Society, Politics and State in Comparative Perspective

Course Number
SOC-UA9970003 / POL-UA9994001 / RELST-UA9613001

Instructor Details
Edan Raviv
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Office: 36 Bnei Dan, Room 201; Office hours: by appointment

Class Details
Class meeting times: to be confirmed
Location: to be confirmed

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
Ever since the French Revolution, if not before, some of the best minds in the social sciences have been sure that the primacy of religion in modern society was entering its twilight. This view has only accentuated with the end of the Cold War, the "Third Wave of Democratization," and increasing globalization. In fact, we are still waiting for this twilight to appear; religion continues to shape individual values, social organization, state institutions, and international relations – perhaps more than ever before. As a result, the academic literature has been experiencing a revival of religious studies, but not only as its own field of study within the humanities, rather within the lens of the social sciences as well, whether in comparative politics, international relations, sociology, or even economics.

The central aim of this course is to examine different theoretical approaches, analytical concepts, and empirical manifestations in the interaction between religion, state, and politics. The course is comparative in three ways, and thusly divided: In the first part of the course, we seek to understand how different social science disciplines study religion. The second part of the course presents different interactions between religion and politics, such as the secularization debate, the compatibility between religion and different types of government, and the role of religion in shaping identity and different types of political organization. The third part of the course will apply these different approaches and concepts to the study of "real world" empirical developments, both historical and contemporary, particularly within the Middle East.

This class will be taught in a seminar format. Readings will be assigned from week to week, and students are expected to have read the readings before class. Moreover, as we are fortunate to be in a study away site that is physically located in a country, not to mention region, which provides one of the most fascinating examples of the interplay between religion and politics, it is essential that students keep up with current events – both global and local.

Thus every session will begin with a group discussion on some interesting developments in the news in the preceding week. This will be followed by a short introduction by the instructor that outlines the class structure and main topics.

In order to further facilitate student participation and group discussion, each student will be required to prepare one summary over the course of the semester on the readings for that week. Following the introductory discussion, that student will present to the class his or her understanding of the readings, and this will guide our discussion for the remainder of the class. Students will be asked to select their desired week on the first day of class, thus it is recommended, though not required, to have at least glanced at the class syllabus before the
semester begins. Presentations are not expected to simply summarize the assigned readings but
to respond to one or more of them, either by critiquing an argument or applying it to a certain
case study. The instructor will present the readings of Week 2 as an example.

Students will also be evaluated on two in-class exams. The exams are meant to offer the student
the opportunity to show his or her understanding of class concepts. Exam questions may or may
not be framed in the context of a current event, but what is most important is that class
concepts are clearly related to the question. Technical requirements and scoring guidelines will
be provided at the time the examinations are distributed.

**Desired Outcome**

This course has the following learning goals:

1. To familiarize students with key theoretical approaches and analytical concepts in the
   social sciences regarding the role that religion plays in modern society.

2. To increase students' knowledge on some of the most pressing empirical examples of
   the conflict between religion and politics, particularly in the Middle East.

3. To support the development of students' ability to discuss social science topics from a
   critical yet analytical perspective, and to learn how to evaluate and apply academic
   scholarship to real-world issues.

**Assessment Components**

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

- Reading Summary Assignment 20%
- Midterm Exam 35%
- Final Exam 35%
- Participation 10%

**Assessment Expectations**

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Grading Policy**

If a student believes an inadvertent error was made in the grading of an individual assignment or
in assessing an overall course grade, a request to have the grade re-evaluated may be submitted.
To appeal an assigned final grade, the student should first email the course instructor requesting
clarification about how the grade was determined. If the student is not satisfied with the
outcome of the discussion and wishes to appeal the grade further, a formal written appeal
should be submitted to the site director. This appeal must be submitted within 30 days after the
grade has been posted; appeals that are submitted after this deadline will not be considered.
### Attendance Policy

Study abroad at NYU’s Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed.

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor in writing one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

### Late Submission of Work

Late submissions will not be accepted unless the student receives approval in writing by the instructor.

### Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-and-wellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

### Plagiarism Policy

Students must adhere to NYU’s academic integrity policy while studying away at a global site. NYU defines plagiarism as “presenting others’ work without adequate acknowledgement of its source, as though it were one’s own.” If an instructor suspects you of violating the University’s academic integrity policy, s/he is required to report this to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs.

### Required Text(s)


Additional readings will be available on Classes.

### Supplemental Text(s)

### Internet Research Guidelines

Although it is hard to overestimate the importance of the internet to the accumulation of knowledge, it needs to be used wisely. This means that one must be selective and careful when relating to internet-based sources, identifying and distinguishing opinions from facts, and journalism from academics. Most importantly, one should make clear reference to internet sources, allowing the reader the opportunity to consult these resources as and if required.
Session 1

Introduction: Overview of the Course, Expectations, and Requirements

[Enter date]

Session 2

What is Comparative Social Science?

[Enter date]


Session 3

Approaches: Religion and Sociology

[Enter date]


Session 4

Approaches: Religion and Political Economy

[Enter date]


Session 5

Approaches: Religion and International Relations

[Enter date]


**Session 6**

**Applications: Identity, Social Movements, and Political Parties**


**Session 7**

**Applications: Religion and the State**


**Session 8**

**MIDTERM**

**Session 9**

**When State(s) and Religion(s) Collide: Israel**


State.” *Nations and Nationalism* 8.4: 475-503.


**FIELD TRIP: THE YITZHAK RABIN CENTER**

**Session 10**  
When State(s) and Religion(s) Collide: Israel and the Palestinians  
[Enter date]  
*Terror in the Mind of God.* Ch. 1, 3-4.

**FILM: PARADISE NOW**

**Session 11**  
When State(s) and Religion(s) Collide: Israel and the Palestinians  
[Enter date]  
*Terror in the Mind of God.* Ch. 7-11

**GUEST SPEAKER: THE PARENTS CIRCLE – FAMILIES FORUM (PCFF)**

**Session 12**  
When State(s) and Religion(s) Collide: Israel and the Palestinians  
[Enter date]  
**FIELD TRIP: TERRESTRIAL JERUSALEM / IR AMIM / EMEK SHAVEH**

**Session 13**  
When State(s) and Religion(s) Collide: the Arab Spring  
[Enter date]  


**Session 14**  
Summary Session: The Future of Religion and Politics  
[Enter date]

**Session 15**  
**FINAL EXAM**  
[Enter date]
Edan Raviv is an advanced PhD candidate in political science at Tel Aviv University, and the new Assistant Director for Academic Affairs at New York University’s Tel Aviv academic center. Edan’s doctoral dissertation explores the variation in the electoral support of political nativism in Western Europe, particularly as it is related to the institutional conflict between international integration and national citizenship regimes. Edan’s research interests thus broadly lie in the subfields of political sociology, comparative politics, the new institutionalism, and international relations.

Previously, Edan was the Director of the Business and Environment Department at the Peres Center for Peace, one of Israel’s leading non-governmental organizations that implements projects to strengthen regional cooperation between Israel and its neighbors. After completing his bachelor’s degree (University of California, Santa Barbara) and master’s degree (New York University), he decided to move to Israel in the summer of 2009, where he lives today with his wife and baby daughter.