

GVPT 479H: Religion and Politics in the United States
Spring 2008
Monday 3:30-6:15, Tydings 1101

Professor Geoffrey Layman
Office: Tydings 2126C (5-9709)
Office Hours: 1:30-3:30 M/W, and by appointment
E-Mail: glayman@gvpt.umd.edu
Course Web Page: http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/glayman/html/gvpt_479.html

Course Description

Students of American politics all too often have ignored the role that religion has played and continues to play in shaping our political system, our political values, and our political coalitions. This course will attempt to remedy that situation by examining the historical and contemporary effect of religion on political culture, political coalitions, individual political behavior, and public policy in the United States. We will pay particular attention to the political impact of contemporary religious divisions that pit religious traditionalists on the one hand against religious liberals and secular individuals on the other hand, but also will assess the relationship between religion and politics outside of the “culture wars” framework. We will explore historical patterns and recent trends in American religion, the evolution of the relationship between church and state in the U.S., the political orientations of a host of religious and ethnic minority groups, the role of religion in the 2008 presidential election, and the impact of religion on American political culture and public policy. To conclude, we will assess the normative consequences of the role that religion plays in American politics by asking whether it threatens democratic government or breathes life into it.

Course Readings

Most of the assigned readings for the course come from the following six books.

- Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. 2006. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Kohut, Andrew, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, and Robert C. Toth. 2000. *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.
- Layman, Geoffrey. 2001. *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wald, Kenneth D, and Allison Calhoun-Brown. 2007. *Religion and Politics in the United States*, 5th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Wilcox, Clyde, and Carin Larson. 2006. *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*, 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Witte, John, Jr. 2000. *Religion and the American Constitutional Experiment: Essential Rights and Liberties*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

There is also a packet of selected readings available at the College Copy/Print Center located at 7319 (B) Baltimore Avenue (301-985-5100). You will need to pay for the packet in cash.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

(1) *Seminar participation* (30%): This class will be conducted as a seminar. In other words, I will spend very little time lecturing. Instead, we will spend our time discussing the readings, their strengths and weaknesses, how they relate to each other, and what they mean for the broader questions of the class: the role of religion in American politics and what that role means for the health of American democracy. You all must be active participants in these discussions and that entails careful and thoughtful reading of each week's assignment.

Because the connection between religion and politics is constantly evolving (particularly in a presidential election year), we will spend some time in virtually every class discussing recent developments in religion and politics, whether they are explained by the scholarly literature that we have read on a particular topic, and if they shed any new light on that literature. To that end, I have assigned a few newspaper or magazine articles on recent political developments for most of the weeks. Students should think about how these developments relate to the themes in the main course readings. You also should be sure to keep up with the presidential campaign and other political events in which religion may play a role.

Finally, we will have more formalized discussions/debates about the role of religion in the 2008 presidential campaign—one on the nomination contests on Feb. 4 and another on the general election campaign on April 28. Preparation for and participation in these discussions will be included in your participation grade.

(2) *Book Report* (5%): Given the magnitude of the literature on religion and American politics, we all cannot read everything that is important over the course of one semester. So, to provide a more thorough coverage of the literature, each student will report on one of the books listed in the course outline. The reporter will provide a one-to-two page summary of the book's important points to each seminar participant and will give an approximately eight-minute presentation of the more interesting facets of the book. The best reports will be ones that provide your colleagues with a useful summary in writing and then do not simply summarize the book in the oral presentation, but instead provide a critical analysis of the central argument and points made in the book or highlight the most interesting facets of the book.

(3) *Term Paper* (30%): You will write a research paper (of approximately 15-20 pages) on some topic relating to the role of religion in American politics. You should provide me with a short (about one page), typewritten statement describing the topic of your paper by **March 10** and the papers are due on **May 12**. The expectation is that students will do substantial outside research for this paper, and you may want to consult with a librarian to make use of all available resources. The topic of your paper is entirely up to you. The following are only suggestions:

(a) The Role of Religion in Recent Elections. You may analyze the role that religion played in the outcome of recent presidential, congressional, or state-level elections, focusing on the importance of particular religion-based issues in the campaign, or the religious characteristics of the states/counties won by each candidate, or the types of groups backing each candidate, or on the relationship between religion and individual voting behavior in the election (possibly using survey data – see suggestion (c) below).

