Sociology of Religion Modules for non-Sociology of Religion Classes

**Religion and Politics**

Designed for four 90-minute class periods.

Module to be utilized in a political sociology or social problems class.

*Developed by:*

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**Module Objectives**

By the end of the module, students will be able to:

1. Recognize the influence of religion on political discourse.
2. Connect political and religious positions to broader social identities in the US.
3. Appreciate the moral concerns of the political left and right.
4. Describe the contributions of religion to public life, both in the US and around the globe.

*Readings for instructor*:

Core readings

[1] Edgell, Penny 2017. “An Agenda for Research of American Religion in Light of the 2016 Election.” *Sociology of Religion* 78(1): 1-8.

[2] Hunter, James Davison. 2010. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World.* Oxford University Press.

[3] Lakoff, George. 2002. *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think.* 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[4] Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

[5] Putnam, Robert D. and David E. Campbell. 2010. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Other resources

[1] Barna Group, Inc. “Religious Beliefs Have Greatest Influence on Voting Decisions.” Retrieved September 27, 2018. <https://www.barna.com/research/religious-beliefs-have-greatest-influence-on-voting-decisions/>

[2] Ryan P. Burge, Easter Illinois University (2017 Blog analyzing Harvard’s “Cooperative Congressional Election Study” or CCES). <https://religioninpublic.blog/2017/03/10/the-2016-religious-vote-for-more-groups-than-you-thought-possible/>

[3] Froese, Paul. 2017. *American Values, Mental Health, and Using Technology in the Age of Trump: Findings from the Baylor Religion Survey Wave 5*. Waco, TX.

[4] Gajanan, Mahita. 2018. “Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib Just Became the First Muslim Women Elected to Congress.” Time, November 7. (<https://www.cnn.com/2018/11/06/politics/first-muslim-women-congress/index.html>)

[5] Jenkins, Jack. 2018. “Faith Groups Mount Election Turnout Efforts That Could Help Both Parties.” Religion News Service. Retrieved November 7, 2018 (https://religionnews.com/2018/11/05/faith-groups-mount-election-turnout-efforts-that-could-help-both-parties/).

[6] McGill, Brian. 2018. “How We Voted in the 2018 Midterms.” *WSJ*. Retrieved November 7, 2018 (https://www.wsj.com/graphics/election-2018-votecast-poll/).

[7] Pew Research Center. 2009. “A Religious Portrait of African-Americans.” Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life. Retrieved November 7, 2018 (http://www.pewforum.org/2009/01/30/a-religious-portrait-of-african-americans/).

[8] Religion and Public Life Program, Rice University. 2016. “The Black Church and Politics - YouTube.” Retrieved November 7, 2018 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mc5HOICdmk).

[9] Religious News Service. 2018. “The Varieties of American Evangelicalism — New Report from the USC Center for Religion & Civic Culture.” Religion News Service. Retrieved November 7, 2018 (<https://religionnews.com/2018/11/05/the-varieties-of-american-evangelicalism-new-report-from-the-usc-center-for-religion-civic-culture/>).

[10] Smith, Gregory A. and Jessica Martínez. 2016. “How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis.” Pew Research Center. (https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/)

**Day 1: Religion and Politics are Intimately Intertwined in Public Life**

*Readings for students*:

[1] Glass, Jennifer. 2019. “Why Aren’t We Paying Attention? Religion and Politics in Everyday Life.” *Sociology of Religion* 80(1): 9-27.

[2] Putnam, Robert D. and David E. Campbell. 2010. “Chapter 11: Religion in American Politics,” (pp. 369-418) in *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

*Goals for the day*:

* Understand the religious contours of political parties
* Appreciate the contribution of religious diversity to public life

*Suggestions for Class Time*:

**Opening class discussion**: How do you see religion and politics connecting in public life?

**Lecture/Discussion:**

1. First, what is politics?
   1. It shares a root with “polis”: the ancient Greek word for community, as well as “polity,” which is any organized collective that governs itself.
      1. The “polis” and its respective government can be defined at various levels, often nested within each other.
      2. People depend upon each other for survival
      3. Unity and civility can be maintained by shared beliefs, ideals, and collective myths about the goodness of the society (Hunter 2010)
   2. Politics is the sphere in which individuals and groups compete for control over the structures of governing the collective—including the making and enforcing of rules… i.e., the govern*ment*.
      1. Politics is therefore inherently about power relations (the ability to get what you want even if it is contrary to the interest of others).
   3. Politics is inherently group based
      1. By definition, it concerns power to govern the polity—the collective itself—which is a group defined by the boundaries of the polis.
      2. Politics is also an arena in which groups—specifically political parties—compete for power.
2. What is the relationship between religion and politics in the US?
   1. Even though the US has legally mandated the separation of church and state, religious organizations and individuals still play an important part in shaping political action.
   2. Inspires political decisions:
      1. Putnam and Campbell:
         1. ~70% of evangelicals, Mormons, and black Protestants
         2. 20-40%: Nones, Jews, and minority religious faiths
      2. In a Barna survey
         1. 18% of adults said their religious beliefs influence their political beliefs a lot, 15% some, and 13% a little.
         2. 75% of evangelicals say their religious beliefs have a lot of influence
   3. Shapes some political attitudes (but not all)
      1. Among the most religious quintile (from Putnam and Campbell):
         1. 78% oppose abortion (compared to 18% of the lowest quintile)
         2. 60% oppose same sex marriage (compared to 16% of the lowest quintile)
         3. 74% choose safety over civil liberties (compared to 54% of the lowest quintile)
   4. Shapes political identity and affiliation [“God Gap” (Putnam and Campbell 2010)]
      1. Identifying as Republican:
         1. 70% of highly religious evangelical Christians and Mormons
         2. 62% of highly religious mainline Protestants
         3. 35% of highly religious Catholics
         4. *Only 14% of Black Protestants*
      2. The correlation between religious attendance and identifying as Republican has slowly grown stronger since 1980
         1. In 2016, 56% of individuals who attend religious services at least once a week voted for Trump, while 62% of those who never attend voted for Clinton (Smith and Martínez 2016)

**Class Exercise**:

1. Open with discussion: Do you think that strict religious groups with strong religious boundaries are a positive or negative force in society?
2. Watch short documentary on Jehovah’s Witness demonstrating their role in advocating for freedom of speech/religion, and protesting Hitler in WWII: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj4cS4n9ZkA&index=1&list=PLB9C383967E1710A5>
3. Revisit opening question. What are the roles of JW’s strong beliefs and boundaries in their public advocacy? What are the challenges of an inclusive society in making room for groups with strong beliefs? Is it worth it?
4. Religion and politics intersects with other social identities—especially race
   1. Whiteness and the 2016 vote
      1. Pew Research Center: How the faithful voted: A preliminary 2016 analysis (Smith and Martínez 2016):
         1. White, born-again/evangelical Christian: 81% for Trump, 16% for Clinton
         2. Catholic: 52% for Trump / 45% for Clinton
            1. White Catholic: 60% for Trump / 37% for Clinton
            2. Hispanic Catholic: 26% for Trump / 67% for Clinton
         3. Jewish: 24% for Trump / 71% for Clinton
         4. Unaffiliated: 26% for Trump / 68% for Clinton
      2. According to Emerson and Smith (2000):
         1. Otherwise well-meaning white Christians often support political policies that reinforce racial inequality because they are strongly committed to cultural beliefs in:
            1. Free will individualism
            2. Relationalism
            3. Anti-structuralism
         2. Discuss as class: Do you think evangelicals representing other racial identities approach racial policy differently?
      3. Non-whites and those in minority faiths mostly voted Democrat
         1. 75% of non-whites
         2. 71% of Jews
         3. 80% of Muslims
         4. 65% of other religions
         5. 70% of unaffiliated
      4. Non-white Democrats (Diamant and Smith 2018)
         1. In fact, the data suggests that while white Democrats are less likely to be religious than Republicans, nonwhite Democrats – who mostly identify as black or Hispanic – more closely resemble Republicans overall on a host of religious measures.
            1. 95% believe in God or a Higher Power
            2. 72% describe themselves as Christian
            3. Only 58% say abortion should be legal in all or most cases
            4. 47% of black Democrats attend church regularly
            5. 74% of black Democrats pray daily
            6. 76% of black Democrats say religion is important in their lives

**In-class exercise (Think/Pair/Share):** As a group, read “Republicans account for a small but steady share of U.S. Muslims” (Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/11/06/republicans-account-for-a-small-but-steady-share-of-u-s-muslims/>). How do you think the \*religious minority status\* of conservative Muslim Americans shape their political identity and behavior?

