Religions Now

Religion 840:105:01 – 07, and H1

Fall 2017

Lectures M-W 1:40, Livingston Cinema 1

Recitation times and locations are shown on the online schedule of classes
http://sis.rutgers.edu/soc/#courses?subject=840&semester=92017&campus=NB&level=U

Instructors

Professor Tia Kolbaba (lectures and recitation 07)
Office: 140 Loree Hall (Douglass Campus)
E-mail: kolbaba@religion.rutgers.edu
Office hours: Tuesday, 11 a.m. to noon; appointments available at other times—just ask!

Professor Joseph Williams (lectures and recitation H1)
Office: 114 Loree Hall (Douglass Campus)
E-mail: jwwillia@religion.rutgers.edu
Office hours: Monday, 11 – 1:00 and by appointment

Ms. Susan Woolever (recitations 01, 04, 06)
Office: 112 Loree Hall (Douglass Campus)
E-mail: sw854@religion.rutgers.edu
Office hours: Will be announced in recitation.

Dr. Luke Grote (Recitations 2, 3, and 5)
Office: 112 Loree Hall (Douglass Campus)
E-mail: Will be announced in recitation.
Office hours: Will be announced in recitation.
This course fulfills part of the following SAS Core Curriculum Requirements:

21st-Century Challenges (21C)
   a. Analyze the degree to which forms of human difference shape a person’s experiences of and perspectives on the world.
   
   d. Analyze issues of social justice across local and global contexts.

Arts and the Humanities [AH]
   o. Philosophical and theoretical issues. Examine critically philosophical and other theoretical issues concerning the nature of reality, human experience, knowledge, value, and/or cultural production.

Course Objectives:
After taking this course, students should:
   • appreciate the sheer diversity of religious opinions in modern societies, especially as they relate to social justice issues
   • grasp key interconnections between religion and major 21st-century developments
   • understand certain key theoretical approaches involved in the academic study of religion

Assessment
Student progress toward the goals of the course will be measured by a midterm and a final examination, each with a fact-based component and an essay component to measure higher-order thinking skills.

Student progress will also be assessed in weekly recitation sessions. Participation is therefore a crucial component of this course. At the end of this syllabus is a description of the criteria used for judging participation—please read them carefully.

Reading and Other Assignments
There are no books to purchase. All readings for the course will either be online or posted as documents to the Sakai site for the course. Go to sakai.rutgers.edu for details.

BUT you must purchase an iClicker—available at the Barnes & Noble Rutgers bookstore. ISBN: 9781498601641

NOTE: ALL READING ASSIGNMENTS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE CLASS PERIOD FOR WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED.
We will give occasional pop quizzes to assess whether you are doing the reading. More importantly, your exam and participation grades will be better if you have done the reading.

Above all we hope that the readings will deepen your understanding of the issues we are studying, help you get more out of the lectures, and enliven your recitation sections.

**Grading:**
The course will have a midterm and a final exam. Each will be worth 30% of your grade.

The course will have occasional pop quizzes to check whether students are doing the reading. Your scores on these quizzes will constitute 20% of your grade.

Participation both in your recitation and in the iClicker polls during the lectures will count for 20% of your grade. At the end of this syllabus is a description of the criteria used for judging participation—please read it carefully.

**Attendance:**
Students are expected to attend all classes. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to your instructor. **Please note: A record of attendance will be kept throughout the semester. More than 4 missed classes will negatively impact your participation grade (you will lose 10% off your participation grade for each absence above the first four).**
## Calendar of Assignments and Lectures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>READING (and/or video-watching) ASSIGNMENT (to be done before lecture or precept, whichever is earlier)</th>
<th>Lecture subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weds., Sept. 6</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<td><strong>NOTE: Recitation sections will NOT meet this week.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unit 1: Religion and State: A MODERN Wall of Separation</strong></td>
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<td>o Excerpts from John Locke, &quot;A Letter Concerning Toleration.&quot; On Sakai. For the curious, the whole letter is online at <a href="http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm">http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm</a>.</td>
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<td><strong>Unit 2: American Ideas about Separation of Church and State</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Thomas Jefferson, A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, 18 June 1779,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Key Points</td>
<td>Related Resources</td>
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• Pope Paul VI: Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html)  
• Look at and make some notes about what you conclude from the following charts depicting American attitudes toward various sex-and-sexuality questions:  
• [http://www.gallup.com/poll/117328/marriage.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/poll/117328/marriage.aspx) -- don’t worry about the same-sex marriage statistics (yet); we’ll get to that later. Study the charts that answer the questions: "How about sex between an unmarried man and woman?" "How about married men and women having an affair?" "How about divorce?" "How about having a baby outside of marriage?" "Do you approve of marriage between blacks and whites?"  
• [http://www.gallup.com/poll/183413/americans-continue-shift-left-key-moral-issues.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/poll/183413/americans-continue-shift-left-key-moral-issues.aspx)  
• A selection of statements about abortion from various Christian writers. *Pay attention to the chronology of these opinions; we historians always care about chronology:* [http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo_hist.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/abo_hist.htm)  
• An introduction to Islamic rulings about abortion from the Middle Ages to the present [http://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_101_150/abortion.htm](http://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_101_150/abortion.htm) | Abortion in the western religious traditions. Kolbaba |
| Mon., Oct. 9 | • Listen to this podcast (allow about half an hour): a conservative evangelical Christian panel regarding homosexuality (you will hear the liberal Christian interpretation in the lecture): [http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/family-talk/listen/homosexuality-panel-i-419566.html](http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/family-talk/listen/homosexuality-panel-i-419566.html)  