- (b) Advice to the 2008 Presidential Candidates. Based on the existing research on the role of religion in American electoral politics, draft a memo to one or both of the major-party nominees for president about the most effective ways for them to deal with religion and issues relating to religion in their campaign. At minimum, the memo should discuss the religious orientations of the candidates and how to discuss the candidate's personal faith most effectively, the traditional religious constituencies of the parties and how to maintain the support of the constituency of the candidate's own party and attract support from constituencies typically tied to the other party, and how religious orientations are related to particular policy issues and how discussion of and positions on those issues may or may not appeal to particular religious groups in the electorate.
- (c) Statistical Analysis of the Impact of Religion on Political Attitudes and Behavior. There are a number of national surveys (e.g. the American National Election Study) that ask a variety of questions about religion and political issues, orientations, and candidates. You may use data from one or more of these surveys to analyze the relationship between Americans' religious orientations and their political attitudes and behavior. I am happy to help students become acquainted with survey data and basic statistical techniques. However, I would recommend such a paper only for students who have some background in statistics.
- (d) Religious Groups in Politics. Pick a particular religious group (e.g. the National Council of Catholic Bishops, the National Council of Churches, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations) or a religion-based political group (e.g. the Christian Coalition, the Family Research Council, the Interfaith Alliance, Bread for the World, National Right to Life) and write a paper on its political activity and influence. What types of political strategies and tactics does it use and why? How politically successful is the group and why? How have its strategies, tactics, and effectiveness evolved over time?
- (e) Religion and Political Issues. Pick a particular political issue that is related to religion (e.g. partial birth abortion, homosexual rights, stem cell research, school vouchers, government efforts to relieve poverty) and analyze the extent to which religion affects the public's attitudes toward the issue or the extent to which religious factors affect policy decisions on the issue, or both.
- (f) State-by-State Variations in Christian Right Strength. On p. 91 of their book, Wilcox and Larson present a map showing where the Christian Right has a strong, moderate, and weak influence in the state Republican party. Choose two or more states where the Christian Right has a different level of influence (e.g. one where it is strong, one where it is weak). First, assess the extent to which the rating provided of Christian Right influence in the state is accurate. Second, provide an analysis of why the Christian Right is stronger in one state than in the other(s). Two books that may be helpful for this topic are *The Christian Right in American Politics: Marching to the Millenium* and *The Values Campaign: The Christian Right in the 2004 Elections*, both by John Green, Mark Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox.

(5) *Paper Presentation (5%)*: You will share the major findings of your research paper with the class on either **May 5 or May 12**. You will do so through a brief oral presentation (no more than 10 minutes) and a typed handout (no more than two pages, provided to each class member) that provides a clear, concise overview of the thesis of your paper, your key findings, and your conclusions.

(6) *Final Exam (30%)*: There will be an exam covering the reading and class discussions from the entire course on **May 17** at 1:30 p.m. The exam will include essay questions and maybe some short-answer questions.

Course Policies

(1) Academic Integrity: Academic honesty will be taken very seriously in this course. Any incidents of cheating or academic dishonesty will be reported to the University Honor Council and will result in failure in the course. Students should be especially careful to avoid plagiarism in their term papers by carefully observing rules of appropriate citation and documentation.

(2) Deadlines and Make Up Policies: The term paper is due at the beginning of class on May 12. Late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for each working day that they are late. Any papers not turned in at the beginning of the last class will be considered at least one day late. A make-up exam will be given only for legitimate reasons (illness, religious observance, participation in university sponsored activities, deaths of close relatives, or other compelling circumstances beyond a student's control) and only if those reasons are accompanied by appropriate documentation.