1. Jennifer Glass (2019) argues that the contemporary political divide in the US tracks deep ideological division between white conservative Christians and all others—white and nonwhite, Christians and non-Christian
   1. Tension between Christian dogma and science has been amplified since the rise of the “Religious Right” in the 1980s
      1. Partly fueled by religious concerns about human dignity in the emerging technological era
      2. Counterintuitively, evangelicalism may be thriving partly \*because\* of this tension (cf. Smith et al. 1998).
   2. White evangelicals are becoming increasingly nativist / anti-immigrant
      1. Conflation of nation and religion (cf. Whitehead et al. 2018).
      2. Non-Christian religions (especially Islam) seen as anti-American
   3. Goal of the Religious Right is to promote conservative Christianity in everyday life
      1. Policy issues related to education, health care, and criminal justice are not central
      2. Their main concern is to “(keep) God in all deliberations and decisions” and protect religious expression for conservative Christians in US society (pg.
      3. Alignment with the Republican Party has helped promote these goals
2. Religion and the 2018 Midterm Election
   1. Religious leaders stumped on both sides (Jenkins 2018)
      1. Rev. Franklin Graham toured California promoting conservative politics
      2. Rev. William Barber II – a leader in the “Poor People’s Campaign” – participated in a rally for the religious left in Atlanta’s famous Ebenezer Baptist Church, where MLK once preached.
   2. But many white evangelicals are doubling-down on Trump
      1. 80% voted Republican, vs. 39% of all other groups (McGill 2018)
      2. Up to 86% among those who attend weekly or more
      3. Some other religious whites also voted Republican, but some did not
         1. Most white Protestants (69%) and white Catholics (56%) voted Republican
         2. Most white “other religion” (55%) and non-religious (67%) voted Democrat.
   3. Religious minority candidates break barriers
      1. First Muslim women elected to Congress (Gajanan 2018)
         1. Ilhan Omar
            1. Democrat, Minnesota
            2. Also the first Somali-American elected to Congress
            3. Replaces Keith Ellison (who won the race for Minnesota Attorney General this week), who was the first Muslim elected to Congress
         2. Rashida Tlaib
            1. Democrat, Detroit (Michigan’s 13th Congressional District)
            2. Daughter of Palestinian immigrants

Suggestions for those interested in further reading

[1] Diamant, Jeff and Gregory A. Smith. 2018. “Religiously, Nonwhite Democrats More Similar to Republicans than to White Democrats.” Pew Research Center. Retrieved November 8, 2018 (http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/23/religiously-nonwhite-democrats-are-more-similar-to-republicans-than-to-white-democrats/).

[2] Emerson, Michael O. and Christian Smith. 2000. *Divided By Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[3] Smith, Christian, Michael Emoereson, Sally Gallagher, Paul Kennedy, and David Sikkink. 1998. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[4] Smith, Gregory A. and Jessica Martínez. 2016. “How the Faithful Voted: A Preliminary 2016 Analysis.” *Pew Research Center*. (https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/how-the-faithful-voted-a-preliminary-2016-analysis/)

[5] Whitehead, Andrew L., Samuel L. Perry, and Joseph O. Baker. 2018. “Make America Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election.” *Sociology of Religion* 79(2):147–71.

[6] Wilson, Erin K. 2014. “Theorizing Religion as Politics in Postsecular International Relations.” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 15(3):347–365.

**Day 2: Religion Provides Meanings for Political Action**

*Readings for students*:

[1] Bellah, Robert N. 1967. “Civil Religion in America.” *Daedalus* 96(1):1–21.

[2] Braunstein, Ruth, Todd Nicholas Fuist, and Rhys H. Williams. 2018. “Religion and Progressive Politics in the United States.” *Sociology Compass*, e12659

[3] Thomson Jr., Robert A. and Paul Froese. 2016. “God Versus Party: Competing Effects of Attitudes Concerning Criminal Punishment, National Security, and Military Service.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(4): 839-585.

*Goals for the day*:

* Critique common stereotypes of religious/non-religious divide between left and right
* Compare differences between the moral visions of the political left and right

*Suggestions for Class Time*:

**Lecture/Discussion:**

1. Two examples from Sutton and Dochuk (2016)
   1. Edward J. Blum’s essay “Slavery and Religion in (Not Just) a Christian Nation”
      1. In Jan. 1777, 6 months after the Declaration of Independence.
      2. A group of black Bostonians circulated petitions to challenge their enslavement on the basis of the new nation’s identity as a Christian nation.
      3. In one petition, they wondered how they could be treated as slaves by “a people professing the mild Religion of Jesus.”
         1. The word “professing” connected to an important oath-taking culture, thus they suggested that slavery was against the oaths that religious communities have with their God
         2. The word “mild” referred to the gentleness and meekness of Jesus, which contrasted with the practice of slavery. Importantly, they were emphasizing mildness at a time of war.
      4. By 1783, Massachusetts declared slavery to be unconstitutional.
      5. Blum argues that this rhetorical style foreshadowing that of Barack Obama, who “parsed the concepts of ‘Christianity’ and ‘the Bible’ in order to address broader issues of education, law, and military affairs.” (37)
         1. E.g., “Whose Christianity would we teach in the schools? … James Dobson’s, or Al Sharpton’s?” (38)
   2. Darren Dochuk’s essay “Crude Awakenings in the Age of Oil”
      1. Oil policy has consistently been framed in religious terms, though they took differing forms.
      2. Four “carbon gospels” (or “crude awakenings”)
         1. 1900-1915: John D. Rockefeller deemed extraction of crude “providential” and redemptive for capitalism
         2. 1935-1950: A vision of a “civil religion of crude” emerged in the New Deal era, with hopes that “big religion” and “big oil” could cement national dominance on the world stage
         3. 1950-1975: era of “wildcat Christianity” with emphases on self-reliance and an independence from non-Christian others who were supplying foreign oil
         4. 2000-present: calls for a rollback of the “wildcat imperative” by environmentalists, including Bill McKibben who led an “anti-Keystone crusade” (p. 124)
2. Political Rhetoric Is Influenced by Religion
   1. Political Rhetoric Is Influenced by Religion
      1. Political ideologies have been shaped by broader cultural narratives.
         1. Though not all of them are religious, sociologist Rhys Williams argued that religion provides important symbolic meaning for defining a vision of the “good society” --- or the ideal community.
   2. In an article written in 1967 sociologist Robert Bellah identified a number of ways in which religiously styled rhetoric slips into American politics.
      1. Usually, this rhetoric does not identify any particular religion, but rather draws from the authority of an abstract god or divine power.
      2. Think of George Washington acknowledging the “providence of Almighty God” or George W. Bush speaking about “our Creator.”
      3. In doing so, political action can be imbued with significant religious meaning that helps to justify or legitimate the action.
   3. Evangelicalism and Politics for Korean Americans (Ecklund 2006)
      1. Ecklund has spent a good deal of time interviewing evangelical Korean Americans about their faith, including how they see it influencing their political orientations. A substantial minority of Korean Americans interviewed by Ecklund identify as politically conservative:
         1. “Upholding the word of God. You have heard this. Americans are so relative. . . America’s foundations were in the Bible and we are deviating from that. And did you hear that thing in California where a judge ruled the pledge of allegiance was unconstitutional because it said, ‘under God.’ I mean that is crazy! But, I think upholding the word of God like ‘thou shall not kill’ and [opposing] abortion where everyone is like ‘freedom to choose’ and that sort of thing. . . And then there is that whole argument about whether the fetus is really life. But then in the Bible it does treat life as beginning at conception. It’s just the standard of God’s word.” –Peter, early 20s, member of “Manna.”
      2. Others, like a young teacher Ecklund (2006) interviewed named Young-Mi, credited her church for instilling a more other-centered orientation. She said:
         1. “I can remember when I was young, how you talk about Martin Luther King…how he wanted equality for blacks and whites. That kind of leads to a discussion on how we need to accept all people… how God accepts us, no matter what we look like or where we’re from… To help people who aren’t like you, reaching out like that kind of makes you a better American because that’s what this country is: helping people out… regardless of what people look like or their backgrounds or what language they speak, you kind of help each other regardless of those things.” –Young-Mi, early 20’s, teacher.
3. Distinct Moral Visions—Its Not “Whether or Not Religion” but “Whose Religion?”
   1. Lakoff (2002)
      1. Political liberals and conservatives have distinct *moral* visions for the role of government in society.
      2. conservatives
         1. Sees the rightful role of the government as a Strict Father God. It asserts that life is difficult, and the government should instill in its citizens the discipline needed to survive in a dangerous world.
         2. The exercise of authority is itself moral – it is moral to reward obedience and punish disobedience (Morality of Reward and Punishment)
         3. It manifests as support for tough criminal punishment, weak safety nets (tough on crime is tough love)
      3. liberals
         1. Sees the government as a Loving God. Assumes that development occurs best through positive relationships.
         2. Virtues include happiness, empathy, ability to care for oneself and others, fair distribution of resources and opportunity
         3. It manifests as support for social safety nets and progressive taxation
   2. Braunstein et al. 2018
      1. **For discussion**: Based on the reading, how does the distinct moral vision of religious progressives shape their political activity?
         1. Progressive voices tend to be more racially, socioeconomically, and religious diverse than conservative voices
         2. Three forms of progressive religious political organizations:
            1. Social movements
            2. National advocacy organizations
            3. Faith-based community organizations
4. The Christian Right vs. the Christian Left (Hunter 2010)
   1. The link between politics and religion, then, is morality. Politics reflects particularly moral sensibilities, and religious traditions can provide narratives and beliefs that support these moral sensibilities. But religion is complex and diverse, and so it can be employed for a wide range of political orientations. Within the Christian tradition, for instance, those on the Christian Right have a very different view of the world than those on the Christian Left.
      1. The Christian Right
         1. Emphasis on the “right ordering” of society (112)
         2. America founded as a Christian nation
         3. Concerned with moral decline
         4. Decidedly partisan (specifically, Republican)
            1. Though younger evangelicals are shifting leftward
      2. The Christian Left
         1. Emphasis on justice
         2. Draws upon the biblically prophetic traditions
         3. Concerned with poverty and other forms of inequality
         4. Depicts the Christian Right as legitimating inequality
   2. Religion and politics can intersect in complex ways
      1. Policy preferences are patterned by political party and legitimated by differing religious rhetoric.
         1. Thomson and Froese (2018):
            1. Democrats tend to favor economic policies that directly address poverty while Republicans tend to favor market solutions to poverty (rising tide lifts all boats)
            2. But Republicans who believe God is highly engaged in the world express attitudes about economic redistribution that resemble those of Democrats.
         2. Thomson and Froese (2016):
            1. Conversely, Republicans tend to favor policies related to harsher punishment of criminals while Democrats favor addressing crime by alleviating poverty and improving education (etc.).
            2. But Democrats who believe God is very judgmental express attitudes that resemble those of Republicans.
            3. Baker and Whitehead (2019) argue these patterns relate to masculine conceptions of God
         3. So while religion is itself often inherently polarizing because of processes related to boundary-making, in politics, shared religious beliefs can be the basis for unexpected policy coalitions.

