

POLS 4341: International Religious Freedom

Course Syllabus



Course Description

This course examines the topic of religious freedom from a global perspective, evaluating how religious freedom is understood across cultures and religious traditions. Students in the course will study contemporary controversies surrounding religious freedom, including country case studies. We will consider the role of religious freedom as one among other human rights, the role of religious freedom in diplomacy, and the relationship of religious freedom to violence and terrorism. We will study religion and politics both through a theoretical lens and through in-depth study of international cases.

Course Goals

In this course, students are expected to gain substantive knowledge about religious freedom through the study of theories, facts, and cases, as well as to gain transferrable skills. Students in the course will study contemporary controversies surrounding religious freedom, including country case studies. Students will also learn more about diverse religious traditions in their own community and the experiences of community members with religion and religious freedom. At the end of the course, students should be able to compare and evaluate the role of religious freedom in governance, the extent to which considerations regarding religious freedom influence the foreign policies of nations, and the impact of religious freedom on conflict and violence. Students should be able to thoughtfully analyze issues of religious freedom and express their analysis through written and verbal communication. Students will also improve their writing and researching skills, apply critical thinking and analytic skills to challenging readings, and gain experience working in the community, leading class discussions, and presenting complex information.

Required Readings

- Hertzke, Allen D., ed. *The Future of Religious Freedom: Global Challenges*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Scholarly articles and current events readings listed in the syllabus and posted online.

Course Assignments and Grading Standards

Letter grades will be based on the traditional scale (90-100 is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, 60-69 is a D, and below 60 is an F). There will be no opportunities for extra credit. Course assignments and their percentage of the total grade are as follows:

- Participation: 25%
- Beginning Survey: 5%
- Concluding Survey: 5%
- Class Discussion Leader Assignment: 10%
- Congregation Report: 10%
- Congregation Story: 10%
- 5 Critical Analysis Papers: 20%
- Final Paper: 15%

Expectations

Students are expected to attend all lectures on time, have the assigned readings completed by the beginning of class each day, participate in class discussions, activities, and simulations, and ask questions. Students are expected to be respectful in their interactions with the professor and with their fellow students. Students are required to have reliable access to the Internet. Cell phones should be turned off and the owner of any cell phone that rings will be required to bring treats for the rest of the class.

Email Policy

The best way to get a hold of me is through email. If you want to receive a reply, please make sure to 1) put your name and the name of the course in the subject line, 2) address the email to Dr. or Professor Glazier, 3) close with your name. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the course, but out of courtesy please check the syllabus and the course website to see if the answer is already available. If you want to make any special arrangements or for any reason want me to remember something, please send it in an email. If I don't have it in email, it never happened.

Attendance Policy

Participation and professionalism are critical parts of this course, and constitute 25% of your final grade. If you are not in class, then you cannot participate. If you are late to class, you are not being respectful and professional. You get two free absences without consequence. I understand that life happens. I recommend that you use these two absences wisely (or not at all). If you miss three class meetings, your participation grade automatically drops to a B; if you miss four class meetings, it drops to a C; if you miss five class meetings, it drops to a D. If you miss six or more classes, you can't get a participate grade higher than an F. I will take roll every day to keep track of attendance. If you are late to class and miss the roll, you are out of luck. Be on time. If you need to miss class, you do not need to tell me before hand or give me any documentation afterwards. I don't distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from your peers.

Beginning and Concluding Surveys

At the start and the end of the class, you will receive a Google forms survey asking you both content knowledge and opinion questions about international religious freedom. This is a course assignment worth a total of 10% of your grade, so please take the time to provide thoughtful responses. Your name will be collected so that I can track that you completed the survey, but after that, your name will be decoupled from your responses and the class will analyze and discuss the responses in the aggregate. We will also discuss changes between the opening and the closing surveys on the last day of the class.

Paper Submission

At five points in the semester, you are assigned a critical analysis paper. You will submit a typed, one-page critical response to the assigned readings for that day in hard copy at the end of class (that way, you can refer to them throughout the discussion). Use this assignment as an opportunity to raise questions and insights for class discussion. There is a whole assignment description with all kinds of additional information about this critical response assignment, so please read it carefully and email me if you have any questions.

