

Fall 2019

PSCI 4724: Senior Seminar in Political Theory

Secularity Reconsidered

T 5:30pm-8:20pm, Major Williams Hall 334

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Office hours: TR 2:00-3:00pm and by appointment

Course Description: Jürgen Habermas's suggestion that we live no longer in secular age, but have entered a post-secular age, has stimulated an intellectual debate, both within Western political theory and well beyond the West. The seminar explores the rather contested meaning of the terminology of the secular, secularization, secularism, and secularity; it analyzes Habermas concept of the post-secular and its responses from Western and non-Western intellectual and cultural contexts. The seminar explores whether secularism is a truly Western concepts that has no representations in cultures outside the Western world or whether it may be possible to identify similar or related concepts of secularity outside the West. The course also invites to rethink the relationship between the secular and the religious. Do we need, for instance, a different representation of the religious in the public sphere?

Student Responsibilities and Course Requirements:

Course Requirements

Essay	10%
Research paper	40%
Weekly Responses	20%
Presentation	10%
Participation	20%

Essay: Each student is expected to complete one approximately 5-7 pages essay. The short essay is designed to allow for an early exploration of the research paper's topic. Particular attention should be given to formal criteria of essay writing such as a well-defined research question, the argument's consistency, introduction, and conclusion. The essay is due in class on October 15 (hardcopy) and is meant as a tool to internalize requirements of a research essay and eventually to help you getting started on the research paper. The essay should build on the readings we have discussed during the first six weeks of class.

Research Paper: Students who are enrolled in the seminar will write an 18-20 page research paper (40%). The deadline is December 14, 9pm. Please deliver an electronic copy through Canvas. Students are free to write on any topic related to the course but the paper must relate directly to the themes of the seminar and address. The final essay needs to have a clearly defines research question; documentation must be consistent and in accordance with academic standards. The research paper can build on the previous essay.

Weekly Responses: Students are expected to write critical responses of one page maximum (double-spaced, typed) on the assigned readings. The critical responses are meant to foster discussion of the texts. Do not summarize. Rather, problematize an aspect of the reading you like to explore further, you find particularly interesting (explain why), or you object to (explain why). The weekly responses are due in class as hardcopy. Summaries without any critical reflection are at best B work.

Presentation: During the course of the semester, students are expected to make one presentation (10%). This presentation should be a critical engagement (NOT simply a summary although some summary of the main arguments will be required) with one of the core readings. The presentation should last about 10 minutes. The presenter is advised to distribute a handout that could also be a collection of controversial quotations taken from the reading. The presenter will be responsible for initiating and moderating a class discussion for about 20 minutes.

Participation: Students are expected to be current with the reading assignments (readings not in the required textbooks are available on Canvas under Files). The course is designed as a seminar. There will be no formal lectures, but rather the primary classroom work will be discussion of the assigned reading for the week. The professor will facilitate and direct discussion, and sometimes offer relevant background or conceptual information. Each student will be expected to contribute on a weekly basis to the debate and interchange within the class. Participation will be graded on the level, quality, and frequency of participation.

Further student responsibilities: Many of the ideas that we will discuss can be politically volatile. Please keep an open mind and maintain a tolerant attitude toward the philosophical materials being read as well as those individuals who might express ideas in class that differ from your own. This is part of the educational process.

All students are required to attend classes regularly, to be prepared for class discussion, and to participate actively in our class discussions. Every kind of entertainment, which is not related to the class, is not accepted – please refrain from using iPods/Pads, MP3 players, laptop computers, etc. Mobile phones must be switched off during class.

The Virginia Tech Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work, unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor System. Any suspected violations of the Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Honor System. Honesty in your academic work will develop into professional integrity. The faculty and students of Virginia Tech will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty.

A note on email communication: During the week, one can expect to receive a response to an email inquiry within 24 hours; however, it might take longer over the weekend. A number of issues, particular those involving confidential or sensitive information, might be better discussed during office hours or by appointment than by email. For legal reasons, I cannot discuss any grades related issues via email. For excused absences, provide the necessary documentation (documented medical excuse or a note from the Dean of Students Office).

If you need adaptation or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in the case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

“As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code.

For additional information about the Honor Code, please visit: <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

Honor Code Pledge for Assignments: The Virginia Tech honor code pledge for assignments is as follows:

“I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

The pledge is to be written out on all graded assignments at the university and signed by the student. The honor pledge represents both an expression of the student’s support of the honor All Undergraduate course syllabi shall contain a section that states and refers the student to the Honor Code Procedures on the University website. The minimum required statement is listed below. Additional information about the expectation of academic integrity in a particular course may be appropriate.

