POLS 405
Topics in Democracy and Society:
Religion and Democracy
Winter, 2013

Professor John F. Young
Office #3071  Phone:  960 6636
Email: young@unbc.ca
Office Hours: M/W, 14:00 – 15:00 or by appointment

Course Objectives:
This course focuses on a few inter-connected themes, including the influence of religious belief in democratic politics and comparative church – state relations. Through an examination of the role of religion in Canada, the United States, Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, we will explore these themes. The intent here is to gain a comparative perspective on the role of religion in politics and its relationship with democracy. We seek further to illuminate the role of culture and society in politics and political transition, and inform our understanding of the contemporary world.

Texts:
- Noah Feldman, Divided By God: America’s Church-State Problem and What We Should Do About It (New York: 2006).

Course Assignments:
Book Review (February 12)  20%
Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (February 12)  10%
Research Paper (April 2)  40%
Seminar Participation  10%
Final Exam  20%

Assignment descriptions: Your book review will be from a book listed in the additional course readings, or a different title approved by the course instructor. It is expected that the book review will be a 1,000 word review that summarizes the research question, methodology, and strengths and weaknesses of the targeted book. It is due in class on February 12. Your research proposal and annotated bibliography is also due in class, February 12th. It will outline in three paragraphs your research question, justify its relevance, and outline your research methodology. You will then include no less than 10 journal articles and book citations with brief annotations. If your book review and research paper are on similar themes, the reviewed book may be one of the ten annotated entries. Your research paper will be a 4-5,000 word essay (16-20 pages), due April 2nd. It is expected that the paper will address one of the three following questions, in a geography of your choice:

1. Is a civil religion an effective and neutral complement to religious pluralism?
2. Does a particular religion – in theory and practice - complement or undermine liberty and/or democracy?
3. Does the medi/academy accurately portray religion and religious disputes?

The final exam will be distributed before the end of class, but will be written as an essay during the scheduled final exam. Seminar participation will require not only attendance, but informed discussion of agreed upon readings.

Course Schedule:

**January 8**  
**The Relationship between Religion and Politics (Introduction)**

**January 15**  
**Church and State**
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, excerpt from *The Social Contract* Book IV Ch. 8 [http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_04.htm#008](http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_04.htm#008)
- Adam Smith, excerpts from *Wealth of Nations* Book V, chapter 1, Article III: “Of the Expense of the Institutions for the Instruction of People of all Ages”
- Alexis de Tocqueville, excerpts from *Democracy in America* [http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/tocqueville.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/religion/tocqueville.html)

Additional:

**January 22**  
**Religion and Politics in America**
- Noah Feldman, *Divided By God*

Additional:

**January 29**  
**Religion and Politics in America II**
- Feldman, *Divided By God*
February 5  
**Canada: Religion and Politics**
- Bob Ferguson, *Commentary* (CBC) (email)  
  Additional:  

February 12  
**Christianity in Europe**
  Additional:  

February 26  
**Orthodoxy, Civil Society and Religious Pluralism in Russia**
  Additional:  
  - Zoe Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia After Communism* (2005)  

March 5  
**Israel, Judaism and Democracy**
- “Israel and the Occupied Territories,” (US State Department document, 2011)  
- Daniel Elazar, “Judaism and Democracy: The Reality”  
  [http://jcpa.org/dje/articles2/jud-democ.htm](http://jcpa.org/dje/articles2/jud-democ.htm)  
March 12  Islam and Democracy  
Additional:  
- Paul Marshall and Nina Shea, Silenced  
- Sayyid Qutb, Milestones (1964); Social Justice in Islam (1949)  
- Ali Allawi, The Crisis of Islamic Civilization  

March 19  Egypt: Islam and Democracy  
Lecture and class discussion  

March 26  Summaries  

April 2  TBA  

A few on-line resources:  
International Center for Law and Religious Studies  http://www.iclrs.org/index.php?pageId=1  
US State Department Religious Freedom Reports  http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/index.htm  
PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life  http://www.pewforum.org/  
Becket Fund for Religious Liberty  http://www.becketfund.org/  
Hudson Institute Centre for Religious Freedom  http://crf.hudson.org/  
Journal of Church and State  http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/jcs/  
Russia Religious News Stetson University  http://www.stetson.edu/%7Epsteeves/relnews/00currentchoices.shtml  
Forum18 (Oslo)  www.forum18.org  
First Things  www.firstthings.com  
Middle East Media Research Institute  http://www.memri.org/middle-east-media-research-institute.html  
RealClearReligion  http://www.realclearreligion.org/