The final paper for the course will require a synthesis of the material covered (more details to come!) and must be submitted through Blackboard using the Safe Assign tool on the homepage of the course Blackboard site. All submissions will be run through plagiarism screening software, which will compare the material used to online sources, library books, and papers submitted by other students. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Dean of Students. Please read the academic integrity policy described below carefully. Plagiarism excuses that are based in ignorance are not acceptable. If something happens that prevents you from submitting an assignment on time, please email me! Also, “the computer ate my homework” is not a valid excuse for failing to turn in a paper in 2020. Email your paper to yourself, sync it in the cloud, use Google Drive, or sign up for a free Dropbox account. Just because your computer breaks, doesn’t mean you shouldn’t be able to turn in your assignments.

Community Contact

In this course, we will have regular contact with members of various religious faiths in Little Rock. Students will have the opportunity to attend religious services and talk with members of diverse faith traditions in the community and community members from different faiths will be invited into our class to participate in discussions. It is incredibly important that students are respectful and polite in all of their interactions with community members. We will talk about the goals we want to set for our class for these interactions, but at all times we must be respectful and polite.

After attending religious services in the community and talking with members and leaders of local congregations, each student will write a congregation report, critically applying the concepts of the course to the particular context of that congregation. Each student will also write a congregation story, intended for public consumption, about the ways that the congregation engages with the local community. The story will be published in the Community Spotlights section of the research website of the Little Rock Congregations Study: <https://research.ualr.edu/lrcs/category/highlights/>.

Class Discussion Leader Assignment

Each student will have the opportunity to be a discussion leader during one week of the semester. During the week that you are the discussion leader, you will need to submit a discussion leader outline 48 hours before class with two main points and five questions to encourage class discussion. During the discussion, you will have a greater responsibility to participate than in a typical week. More details are available in the Discussion Leader Assignment document.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is taken very seriously in this course. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, cheating on an exam, unauthorized collaboration on an assignment, and plagiarism. Professors are REQUIRED to report any academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students, and students caught cheating will receive an F for the assignment and may receive an F for the course. In order to ensure that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please thoroughly review the plagiarism handout provided and read the complete description of the UALR policy on

academic dishonesty, which is available in the student handbook at www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/student_rights.html.

Students with Disabilities

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to have a disability documented), and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible, so that we can discuss with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability. Please do plan ahead. Accommodations will not be provided on the day of the exam without prior notification.

Inclement Weather Policy

The university's inclement weather policy is available at this website: <https://ualr.edu/policy/home/admin/weather/>. Please check your email or the website if you don't know whether class will meet due to weather. I will definitely email you if class is cancelled and let you know what kind of learning task I have planned for you so that we don't waste that time.

Regular and Substantive Contact

This portion of the syllabus comes to you courtesy of the Department of Education. This is where I get to tell you about the many and varied ways I plan to be available to you this semester. I love teaching and I love helping my students learn. Because of that, I will hold office hours every Wednesday from 8:30 to 10:00 am and by appointment. I am also readily available by email and promise to respond within 24 hours during the work week (usually sooner) and within 48 hours on the weekend. If you ever need anything at all, I hope you will email me. I even share my personal cell phone number with my students, but I do ask you to use it judiciously: 501-813-2079. I will be in class for every class meeting and I will personally email you to check in during the semester. I hope that all of this sends you the intended message: I want you to succeed in this course!

Contested grades

If you believe a grade is inaccurate, you must wait at least 24 hours before coming to speak with the professor. If there is a math mistake or an overlooked answer, please let me know and I will correct it. However, if you are actually contesting your grade, you must write a letter that explains why you believe a mistake in grading was made. Grades on exams or papers can only be contested within two weeks of when they are handed back. Course grades can only be contested within 60 days of the end of the quarter.

Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1: What do we think we know about religious freedom?

January 21 and 23

Tuesday: Beginning Survey due by January 19, 2020.