Course Outline

*All of the readings in the course packet are marked by a *. Readings marked by a # are electronic files that will be provided to students either through e-mail or on the course webpage. All other readings that are not in the books for the course are available online and the web address is provided here.*

Please note that the books for book reports are not on reserve in the library. Once you know the book on which you will report, you should try to check it out of the library. If you cannot locate a particular book, please let me know well in advance of your scheduled report. I own a copy of most (not all) of the books listed for reports.

Jan. 28 — Course Introduction and Conceptualizing American Religion

Read:

- Kohut et al., chapters 1-3
- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 2

Feb. 4 — Religion in the 2008 Presidential Election: The Nominating Contests

Read:

- #Green, John C. 2007. “Religious Diversity and American Democracy: A View from the Polls.” Paper Prepared for the American Political Science Association Taskforce on Religion and American Democracy.
 - Cox, Dan, and Gregory Smith, “Religious Groups’ Presidential Candidate Preferences.” (<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=259>)
 - #Gerson, Michael. 2007. “A Second Home for Religious Voters.” *Washington Post*, November 2, p. A21.
 - #Marcus, Ruth. 2007. “The Democrats’ Leap of Faith.” *Washington Post*, June 6, p. A23.
 - #Meacham, Jon. 2007. “A New American Holy War.” *Newsweek*, December 17, p. 30.
- *In addition to these readings, each student will locate , read, and provide a summary of four newspaper or magazine articles on a particular topic. See the handout provided on 1/28.*

Feb. 11 — Historical Patterns and Recent Trends in American Religion

Read:

- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 1
- Finke and Stark, entire book

Reports:

- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. 2004. *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Smith, Christian. 1998. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Feb. 18 — The Politics of Church and State

Read:

- Witte, chapters 1-8
- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 4
- #Lane, Charles. 2005. “Court Split Over Commandments.” *Washington Post*, June 28, p. A1.
- #“Ten Opinions.” *Washington Post*, June 28, 2005, p. A14.

Reports:

- Meacham, Jon. 2007. *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation*. New York: Random House.
- Miller, William Lee. 2003. *The First Liberty: America’s Foundation in Religious Freedom*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Feb. 25 — The “Culture Wars” Thesis

Read:

- *Hunter, James Davison. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books. Parts I and II.
- *Fiorina, Morris P., with Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope. 2005. *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America*. New York: Pearson Longman. Chapters 1-5.
- #Layman, Geoffrey C., and John C. Green. 2006. “Wars and Rumours of War: The Contexts of Cultural Conflict in American Political Behaviour.” *British Journal of Political Science* 36:61-89.
- #Dionne, E.J., Jr. 2007. “A Culture War Treaty.” *Washington Post*, October 9, p. A17.
- #Frank, Thomas. 2006. “The Culture Crusade of Kansas.” *New York Times*, Aug. 8, p. A17.

Reports:

- White, John Kenneth. 2003. *The Values Divide*. New York: Chatham House.
- Wolfe, Alan. 1998. *One Nation, After All: What Middle-Class Americans Really Think About: God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other*. New York: Viking.
- Williams, Rhys H., ed. 1997. *Cultural Wars in American Politics: Critical Reviews of a Popular Myth*. New York: de Gruyter.

March 3 — The Christian Right (and the Religious Left?)

Read:

- Wilcox and Larson, entire book
- Kellstedt, Lyman A., and Corwin E. Smidt. 2005. “The Religious Left in the 2004 Election: A Mighty Wind or a Gentle Breeze?” Paper Presented at “A Matter of Faith? Religion in the 2004 Election,” University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, Dec. 2-3. (available at http://americandemocracy.nd.edu/conferences/matter_of_faith/Schedule.shtml).
- #Cooperman, Alan, and Thomas B. Edsall. 2006. “Christian Coalition Shrinks as Debt Grows.” *Washington Post*, April 10, p. A1.
- #Gerson, Michael. 2007. “The Kingmaker’s New Subject.” *Newsweek*, November 19. p. 33.
- #Gerson, Michael. 2006. “A New Social Gospel.” *Newsweek*, November 13, p. 40.
- #Kirkpatrick, David D. 2007. “The Evangelical Crackup.” *New York Times*, Oct. 28, p.38.
- #“Is God Ambidextrous?” *The Economist*, May 27, 2006.

