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# RELIGION 330: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

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Instructor: Dr. Onishi

Skidmore College

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Office Hours: Thursday. 2-4, and by appt.

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Time: WF 12:40-2:00

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

### OBJECTIVES

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1. To gain an understanding of the relationship between politics and religion in the USA during the twentieth-century.
2. To reflect critically on how past events and movements shaped the 2016 presidential election.
3. To analyze how religion has been a vehicle for political change.
4. To analyze how religious beliefs inform political views, and vice versa.

### ASSIGNMENTS

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1. Interviews (x3) = 10% each (30% total)
2. Research Paper (50% total)
3. Research Presentation: (15%)
4. Participation (5%)

### BOOKS TO PURCHASE

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Frank Lambert, *Religion in American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010. SBN: 9780691146133.

Robert P. Jones, *The End of White Christian America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016. ISBN: 978-1501122293

Johnny E. Williams, *African American Religion and the Civil Rights Movement in Arkansas*. Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2003. ISBN 9781578065455

Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*, 2nd edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780231147118.

### SCHEDULE

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## WHITE CHRISTIANS ELECTED DONALD TRUMP: WHY? HOW?

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1/25: Introduction: What is a Protestant? (<http://www.historyguide.org/intellect/lecture5a.html>)

1/27: Lambert, *Religion in American Politics*, Chapter 4.

2/1: Lambert, *Religion in American Politics*, Chapter 7.

2/3: *For God and Country*, Chapter 3.

2/8: "With God on our Side: George W. Bush and the Rise of the Religious Right in America"

2/10: Jones, *End of White Christian America*, Chapter 3

2/15: **Laura Olson**

2/17: Jonathan Merritt, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/08/evangelical-christians-trump-bill-clinton-apology/495224/> + Robert P. Jones, <http://time.com/4577752/donald-trump-transformation-white-evangelicals/?xid=tcoshare>

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## THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, RELIGION, AND BLACK LIVES MATTER

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2/22: Lambert, Chapter 6

**Interview Analysis #1 Due**

2/24: Johnny E. Williams,

3/1: Johnny E. Williams, + Black Panthers, "Vanguard of a Revolution"

3/3: Black Lives Matter Platform + "Stay Woke"

3/8: Berkeley Forum, "Religion and Black Lives Matter" (<https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/forum/religion-and-black-lives-matter>)

3/10: Religion Dispatches: "Religion, Secularism, and Black Lives Matter" (<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2016/09/22/religion-secularism-and-black-lives-matter/>)

3/15: **Spring Break**

3/17: **Spring Break**

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## ISLAM AND THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE BEFORE AND AFTER 9/11

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3/22: Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America*

**Interview Analysis #2 Due**

3/24: Wadsworth

3/29: *One Nation Under Gods* (Chinese Americans)

3/31: Smith, *Islam in America After 9/11*

4/5: Trump, Geller, and Muslim surveillance

**Interview Analysis #3 Due**

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## RESEARCH

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4/7: Library Research Presentation

**Research Topic Due**

4/12: Individual Meetings

4/14: Writing Workshop

**Annotated Bibliography Due**

4/19: Individual Meetings

4/21: Peer Review

**Rough Draft Due**

4/26: Presentations

4/28: Presentations

5/2: Presentations

**\* Final Paper Due: May 4**

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## ATTENDANCE

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You are expected to attend all classes. Attendance is constituted by more than your mere presence in the classroom. Teaching and learning at Skidmore is characterized by close readings of difficult texts and close learning with colleagues. Thus, you cannot participate in our class if you have not properly prepared for it. Attendance is counted when one is physically present, has completed the assigned readings and other tasks for the colloquium, and is ready to discuss, argue, and dialogue with his/her peers and instructor about them. Anything less than this will be considered an absence. If you are not prepared to participate in the discussion, I may ask you to leave.

*If you are absent for any reason, I expect you to notify me. I will take every absence into consideration when it comes to calculating your final grade in the course.*

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## PLAGIARISM:

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All cases of suspected plagiarism will be taken to the Honor Council for official investigation. The consequences for any student found guilty of plagiarism range from suspension to expulsion.

The following summary will help you think about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it:

See: [www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism](http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism):

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### "WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?"

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Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

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## ACCORDING TO THE MERRIAM-WEBSTER ONLINE DICTIONARY, TO "PLAGIARIZE" MEANS

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- to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
- to use (another's production) without crediting the source
- to commit literary theft
- to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

## BUT CAN WORDS AND IDEAS REALLY BE STOLEN?

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According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

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## ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM:

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- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not (see our section on "fair use" rules)
- Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source is usually enough to prevent plagiarism. See our section on [citation](#) for more information on how to cite sources properly."

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## LATE WORK

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Late work will not be accepted without an instructor-approved extension, which will be granted in cases involving documented illness, family emergencies, or other health-related issues.

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## TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Computers, tablets, and cellphones are not allowed in class for personal or academic use. If you have a documented need to use computers for note-taking purposes, please notify me ASAP.