Suggestions for those interested in further reading

[1] Baker, Joseph O. and Andrew L. Whitehead. 2019. “God’s Penology: Belief in a Masculine God Predicts Support for Harsh Criminal Punishment and Militarism.” *Punishment & Society*. doi: 10.1177/1462474519850570

[2] Braunstein, Ruth, and Malaena Taylor. 2017. “Is the Tea Party a ‘Religious’ Movement? Religiosity in the Tea Party versus the Religious Right.” *Sociology of Religion* 78(1): 33-59.

[3] Ecklund, Elaine Howard. 2006. “Chapter 6: Civic Models and Community Service,” in *Korean American Evangelicals: New Models for Civic Life.* New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 95-118.

[4] Hunter, James Davison. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.

[5] Thomson Jr., Robert A. and Paul Froese. 2018. “God, Party, and the Poor: How Politics and Religion Interact to Affect Economic Justice Attitudes.” *Sociological Forum* 33(2): 334-353.

[6] Sutton, Matthew Avery and Darren Dochuk, eds. 2016. *Faith in the New Millennium: The Future of Religion and American Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

[7] Williams, Rhys. 1999. “Visions of the Good Society: The Religious Roots of American Political Culture.” *Sociology of Religion* 60(1):1–34.

**Day 3: Religion provides resources / tools for political action**

*Readings for students*:

[1] Patillo-McCoy, Mar. 1998. “Church Culture as a Strategy of Action in the Black Community.” *American Sociological Review* 63(6): 767-784.

[2] Ecklund, Elaine Howard, Celina Davila, Michael O. Emerson, Samuel Kye, and Esther Chan. 2013. “Motivating Civic Engagement: In-Group versus Out-Group Service Orientations among Mexican Americans in Religious and Nonreligious Organizations.” *Sociology of Religion* 74(3): 370-391.

*Goals for the day*:

* Identify political language in religious rhetoric
* Think critically about the role of religious resources for community well-being

*Suggestions for Class Time*:

**Lecture/Discussion:**

1. **Video:** Martin Luther King’s Last Speech: “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oehry1JC9Rk>)
   1. Questions for class discussion:
      1. Where, or what, is the “promised land?” Is it religious, political or both?
      2. What is the role of religion in this
2. The case of black Protestants (Religion and Public Life Program, Rice University 2016)
   1. Perhaps the most religious group in the US, Black Protestants, are largely Democrats. (Pew Research Center 2009)
   2. In 2016, 88.1% voted for Clinton (Burge 2017)
   3. This helps us see
      1. the way that race interacts with religion and politics and
      2. the effect of the segregation of religious congregations.
   4. Although Black Protestants share many theological beliefs with white Evangelicals, their social location leads them to prioritize different social issues, and thus they side with a different political party.
3. Religious leaders can influence political action.
   1. Pastors implicitly endorse candidates through whom they pray “for” and even whom they pray “against” from the pulpits of their sanctuaries, they impart partisan views to their churches.
   2. Churches and pastors model for their participants whether it is more in keeping with bring a good Christian to be a pro-life Republican, a social justice Democrat, or to remain largely uninvolved in political life.
   3. Such categorizations are important to American politics: when individuals don’t vote in community elections because pastors categorize voting as unimportant, then people in churches lose their voice in local and national politics.
4. Religious congregations provide people with resources for political involvement in tangible forms.
   1. These include leaders, social networks, and places to meet.
   2. These forms of capital result in a payoff greater than their specified religious utility, in that they can nurture efficacy for political action. Those who see the connection between religion and politics primarily in this way might say Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a successful leader of the Civil Rights Movement largely because of the human capital he gained through his church work as a pastor, skills that included the ability to speak well in front of a crowd.
5. Social capital, or “social relationships that have a ‘pay off’ other than the relationship itself [[“social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity” (pg. 21) (Putnam 2000)]]
   1. Tends to be expressed as generalized trust – a sentiment that others tend to be good at heart
   2. Relates to civic engagement, including voting, volunteering, joining clubs
   3. Bridging vs bonding:
      1. Bridging capital facilitates the creation of inclusive networks, broader identities, and community norms of reciprocity
         1. Outward focus: Building bridges to other communities, other kinds of people
         2. examples: civil rights movement, interfaith dialogues
      2. Bonding capital facilitates more exclusive network maintenance, norms for specific religiosity, and in-group loyalty. By extension, however, bonding social capital also tends to foster “strong out-group antagonism” (pg. 23)
         1. Inward focus: strengthening ties within the group
         2. examples: fraternities, country clubs, sports teams
      3. Not either/or but more/less of both
   4. Religion and social capital
      1. “Faith communities in which people worship together are arguably the single most important repository of social capital in America.” (66)
      2. “Churches provide an important incubator for civic skills, civic norms, community interests, and civic recruitment.” (66)
      3. “Joiners”: Regular attenders and those who say religion is important are more likely to volunteer, visit friends, join clubs, play sports, and join politic clubs.
      4. But there are important denominational differences
         1. Evangelicals are more likely to be involved in activities with their own religious community but not in the broader community, thus generating high levels of bonding capital but low levels of bridging capital
         2. Mainline and Catholic religionists are more likely to be involved in the wider community, thus generating relatively higher levels of bridging capital.