Reports:

- Wallis, Jim. 2005. *God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Oldfield, Duane M. 1996. *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Green, John C., Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox, eds. 2007. *The Values Campaign? The Christian Right and the 2004 Elections*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

March 10 — Religion and Partisan Change

Read:

- Layman, introduction and chapters 1, 3, 5, and 6
- #Green, John C. 2007. “Religious Diversity and American Democracy: A View from the Polls.” (see Feb. 4 readings)
- #Layman, Geoffrey C., and Laura S. Hussey. 2007. “George W. Bush and the Evangelicals: Religious Commitment and Partisan Change among Evangelical Protestants, 1960-2004.” In *A Matter of Faith: Religion in the 2004 Presidential Election*, ed. David E. Campbell. Washington, D.C.: Brookings.
- Cox, Dan. 2007. “Young White Evangelicals: Less Republican, Still Conservative.” Pew Forum, Sept. 28. (<http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=250>)

Reports:

- Green, John C. 2007. *The Faith Factor: How Religion Influences American Elections*. New York: Praeger.
- Frank, Thomas. 2004. *What’s the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Edsall, Thomas B. 2007. *Building Red America: The New Conservative Coalition and the Drive for Permanent Power*. New York: Basic Books.

** TERM PAPER PROPOSAL DUE ON MARCH 10

March 24 – The Politics of Catholics, Jews, and Mainline Protestants

Read:

- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 9
- #Mockabee, Stephen T. 2007. “The Political Behavior of American Catholics: Change and Continuity.” In *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic*, ed. J. Matthew Wilson. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- #Uslaner, Eric M., and Mark Lichbach. 2008. “Identity versus Identity: Israel and Evangelicals and the Two Front War for Jewish Votes.”
- #Miller, Lisa, and Jessica Ramirez. 2007. “A Catholic Dilemma: Can They Root For Rudy?” November 26, p. 8.
- #Steinfels, Peter. 2006. “Persuasion or Penalties?” *New York Times*, June 24, p. A13.
- #VandeHei, Jim. 2006. “Future of Orthodox Jewish Vote Has Implications for GOP.” *Washington Post*, August 3, p. A6.

Reports:

- Prendergast, William B. 1999. *The Catholic Voter in American Politics: The Passing of the Democratic Monolith*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Maisel, L. Sandy, and Ira N. Forman, eds. 2001. *Jews in American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

March 31 – Religion and Politics among Ethnic and Religious Minority Groups

Read:

- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapters 10 and 11
- McDaniel, Eric L 2005. “The Black Church and the 2004 Election.” Paper Presented at “A Matter of Faith? Religion in the 2004 Election,” University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN, Dec. 2-3. (available at http://americandemocracy.nd.edu/conferences/matter_of_faith/Schedule.shtml).
- #Leal, David, Matt Baretto, Jongho Lee, and Rodolfo O. de la Garza. 2005. “The Latino Vote in the 2004 Election.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38:41-49.
- #Jamal, Amaney. 2007. “Muslim Americans: Enriching or Depleting American Democracy?” Paper Prepared for the American Political Science Association Taskforce on Religion and American Democracy.
- *Campbell, David E., and J. Quin Monson. 2007. “Dry Kindling: A Political Profile of American Mormons.” In *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic*, ed. J. Matthew Wilson. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- #Woodward, Kenneth. 2007. “The Presidency’s Mormon Moment.” *New York Times*, April 9, p. A17.
- #“Disparate Doctrines: Two Faiths in Conflict.” *Newsweek*, December 17, 2007, p. 33.

