and Morality," in Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891-present*, 235-243.*

ISLAMIC THOUGHT

- 2/29: "Introduction," in Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic World*, 1-7.*
- "Introduction," in Knut S. Vikor, *Between God and the Sultan: A History of Islamic Law*, 1-19.*
- "Concepts, Origins, and Mutations," in Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic World*, 10-16.*
- "The Shari'a and Political Authority," in Sami Zubaida, *Law and Power in the Islamic World*, 74-80; 117-120.

3/2: FIRST ESSAY DUE

INDIAN THOUGHT

- 3/5: Timothy Lubin, Donald R. Davis, Jr., and Jayanth K. Krishnan, "Introduction," in *Law and Hinduism: An Introduction*, 1-7.*
- Donald R. Davis Jr., "A historical overview of Hindu Law," in *Law and Hinduism: An Introduction*, 17-27.*

BUDDHIST THOUGHT

- 3/7: Andrew Huxley, "Buddhist Law as a Religious System?" in *Religion, Law and Tradition: Comparative Studies in Religious Law*, ed. Huxley, 127-144.*

THE PROBLEM(S) OF PLURALISM AND PUBLIC REASON

- 3/12: "Liberalism and Reason," in Gerald Gaus, *Contemporary Theories of Liberalism: Public Reason as a Post-Enlightenment Project*, 1-19.*
- "Settling Sretna Bosna," in Kent Greenawalt, *Private Consciences and Public Reasons*, 12-22.*
- 3/14: Robert Audi, "The State, The Church, and the Citizen," in *Religion and Contemporary Liberalism*, 38-75.*
- 3/19: Richard Rorty, "Religion As Conversation-stopper," in *Philosophy and Social Hope*, 168-174.
- Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Why We Should Reject What Liberals Tell Us about Speaking and Acting in Public," in *Religion and Contemporary Liberalism*, 162-181.*

3/26: Richard Rorty, "Religion in the Public Square: A Reconsideration," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), pp. 141-149.*

3/28: MIDTERM EXAM

CASE STUDIES

RELIGION AND (AMERICAN/BRITISH) LAW

- 4/9: "Background of Constitutional Principles," in Ronald B. Flowers, *That Godless Court: Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships*, 9-20.*
- "Defining the Scope of Religious Freedom Prior to 1963," in Ronald B. Flowers, *That Godless Court: Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships*, 21-30.*
- "The Uncertain Status of Religious Freedom: 1963-2004," in Ronald B. Flowers, *That Godless Court: Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships*, 31-50.*
- 4/11: "Religion in Public Schools," in Ronald B. Flowers, *That Godless Court: Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships*, 99-128.*
- "Religious Symbols on Public Property," in Ronald B. Flowers, *That Godless Court: Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships*, 151-154.*
- 4/16: "England: Partial Establishment," in Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper, *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies* 131-162.*

RELIGION AND (AMERICAN) POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

- 4/18: "Mobilizing Religious Interests," in Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, 109-142.*
- 4/23: "Religion and Political Action," in Kenneth D. Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, 143-180.*
- 4/25: TBA (Primary Texts from 2012 Campaign)

4/27: SECOND ESSAY DUE

RELIGION AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

- 4/30: "Terror and God," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 3-15.
- "Soldiers for Christ," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 19-43.
- 5/2: "Zion Betrayed," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 45-60.
- "Islam's 'Neglected Duty'," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 61-84.

5/7: "Theater of Terror," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 121-147.

"Cosmic War," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 148-166.

5/9: "Martyrs and Demons," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 167-189.

"Warriors' Power," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 190-218.

5/14: "The Mind of God," in *Terror in the Mind of God*, 219-249.

5/16: FINAL EXAM