

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
POS 769
Seminar in Comparative Politics: Religion and Politics
Dr. Jelen

Contact Information:

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Office Hours:

MW: 10:00-11:30 am
M 4-5 pm

Required Texts:

Gene Burns, *The Frontiers of Catholicism: The Politics of Ideology in a Liberal World*
Robert W. Hefner (editor) *Remaking Muslim Politics: Pluralism, Contestation, Democratization*
Ted G. Jelen, (editor) *Sacred Markets, Sacred Canopies: Essays on Religious Markets and Religious Pluralism*
Ted Gerard Jelen and Clyde Wilcox (editors), *Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective: The One, the Few, and the Many*

Objective:

This course is intended to provide an in-depth examination of religious politics in a variety of national and regional settings. The course is divided into two parts: The first deals with general theories of sacred politics, with case studies from diverse areas. The second provides a more detailed analysis of the politics of two distinctive monotheistic traditions: Roman Catholicism and Islam

Student responsibilities:

Beginning on September 6, each student will prepare a list of three to five questions about the week's readings. These questions will form the basis for the seminar discussion. The questions, and participation in the resulting discussion, will count for 20 per cent of the student's grade.

On or before September 27, each student will choose a research topic in conjunction with the instructor. The topic may deal with any aspect of comparative religion and politics. Examples of possible topics might include religious politics in a particular country (other than the United States), a comparison of a religious tradition in two or more countries, or more general theories of the relationship between the sacred and the political.

There will be three graded assignments associated with the research project:

- 1) On or before October 25, each student will submit an annotated bibliography. This will consist of *original* abstracts of approximately 100 words apiece on 20-30 *scholarly* sources. The bibliography will count for 20 per cent of the student's grade.
- 2) On November 15-29, each student will present to the class (for about 30 minutes) a preliminary version of the literature review paper discussed under (3) below. The student will provide each member of the class (and the instructor) an outline of the literature review paper, and an (unannotated) list of references. The outline and presentation will count for 20 per cent of the student's grade.
- 3) On or before December 6, each student will submit a literature review paper on her/his research topic. The paper should summarize the relevant literature on the student's topic, and the paper should be thematic. That is, rather than a recitation of research findings, the paper should synthesize and summarize a) the most important research findings in the area; b) The points on which most scholars are in general agreement, c) The major controversies within the research area, d) The sorts of evidence/research strategies which would be appropriate to resolve the outstanding controversies, and e) The directions for future research which would seem most appropriate. The literature review paper will count for 20 per cent of the student's grade.

Finally, on December 13, at 6:00 pm, there will be a final exam. Exam material will include course readings, as well as the content of the student presentations. The final will count for 20 per cent of student's grade.

Policies:

Any attempt at academic dishonesty results in failure of the entire course. This includes, but is not limited to, receiving outside assistance on exams, or using unattributed material from other sources. *Any* use of cell phones or other electronic devices during exams is considered academic dishonesty.

Given the importance of discussion and participation to this course, class attendance is required.

Order of Events, with Approximate Dates:

I. Religious Markets and Religious Politics (August 20-September 18)

From Jelen and Wilcox reader:

Chapter 1 (Jelen and Wilcox)

From Jelen reader:

Chapters by Warner (1), Stark and Finke (2), Hamberg and Petterson (4), Gill (5), Olson(6)

II. Sacred Canopies (September 27)

From Jelen and Wilcox reader:

Chapters by Byrnes (1), Dillon (2), Manuel (4), Wald (5)

III. Religious Dualism and Pluralism (October 4)

From Jelen and Wilcox reader:

Chapters by Soper and Fetzer (8), Gill (9), Hallum (10), Sahu (11), Toyoda and Tanaka (12), Wilcox and Jelen (13)

IV. Roman Catholicism (October 11-18)

A. Vatican Politics

Burns, 1-3

B. Catholic Politics in the United States

Burns, 4-6

C. Liberation Theology

Burns 7

October 25: Annotated Bibliography due.

V. Islam (October 25-November 8)

A. Overview:

From Hefner reader:

Chapters by Hefner (1), Mandaville (12)

B. Islam in the Arab Middle East:

From Hefner reader:

Chapters by Eickelman (2), Norton (6), Singerman (7), Okrulik (8),

From Jelen and Wilcox reader:

Chapter by Tamadonfar (7)

D. Iran:

From Hefner reader:

Chapter by Baktari (5)

From Jelen and Wilcox reader:

Chapter by Siavoshi (6)

E. Islam in South Asia:

From Hefner reader:

Chapters by Barfield (9), Peletz (10), Hefner (11)

F. Islam and the West

From Hefner reader:

Chapters by White (4), Hefner (11)

November 15-29: Student Presentations

December 6: Literature Review Papers due

VI. Wrap-up (December 6)

Burns, 8,

From Jelen reader:

Chapters by Bruce (7) Jelen (8)

From Jelen and Wilcox reader:

Chapter by Jelen and Wilcox (14)

December 13: 6:00 pm: Final Exam