

NYU Tel Aviv
POL-UA 9994, RELST-UA 9613, SOC-UA 9970
Religion, Politics and State in Comparative
Perspective

Instructor Information

- Dr. Edan Raviv; Mobile: +972-54-2808002; Email: edr248@nyu.edu
- Office Hours: by appointment

Course Information

- POL-UA 9994, RELST-UA 9613, SOC-UA 9970
- Religion, Politics and State in Comparative Perspective
- Since the Enlightenment, some of the most heralded intellectuals have been sure that the primacy of religion in modern society was on the cusp of irrelevance. This view has only been accentuated with the end of the Cold War, the “Third Wave of Democratization,” and globalization. However, we are still waiting for this prediction to materialize: religion continues to shape individual values, social organizations, state institutions and international relations – perhaps more so than ever before. As a result, the academic literature has been experiencing a revival of the study of religion within the lens of the social sciences. This seminar examines different theoretical approaches, analytical concepts, and empirical manifestations in the interaction between religion, state and politics. The first part seeks out definitions of the three conceptual pieces in the course title – religion, state, and politics. The second part presents a variety of interactions among the three, such as the compatibility between religion and different forms of government; nationalism; extremism; and more. This is established throughout the course through guest lectures, co-curricular trips, and careful study of empirical developments around the world, particularly in Israel, the Middle East, and the United States.
- Prerequisites: None
- Mondays, 1:15-4:15pm
- NYUTA Academic Center, 17 Brandeis Street, Room 104

Course Overview and Goals

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- Increase familiarity with social science theories, concepts, and methods in the study of religion and politics.
- Learn to apply and critique concepts to a wide variety of political and religious

systems, and interpret the nuances that exist between the heterogeneity of such case studies.

- Develop the ability to discuss historical and contemporary political events and trends from a critical and analytical perspective.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive on time. Students must complete all assigned readings before the class meeting and be prepared to participate actively in discussions of the readings and current events.

Weekly Study Questions

Each week, a set of study questions pertaining to that week's readings are posed. These questions are designed to assist students with the weekly reading assignments. Students are required to submit short answers to these questions 8-10 times throughout the semester.

Final Paper

In the final paper the students are required to write an original research paper on a question that is related to the course main theme, the Israeli-Palestinians conflict. The students may choose one of the topics and questions that were covered during the course or new ones. The students should demonstrate their ability to analyze an original research question, utilize academic sources (including media, surveys and any other primary and secondary materials) to substantiate their arguments and findings. Students should use extra readings in addition to those in the syllabus. It is important that students make critical discussion and bring their own voices and conclusions to their paper. Students should coordinate and discuss their research subjects with Amara and Shilon and can ask for their advice at any point during the course.

Length: 8 double-spaced pages (including footnotes); times new roman; font 12.

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class Participation	20%
Weekly Preparation Essays	30%
Final Paper	50%

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

Letter Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percent
A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D+	67-69%
D	65-66%
F	below 65%

Course Schedule

Topics and Assignments

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Feb. 6			
Feb. 11			
Feb. 18			

Week/Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
Feb. 25			
Mar. 4			
Mar. 11			
Mar. 25			
Apr. 5 (Fri.)			
Apr. 8			
Apr. 15			
Apr. 29			
May 6			
May 13			
May 20			

Course Materials

Required Textbooks & Materials

All readings are available on NYU Classes

Optional Textbooks & Materials

N/A

Resources

- **Access your course materials:** [NYU Classes](https://nyu.edu/its/classes)(nyu.edu/its/classes)
- **Databases, journal articles, and more:** [Bobst Library](https://library.nyu.edu) (library.nyu.edu)
- **Assistance with strengthening your writing:** [NYU Writing Center](https://nyu.mywconline.com) (nyu.mywconline.com)
- **Obtain 24/7 technology assistance:**[IT Help Desk](https://nyu.edu/it/servicedesk) (nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness

Study abroad at 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 at the centers is mandatory, and **unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade**. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

All medical-based absence requests **MUST** be presented to the Manager of Student Life and Housing (MSLH). In the case of illness, contact the MSLH within seven (7) days of the absence or as soon as practicable and provide medical documentation. Non-medical requests should be made to the Assistant Director for Academics (AD/Academics) and in advance of the intended absence. Your instructors will be informed of any excused absence; they are not authorized to approve your absence, and they are required to report any absence to the AD/Academics.

NYU Policy on Religious Holidays

- Students who anticipate being absent because of any religious observance should, whenever possible, notify faculty and the AD/Academics in advance of such anticipated absence.
- Whenever feasible, examinations and assignment deadlines should not be scheduled on religious holidays. Any student absent from class because of his/her religious beliefs shall not be penalized for any class, examination, or assignment deadline missed on that day or days. In the event that examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on a religious holiday, any student who is unable to attend class shall be permitted the opportunity to make up any examination or to extend any assignment deadline missed on that day or days.
- No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to any student who avails him/ herself of the provisions of the resolution.
- A violation of these policies and principles shall permit any aggrieved student to bring forward a grievance, provided under the University Grievance Procedure.

Late Assignments

All works must be submitted on time unless you have received an explicit extension. Any late submission may result in grade deduction at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Plagiarism constitutes an academic offence for which you can be disciplined. Punishment may include a failing grade, suspension or expulsion. In all confirmed cases, a report will be sent to the student's Dean at NYU or, in the case of a non-NYU student, to the home institution.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further

information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio

Dr. Ahmad Amara is a graduate of the joint PhD program in History and Hebrew and Judaic studies at New York University. Amara's research focuses on questions of law, history, and geography, including the changing property relations under the Ottoman land reform in the Beersheba sub-district, waqf and endowed properties in Jerusalem. Dr. Amara is also a human rights advocate and holds an LLB and LLM from Tel-Aviv University and a second master's degree in international human rights law from Essex University in the United Kingdom. He has a number of articles, a book and an edited volume.

Dr. Avi Shilon is a historian and political scientist. He was Post-Doctoral fellow at New York University, The Taub Center for Israel Studies, and at Tsinghua University, Beijing (2015-2017). His dissertation focused on *The Revisionist Movement Leaders' Attitudes Toward Jewish religion, 1925-2005*. His first book, "Menachem Begin: A Life", was published by Yale University press on 2012. His second book, "Ben Gurion: His Later Years in the Political Wilderness", which explores the founding father's world-view after his retirement, had been published by Rowman & Littlefield on 2016. Dr. Shilon also writes op-ed columns for *Haaretz*.