Thursday: Pew Research Center, “A Closer Look at How Religious Restrictions Have Risen Around the World”; Finke “Origins and Consequences of Religious Freedoms: A Global Overview”

Week 2: Religious freedom as a human right

January 28 and 30

Tuesday: Arcot Krishnaswami, “Study of Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices” pp. 1-45

Thursday: Sullivan, The Impossibility of Religious Freedom, Chapter 1, “Introduction”

Week 3: Religious freedom as a human right

February 4 and 6

Tuesday: Kamp, “Femicide as Terrorism: The Case of Uzbekistan’s Unveiling Murders”; Yang, “Religion in China under Communism: A Shortage Economy Explanation”

Thursday: No class; Dr. Glazier is presenting research at the APSA Teaching and Learning Conference in New Mexico

Week 4: Religious freedom and violence

February 11 and 13

Tuesday: Grim, “Religious Freedom: Good For What Ails Us?”; Saiya, “The Religious Freedom Peace”

Thursday: Hertzke Chapter 14, Seiple and Hoover, “Religious Freedom and Global Security”

Week 5: Religious freedom and violence

February 18 and 20

Tuesday: Fox and Akbaba, “Securitization of Islam and religious discrimination: Religious minorities in Western democracies, 1990–2008”

Thursday: Toft, Philpott, and Shah, God’s Century, Chapter 5, “The ‘Global’ Dimensions of Religious Terrorism”

Week 6: Religious freedom and diplomacy

February 25 and 27

Tuesday: Hertzke Chapter 15: Farr, “Religious Freedom and International Diplomacy”

Thursday: Farr, “Diplomacy and Persecution in China”

Week 7: Religious freedom and diplomacy

March 3 and 5

Tuesday: Hurd, Beyond Religious Freedom, Chapter 3 “International Religious Freedom”

Thursday: Fox and Flores, “Religions, Constitutions, and the State: A Cross-National Study”

Week 8: Religious Freedom in our own Community

March 10 and 12

Tuesday: What are our goals for community meetings and congregation visits?

Thursday: Horowitz, Robinson, and Seifer, “Community-Based Participatory Research from the Margin to the Mainstream: Are Researchers Prepared?” Glazier and Topping, “Using Social Media to Advance Community-based Research”

Community Visits begin March 13 and must be completed by April 12

Week 9: Case Study: China

March 17-19

Tuesday: Potter, “Belief in Control: Regulation of Religion in China”; Quanxi, “On Rule of Law and Religious Organizations in China”

Thursday: Community visitors and discussion; the Adney family and Dr. Jess Porter

Week 10: Spring Break

March 23-29

No assigned readings

Week 11: Case Study: France

March 31 and April 2

Tuesday: Hertzke, Chapter 8, Ferrari, “Models of State-Religion Relations in Western Europe”; Berman, “Why the French Ban the Veil”; Kassimeris and Jackson, “The “Burkini” Ban Illustrates the Unequal Cultural Power that Shapes the Lives of Muslims in Europe”

Thursday: Community visitors and discussion; Dr. Christopher Williams and Nora Bouzihay

Week 12: Case Study: Egypt

April 7 and 9

Tuesday: Hackett, Proselytization Revisited: Rights Talk, Free Markets and Culture Wars Chapter 6, Sharkey, “Muslim Apostasy, Christian Conversion, and Religious Freedom in Egypt: A Study of American Missionaries, Western Imperialism, and Human Rights Agendas”; McInerney and Hawthorne, “The Double Talk of Trump’s Favorite Dictator”

Thursday: Community visitors and discussion; Heba Soliman and Mahmoud Hussein

Week 13: Case Study: India

April 14 and 16

Tuesday: Kronstadt, “India: Religious Freedom Issues”; Traub, “Is Modi’s India Safe for Muslims?”

Thursday: Community visitors and discussion; Priest Sh. Sheshachari Tiruvaimudi from the Shiva Vishnu Temple of Little Rock and a member of the temple

Congregation Reports are due on Friday, April 17

Week 14: Case Study: Turkey

April 21 and 23

Tuesday: Hurd, Beyond Religious Freedom, Chapter 5, “Minorities under Law”; Hertzke, Chapter 12, Kucukcan, “Are Muslim Democrats a Threat to Secularism and Freedom of Religion? The Turkish Case”

Thursday: Community visitors and discussion; Suveyda Karakaya and Mehmet Ulipinar

Congregation Stories are due on Friday, April 24

Week 15: Debrief and Reflect

April 28 and 30

Tuesday: Philpott and Shah, “In Defense of Religious Freedom: New Critics of a Beleaguered Human Right”

Thursday: Concluding Survey due by April 29, 2020

Final Papers are due on Friday, May 8