1. All assignments submitted shall be considered “graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.
2. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute academic misconduct: cheating, plagiarism, falsification, fabrication, multiple submissions, complicity, violation of university, college, departmental, program, course, or faculty rules. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct. Clarification is provided for each definition with some examples of prohibited behaviors in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual located at <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

Key Readings:

- Burchardt, Marian, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, ed. *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Calhoun, Craig, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, ed. *Rethinking Secularism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Mendieta, Eduardo and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, ed. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Rectenwald, Michael, Rochelle Almeida, and George Levine, ed. *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.
- Roy, Olivier. *Secularism Confronts Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

The readings for the course, as listed below in the course schedule, may be subject to change.

Course Schedule:

Aug 27: Introduction to the course

Readings: No readings.

Sept 3: Secularity, the Secular, Secularization, Secularism

Readings: Kent Greenawalt, “Secularism, Religion, and Liberal Democracy in the United States,” *Cardozo Law Review* 30, no. 6 (2009): 2383-2400. – José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularization, Secularism.” In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 54-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sept 10: Habermas and the “Post-secular Age”

Reading: Jürgen Habermas, “Religion in the Public Sphere.” *European Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2006): 1-25. Jürgen Habermas, “‘The Political’: The Rational Meaning of a Questionable Inheritance of Political Theology.” In *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, edited by Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 15-33. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. – Craig Calhoun, “Secularism, Citizenship, and the Public Sphere”. In *Rethinking*

Secularism, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 75-91. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sept 17: Class does not meet (conference)

Sept 24: Secularism/post-secular Debate

Readings: Charles Taylor, "Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism." In *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, edited by Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 34-59. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011. – Charles Taylor, "Western Secularity." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 31-51. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. – Judith Butler, "Is Judaism Zionism?" In *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, edited by Eduardo Mendieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 70-91. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

Oct 1: Multiple Secularism and Post-Secular Fundamentalism

Readings: Alfred Stepan, "Multiple Secularisms of Modern Democracies and Non-Democratic Regimes." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 114-144. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. – R. Scott Appleby, "Rethinking Fundamentalism in a Secular Age." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 225-247. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Oct 8: Secularism and Anti-Secularism in the US

Readings: George Levine, "The Troubles of An Unrepresented Secularist." In *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, edited by Michael Rectenwald, Rochelle Almeida, and George Levine, 138-151. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. — Charles Louis Richter, "A Deeply Held Religious Faith, and I Don't Care What It Is: American Anti-Atheism as Nativism." In *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, edited by Michael Rectenwald, Rochelle Almeida, and George Levine, 295-309. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. – James McBride, "The Myth of Secularism in America," In *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, edited by Michael Rectenwald, Rochelle Almeida, and George Levine, 311-328. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Oct 15: The Secular in the Arab World (Essay due in class)

Readings: Daniel Kinitz, "Deviance as a Phenomenon of Secularity and Deviants in Twentieth-century Egypt—A Search for Sociological Explanations." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 97-120. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. – Gudrun Krämer, "Secularity Contested: Religion, Identity and the Public Order in the Arab Middle East." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 121-137. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Oct 22: Islam and Secularism I

Reading: Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 1-65.

Oct 29: Islam and Secularism II

Reading: Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007, 65-115.

Nov 5: South Asian Post-Secularity?

Readings: Rajeev Bhargava, "We (In India) Have Always Been Post-Secular. In *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, edited by Michael Rectenwald, Rochelle Almeida, and George

Levine, 109-135. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. – Rina Verman Williams and Laura Dudley Jenkins, "Secular Anxieties and Transnational Engagements in India." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 19-37. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Nov 12: From India to East Asia

Readings: Beatrice Renzi, "Anti-cast Radicalism, Dalit Movements and the Many Critiques of Secular Nationalism in India," In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 63-92. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. Richard Madsen, "Secularism, Religious Change, and Social Conflict in Asia." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 249-269. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Peter van der Veer, "Smashed Temples, Burned Books: Comparing Secularist Projects in India and China." In *Rethinking Secularism*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 270-281. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Nov 19: (South) African Post-Secularity?

Readings: Paul S. Landau, "Moments of Insurgency: Christianity in South African Politics, from the 18th Century to Today." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 189-214. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. – Rijk van Dijk, "After Pentecostalism? Exploring Intellectualism, Secularization and Guiding Sentiments in Africa." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 216-238. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Nov 26: Thanksgiving Break

Dec 3: Post Eastern Block Secularity

Readings: Alexander Agadjanian, "Vulnerable Post-Soviet Secularities: Patterns and Dynamics in Russia and Beyond." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 242-260. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. – Klaus Buchenau, "Socialist Secularities: The Diversity of a Universalist Model." In *Multiple Secularities Beyond the West: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age*, edited by Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell, 261-282. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015.

Dec 10: Summary

Readings: No readings; we will summarize the course's findings and discuss the research paper projects.

Dec 14, 9pm: Research Paper due