**Unit 4: Religion and Economic Inequality**

o Excerpts from Presbyterian Church USA statement on tax justice. On Sakai.  
o Yasir Qadhi on the Implications of Zakat (start at 18:40): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-Khmtial2ig](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-Khmtial2ig) | Religious approaches to economic justice in the U.S., part 2. Williams |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| Weds., Oct. 18 | o Excerpts from *Laudato Si*. On Sakai.  
| Mon., Oct. 23 | o No reading: Begin studying for the exam.  
  o Precepts will NOT meet this week.                                                                                   | Indirect ways that religion impacts economic inequality. Williams    |
| Weds., Oct. 25 | o Midterm Examination.  
  o Precepts will NOT meet this week.                                                                                   |                                                                      |
|             | **Unit 5: Religious Issues in Today’s News**                                                                            |                                                                      |
  o Read AT LEAST the landing page, including the statistics: How many refugees? How many internally displaced people? And so on.  
  o Read some of the other articles on the site, too—whatever interests you.                                               | Film: "Dalya’s Other Country" |
| Weds., Nov. 1 | o To be determined—please pay attention to updates in class and on Sakai.                                                   | Lecture: to be determined.                                             |
| Mon., Nov. 6 | o To be determined—please pay attention to updates in class and on Sakai.                                                   | Lecture: to be determined.                                             |
|             | **Unit 6: Definitions of Religion and Fundamentalism. Is "Religious Violence" an Oxymoron?**                             |                                                                      |
| Weds., Nov. 8 | o Review Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors*, ch. 1: "The Study of Religion in the Current Political Moment," parts 1-3 (pages 1-8). On Sakai. (You already read this in the first week of class, but please review the points Lincoln makes.)  
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>this is &quot;only&quot; 22 pages, it is DENSE reading. You may need a dictionary for some vocabulary. Please allow yourself plenty of time to read it.</td>
<td>around: fundamentalism Kolbaba</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Watch this video (10:16): <a href="https://youtu.be/w3Y3LeUtqJw">https://youtu.be/w3Y3LeUtqJw</a></td>
<td>Black and white or shades of gray? Kolbaba</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon., Nov. 20</td>
<td>No reading assignment. Happy Thanksgiving!</td>
<td>Another angle: some thoughts on the psychology of religious terrorism. Kolbaba</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Weds., Nov. 22 | NO CLASS: Rutgers follows the Friday schedule of classes.  
<p>|                | Precepts will not be held this week.                                                      |                                                                              |
|                | <strong>Unit 7: Religious Pluralism in the U.S.</strong>                                               |                                                                              |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
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 | | Evangelical opposition to the theory of evolution. Kolbaba |

| Weds., Dec. 13 | No reading assignment.  
 | | Summing up the course. |

| Weds., Dec. 20 | Final Examination, 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. |

Religious pluralism and the rising number of religious “nones.” Williams
Standards for Grading Student Participation in Class Discussions

A:
A student who receives an A for participation in discussion typically comes to every class with questions about the readings in mind. An A discussant engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others, and consistently elevates the level of discussion.

B:
A student who receives a B for participation in discussion typically does not always come to class with questions about the readings in mind. A B discussant waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some discussants in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.

C:
A student who receives a C for participation attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant. S/he may also fail to show respect for the contributions of others, fail to listen carefully to others, or be discourteous in other ways.

D:
A student who fails to attend regularly and prepare adequately for discussion risks the grade of D

Or even F

[These standards are adapted only slightly from those officially adopted by the Princeton University Department of History in 1998. They were authored primarily by Andrew Isenberg (thanks, Drew).]