

## **Course Syllabus** ***Religion & Political Conflict***

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The course first explores theoretical discourses on political legitimacy more generally. Second, it discusses the relationship between religion and legitimacy with a particular emphasis on potential (violent) conflicts. The section considers both discourses within pluralist democracies and discourses outside the “Western” liberal realm. Third, it takes a critical look at dominant discourses on a special form of violence (terrorism) that is frequently associated, at least in public discourse, with “Islamic terrorism.” Finally, the course explores selected cases in which the theoretical foundations laid out previously will be applied. Special attention will be given to the selected cases root causes: Is religion the main cause for the conflict? Are other causes like injustice, exclusion, or oppression the conflict’s root causes that are expressed in religious language? Or can we identify a mix of several causes (religion may be among them) that have caused (violent) conflict or are used to legitimize it? How does our interpretation of a conflict influences options for conflict resolution?

The course aims at students with a primer interest in political theory and at students with an interest in Peace and Conflict Studies, Security Studies, or International Politics/International Relations who are interested in adding some theoretical foundations to their empirical studies.

### **Course Requirements**

“No shows are anathema in academia. The entire enterprise depends on people showing up!” (D.W. Moran). All students enrolled in the course are expected to be current with the readings and to contribute to classroom discussion. Students who take the course for up to three (3) credits have the option either to give a presentation or to write a research paper (Hausarbeit). Students who take the course for up to six (6) credits are expected to give a presentation and to write a final research paper (Hausarbeit). Students who take the course for a certificate of participation (Teilnahmenschein) are expected to take actively part in course discussion based on the core readings.

*Active Participation:* It goes without saying that a seminar is not a lecture course; thus, the success of the seminar does not only depend on the instructor, but also on students’ critical contributions. While controversial contributions and discussions are appreciated, students are expected to maintain a certain level of civility.

*Presentation:* Presentations should aim at fostering discussion. Presenters are expected to prepare a handout (*Thesepapier*) that outlines the presentation’s main topic and some questions (three is a good number) for further discussion. Presentations should not exceed 20 minutes; the presenter is expected to lead the discussion for approximately another 10-15 minutes, ideally based on the prepared questions for further discussion. While presentations should focus on at least one of the core readings, students are encouraged to engage with related scholarly literature not listed in the syllabus. A good way to start is to consult the core readings’ references. In case the reading is a chapter from a larger work, it is advisable to consult the entire book or to search around the more general theme. Students who will also write a research paper (Hausarbeit) may team-up with one of their fellow students.

*Research Paper (Hausarbeit):* Students are free to write on any topic related to the course's topic; however, students are encouraged to discuss potential research paper topics with the instructor. Ideally, the research paper builds on the presentation, although it is not mandatory. It is expected that the research paper has a well-defined research question (think about it as a short sentence that ends with a question mark); research papers should have a consistent argument. You may use whatever citation-style they prefer—assuming that it is consistent. Students enrolled for six (6) credits are expected, in addition to their presentation, to write a research paper of about 20 pages—double spaced, including the cover page, the list of content, which you may omit, and the list of references. Students who are enrolled for three (3) credits and do not give a presentation are expected to write a research paper of about 15 page—double spaced, including the cover page, the list of content, which you may omit, and the list of references.

**For easy reference during class discussion, students are encouraged to print the readings and are expected to bring the readings to class.**

*Like any liberty, religious freedoms force those in power to protect the rights of minorities, even when the majority does not agree. Enforcing this liberty comes with a price, but the price of denying the freedom may be far higher (Grim & Finke 2011, 213).*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Introduction to the Course

#### Legitimacy, Rights, Minorities—Some Classics

Required readings: Hennis, W. (2009). Legitimacy: On a Category of Civil Society. In W. Hennis, *Politics as Practical Science* (pp. 77-120) trans. Keith Tribe, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Dworkin, R. (1977). *Taking Rights Seriously*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, chap. 7. Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, chap. 6.

#### Legitimacy & Religion

Required readings: Backer, L.C. (2009). Theocratic Constitutionalism: An Introduction to a New Global Legal Ordering. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 16 (1), 85-172. Nazeer Ka Ka Khel, M. (1980). Legitimacy of Authority in Islam. *Islamic Studies*, 19 (3), 167-182. Masoud, T.E. (1999). The Arabs and Islam: The Troubled Search for Legitimacy. *Daedalus*, 128 (2), 127-145.

#### The Religious State and Political Conflict

Required readings: Grim, B.J., & Finke, R. (2011). *The Price of Freedom Denied: Religious Persecution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, chap. 1-3. Kippenberg, H.G. (2011). *Violence as Worship: Religious Wars in the Age of Globalization*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, chap. 1-2.

#### Religion and Structural Violence

Required readings: Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (3), 167-191. Beyer, C. (2008). *Violent Globalisms: Conflict in Response to Empire*. Aldershot: Ashgate, chap. 4.

#### Ethnic Violence versus Religious Violence

Required reading: Oberschall, A. (2007). *Conflict and Peace Building in Divided Societies: Responses to Ethnic Violence*. London: Routledge, chap. 1.

### **Globalized Conflicts**

Required readings: Held, D. (2010). *Cosmopolitanism: Ideals and Realities*. Cambridge: Polity, chap. 4. Cook, D. (2005). *Understanding Jihad*. Berkeley: University of California Press, chap. 6.

### **Has Terrorism anything to do with Religion?**

Required readings: Jackson, R. (2007). The Core Commitments of Critical Terrorism Studies. *European Political Science*, 6, 244–251. Barber, B.R. (2003). The War of All against All: Terror and the Politics of Fear. In V.V. Gehring (Ed.), *War After September 11* (pp. 75-91), Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. Waldron, J. (2010). *Torture, Terror, and Trade-Offs: Philosophy for the White House*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, chap. 3. Mueller, J., & Stewart, M.G. (2012). The Terrorism Delusion: America's Overwrought Response to September 11. *International Security*, 37 (1), 81-110.

### **Beyond Islam: Hindu Religious-National Identity and Conflict**

Required readings: Pirbhai, M. (2008). Demons in Hindutva: Writing a Theology for Hindu Nationalism. *Modern Intellectual History*, 5 (1), 27–53. Corbridge, S., Kalra, N., & Tatsumi, K. (2012). Understanding Hindu-Muslim Violence in Post-Partition India. *Pacific Affairs*, 85 (2), 287-311. Mukherjee, K. (2013). Is Hindu Nationalism a Threat to Religious Minorities in Eastern India? *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 102 (5), 445–457. Anand, D. (2005). The Violence of Security: Hindu Nationalism and the Politics of Representing 'the Muslim' as a Danger. *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*, 94 (379), 203 – 215.

### **Summary and Concluding Discussion**

No reading.