**Class Exercise**:

1. Break into groups and discuss Patillo-McCoy’s article.
   1. What distinctly religious resources that civic and community leaders can draw upon does the author describe?
   2. Can these resources be replicated outside religious communities? Under what conditions?
   3. In what ways might religious resources compensate for deficiency of other community resources?

Suggestions for those interested in further reading

[1] Baumann, Roger. 2016. “Political Engagement Meets the Prosperity Gospel: African American Christian Zionism and Black Church Politics.” *Sociology of Religion* 77(4): 359-385.

[2] Delehanty, John D. 2016. “Prophets of Resistance: Social Justice Activists Contesting Comfortable Church Culture.” *Sociology of Religion* 77(1): 37-58.

**Day 4: Religion and Politics across the Globe**

*Readings for students*:

[1] Davis, Nancy & Robert Robinson. 1999. “Their Brothers’ Keepers? Orthodox Religionists, Modernists, and Economic Justice in Europe.” *American Journal of Sociology* 104(6): 1631-1665.

[2] Davis, Nancy & Robert Robinson. 2006. “The egalitarian face of Islamic orthodoxy: Support for Islamic law and economic justice in seven Muslim-majority nations.” *American Sociological Review* 71(2): 1677-190.

[3] Yang, Fenggang. 2006. “The red, black, and gray markets of religion in China.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 47 (1): 93-122.

*Goals for the day*:

* Challenge assumptions about the alignment of theological conservatism with economic individualism through examination for cross-national patterns
* Assess the contexts in which religion supports or subverts political regimes
* Consider the ways in which political regimes may influence religious practice

*Suggestions for Class Time*:

**Lecture/Discussion:**

1. (Segue from US focus to global focus): According to Froese (2014), the influence of religion in American politics is unusual for post-industrial countries, in that versions of theism can be seen as a political actor, and one that specifically favors the Republican party and conservative politics even while keeping church and state separate.
   1. Sacralization ideology – the idea that institutions and the experience of every day life is “suffused with religious symbols, rhetoric, and ritual” (p. 652)
      1. Most pronounced in Muslim-majority countries
      2. Modernization (especially processes such as differentiation, pluralism, and privatization) tends to be at odds with the popularity of sacralization ideology
      3. US has particularly high levels of religiosity and sacralization for post-industrial nations
   2. Froese suggests that “image of God” is a powerful indicator of moral outlooks and political values for cross-national research because the concept of “God” is widely applicable across cultural contexts
      1. On a scale measuring beliefs about God’s involvement in the world, US responses were closer to those from African nations (more active) than European nations (more distant)
      2. In the US, politicians need not link their policy positions to sacred religious texts; it is sufficient to appear to be religiously sincere
2. In a pair of studies, Davis and Robinson challenge assumptions about the relationship between religious “orthodoxy” and political attitudes
   1. Davis and Robinson 1999:
      1. Are “modernists” left of the “orthodox” (traditionalists)? Authors test this question with data from 21 European countries and Israel.
         1. Traditionalists/Orthodox
            1. Defined as those who believe in the role of God—e.g., through sacred texts— in establishing moral norms, which is absolute (following Hunter’s work)
            2. Usually associated with right-wing politics in Europe
         2. Modernists/Secularists
            1. Defined as those who understand humans to establish moral norms
            2. More libertarian than traditionalists on social issues (abortion, birth control, non-marital sex, prayer in public schools)
         3. But are they egalitarian on economic issues?
         4. Economic individualism (their dependent variable)
            1. Response to statements:
            2. Incomes should be made more equal (reverse of “individualism”)
            3. There should be greater incentives for individual effort
            4. Fairness of unequal pay for unequal productivity
            5. Government’s responsibility in providing jobs (reverse of “individualism”)
            6. Government’s responsibility in reducing income differences between rich and poor (reverse of “individualism”)
      2. Modernists tend to be economically individualistic, and are thus more likely to be more conservative than the orthodox than to the left of them.
         1. Because of their “theological individualism,” they tend to believe that solutions to economic problems need to come from within individuals rather than through “communitarian efforts such as social welfare programs, jobs provision, taxation of the rich, or private charity” (p. 1653).
   2. Davis and Robinson 2006:
      1. Moral Cosmology theory: religious orthodoxy is associated with “theological communitarianism” (individuals belong to religious communities and timeless religious law) which gets translated “economic communitarianism” (state support for programs to reduce inequality and care for the poor)
         1. In contrast, “modernists” bend toward economic individualism
      2. In seven Muslim majority nations, they find that Islamic orthodoxy corresponded with support for at least one of three progressive economic reforms:
         1. Greater government responsibility to provide for everyone
         2. Equalizing incomes
         3. Increased government ownership of business
      3. But it was also associated with at least two measures of cultural communitarianism / authoritarianism in each country:
         1. Preference for men in politics
         2. Anti-abortion attitudes
         3. Anti-homosexual attitudes
         4. Anti-divorce attitudes
3. Religion can support or subvert political regimes
   1. Catholicism in Latin America (Gill 1998).
      1. Church-state relations have evolved over time
         1. Both church and state benefited from subordinating the church to the state during the colonial era
         2. Modernizing forces pushed back against Christendom during the period of Independence
         3. Concerns for combatting anti-Catholic ideologies like Marxism, liberalism, and Masonry animated a dissociation of the church from politics in early 20th century
         4. Progressivism and a “preference for the poor” emerged in the 1960’s
      2. Church response to authoritarianism depended mainly on religious competition
         1. Protestantism came to Latin America in several waves, with charismatic leadership drawing people away from the Church in some place more than others
         2. Where the Catholic church maintained a monopoly, national episcopacies tended to be either neutral or pro-authoritarian
         3. Where religious competition was high, national episcopacies tended to be anti-authoritarian
   2. Religion and political violence
      1. According to Mark Jurgensmeyer (2017), political violence has been on the rise (spiking in 2014 with the rise of ISIS).
         1. Historically, political violence has been enacted by people of all faiths, including but not limited to Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Sikhism.
         2. Religion can provide a powerful moral motivation to carry out political violence, because it can be used to frame conflict as having cosmic significance within a transcendent order.
            1. Religion reinforces these beliefs through ritual practice like prayer, songs, and pilgrimage.
         3. He urges caution in blaming religion, though: “One’s person terrorist is another person’s freedom fighter.” Designating an act as terrorism, he says, requires a subjective judgment about whether a violent act is legitimate, so what we call terrorism might say just as much about ourselves as it does about the act itself. When he talks to supporters of religious militants, they rarely describe themselves as terrorists. They usually see their acts as defensive rather than offensive. This goes for as much for Islam as it does white supremacy. (see also Sageman 2004)
4. Politics can influence religious practice and participation
   1. Religious “markets”
      1. Many scholars conceptualize religion in terms of religious supply (religious organizations) and demand (desire for religion among individuals)
      2. The “religious economies perspective” (see Stark & Finke 2000) is a supply-side theory that posits religious demand as normally-distributed in a given population and relatively constant (see Norris and Inglehart 2011 for an important critique)
      3. Differences in religiosity across regions, then, result from factors that modify religious supply, including policies regulating religious organization.
      4. Stark and Finke argue that differences in religious establishment explain differences in religiosity among those in the US versus Europe.
         1. In the US, the lack of a state church means that suppliers (e.g., religious organizations) have to compete with each other for members, forcing innovation and improvement.
         2. Establishment of state churches in Europe yields “free riders” – because the cost to belong is low, they are less committed to religious life. Church leaders also do not need to compete, especially if they are supported by taxes.
   2. Paul Froese (2008) considers the case of religion in the former Soviet Union, which he dubs the “Soviet Secularization Experiment.” Can the state, through policy to cut off supply, extinguish religious demand?
      1. Marxist-Leninist ideologues saw religion as a threat to a classless society because it could be used to manipulate power relations and “(trick) workers into accepting their fate” (p. 44).
         1. In the aftermath of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Soviets seized religious properties and closed institutional structures.
         2. Religious demand persisted, so they attempted to expose it as pseudoscience through a re-education campaign.
         3. Nevertheless, modern, educated people continued to observe holidays and life-cycle rituals, so they attempted to replace religion with a version of scientific atheism that resembled religious faith (e.g., elevating Lenin and Stalin to ‘sainthood’-like status).
      2. Generally, efforts had mixed success.
         1. The Communist Party assumed control of the Russian Orthodox Church. While it did not disappear altogether, its vitality was seriously diminished.
         2. Protestant sects were accustomed to surviving within a regulated religious market. While they initially celebrated the loss of power of the Russian Orthodox Church, persecution drove them underground.
         3. Islam persisted in Central Asia as an ethnic identity.
      3. By shutting off religious supply by undermining pre-Revolution monopoly religions, the Soviets “unwittingly” opened the door to religious pluralism (p. 143).
         1. In coercing atheist belief, they may have created Communist free-riders.
         2. Shutting off religious supply did not whither religious belief, but simply caused religious free-riders to disassociate.
         3. Even implementing Soviet substitutes for religious rituals did not satisfy an underlying desire for a belief in God.
   3. China and the diversification of the religious market (Yang 2006).
      1. Strong regulation of China has not lead to the abolition of religion, but to “the decline of one form of religiosity—participation in formal organizations” (p. 96) as well as the emergence of a tripartite religious market:
         1. Red market – legal religion, recognized by the state, heavily regulated and “stained ‘red’”: “The red stain is reflected in the rhetoric of clergy, theological discourse, and practices of the sanctioned religious group” (p. 97)
         2. Black market – underground and illicit, officially banned by the state
         3. Gray market – religious activities with ambiguous legal status (illegal activities of legally sanctioned groups, or religious/spiritual practices that manifest in non-religious spheres)
      2. Red market & politics
         1. China has granted legal recognition to five religions: Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism
         2. Each are regulated by “patriotic” associations
            1. This market is therefore open (legally sanctioned) but not “free”
            2. Heavily monitored
            3. Religious leaders required to undergo political study
            4. Use of religion for social activism is prohibited
      3. Black market & politics
         1. Red market cannot meet people’s religious needs, and black market formed in response to antireligious suppression in the 1950’s.
            1. Underground Catholicism retained papal authority, which forbade cooperation with Chinese regime in 1949
            2. Protestant house churches emerged when denominations were brought under control of the government
            3. Crackdowns on underground Christians, Buddhists, Daoists, and Muslims are frequent and severe. But when leaders are rounded up, new ones emerge.
      4. Gray market & politics
         1. Chinese government supports temple revivals in some cases to attract foreign investment and encourage tourism, like homage trips to the mainland from Taiwan.