Reports:

- Ostling, Richard N., and Joan K. Ostling. 1999. *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Harris, Fredrick. 1999. *Something Within: Religion in African American Political Activism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, Fredrick, C., Valeria Sinclair-Chapman, and Brian D. McKenzie. 2006. *Countervailing Forces in African-American Civic Activism, 1973-1994*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

April 7 — Religion and American Political Behavior

Required:

- Kohut et al., chapters 4-5
- Layman, Geoffrey C., and John C. Green. 2006. “Wars and Rumours of War: The Contexts of Cultural Conflict in American Political Behaviour.” (Read for Feb. 25)
- #Campbell, David E. 2006. “Religious ‘Threat’ in Contemporary Presidential Elections.” *Journal of Politics* 68:104-115.

- #Bolce, Louis, and Gerald De Maio. 1999. “The Anti-Christian Fundamentalist Factor in Contemporary Politics.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 63:508-42.
- #Jones-Correa, Michael A., and David L. Leal. 2001. “Political Participation: Does Religion Matter?” *Political Research Quarterly* 54:751-70.
- #McKenzie, Brian D. 2004. “Religious Social Networks, Indirect Mobilization, and African-American Political Participation.” *Political Research Quarterly* 57:621-32.

Reports:

- Leege, David C., Kenneth D. Wald, Brian S. Krueger, and Paul D. Mueller. 2002. *The Politics of Cultural Differences: Social Change and Voter Mobilization Strategies in the Post-New Deal Period*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jelen, Ted. 1991. *The Political Mobilization of Religious Beliefs*. New York: Praeger.

April 14 — Religion, Political Elites, and Policymaking

Read:

- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapters 5 and 6
- #Guth, James L., and Lyman A. Kellstedt. 2005. “The Confessional Congress: Religion and Legislative Behavior.” Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.
- #Djupe, Paul A., and Christopher P. Gilbert. 2002. “The Political Voice of Clergy.” *Journal of Politics* 64:596-609.

Reports:

- Guth, James L., John C. Green, Lyman A. Kellstedt, Corwin E. Smidt, and Margaret M. Poloma. 1997. *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Hertzke, Allen D. 1988. *Representing God in Washington: The Role of Religious Lobbies in the American Polity*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

April 21 — Religion, Politics, and American Democracy

Read:

- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapters 3 and 12
- *Hunter, James Davison. 1994. *Before the Shooting Begins: Searching for Democracy in America's Culture War*. New York: Macmillan. Parts I and V.
- #Layman, Geoffrey C. 2007. “Religion and Party Activists: A ‘Perfect Storm’ of Polarization or a Recipe for Pragmatism?” Paper Prepared for the American Political Science Association Taskforce on Religion and American Democracy.
- #Wilcox, Clyde. 2007. “The Christian Right and Civil Virtue.” Paper Prepared for the American Political Science Association Taskforce on Religion and American Democracy.

- #Brooks, David. 2007. "Faith vs. the Faithless." *New York Times*, December 7, p. A31.
- #Dionne, E.J., Jr. 2007. "Boldness, Watered Down." *Washington Post*, December 7, p. A39.

Reports:

- Neuhaus, Richard John. 1986. *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Carter, Jimmy. 2005. *Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Danforth, John. 2006. *Faith and Politics: How the "Moral Values" Debate Divides America and How to Move Forward Together*. New York: Viking.

April 28 — Religion and the 2008 Presidential Election: The General Election

- *We will discuss the role that religion is likely to play in the general election contest in the context of our readings and discussions over the course of the semester. More details on student preparation for this discussion will be provided as the date approaches.*

May 5 — Paper Presentations

May 12 — Paper Presentations

** TERM PAPER DUE ON MAY 12

** FINAL EXAM ON MAY 17, 1:30 P.M.