Suggestions for those interested in further reading

[1] Froese, Paul. 2008*. The Plot to Kill God*. University of California Press.

[2] Froese, Paul. 2014. “Religion and American Politics from a Global Perspective.” *Religions*, 5, 648-662.

[3] Gill, Anthony James. 1998. *Rendering unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[4] Jurgensmeyer, Mark. 2017. *Terror in the Mind of God, Fourth Edition: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press

[5] Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2011. *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[6] Sageman, Marc. 2004. *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

[7] Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[8] Worth, Robert F. 2018. “The Billionaire Yogi Behind Modi’s Rise” *New York Times Magazine*, July 26

*Assessments (2 options)*

1. Critical essay: Read and/or listen to the following articles/podcasts:
   1. “I Know I Am, But What Are You?” (excerpt from “Red State Blue State,” *This American Life*): <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/491/tribes/act-one>
   2. “Provoked by Trump, The Religious Left Is Finding Its Voice” (*Morning Edition*): <https://www.npr.org/2019/01/24/684435743/provoked-by-trump-the-religious-left-is-finding-its-voice>
   3. “Who’s Bad?” (excerpt from “The Bad Show,” *Radiolab*): <https://www.wnycstudios.org/story/180092-the-bad-show>

With consideration also to course readings and lectures, address the following questions. Compare and contrast how morality gets expressed on the political left and right. How do both sides frame the greater good? Why is morality such a powerful force? What are the political implications of competing moral frameworks?

1. Critical essay: Read two letters from religious leaders during the US Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s:
   1. Carpenter, C.C.J., Joseph A. Durick, Hilton L. Grafman, Paul Hardin, Nolan B. Harmon, George M. Murray, Edward V. Ramage, and Earl Stallings. 1963. “A Call for Unity” (<https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/documents/ACallforUnityTextandBackground.pdf>)
   2. King Jr., Martin Luther. 1992. “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” UC Davis Law Review 26: 835 (<https://lawreview.law.ucdavis.edu/issues/26/4/articles/DavisVol26No4_King.pdf>

Note that the latter was written in response to the former. With consideration also to course readings and lectures, compare and contrast these letters by addressing the following: (1) What is the ultimate political goal to which each letter seems to aim? How do they differ, how are they the same? (2) Identify the religious principles drawn upon by both letters. (3) Discuss what, if any, role race might have played in informing the perspectives represented by both letters.