

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies

CURE 4158 Religion and Politics
宗教與政治

Wednesdays 2:30–5:15, LHC_G06

Instructor: Dr. GUO Ting

Email: tingguo@cuhk.edu.hk

Office: KKB 213

Office hours: tbc

Course TA: tbc

Course Description

This course surveys major topics in the religious studies approach to religion and global politics. The first objective of the course is to familiarise students with the existing theoretical literature and empirical research. The second objective to evaluate recent research on the role of religious actors, institutions, and ideologies in policymaking, state-building, democratic politics, social movements, and other political processes.

本課程調查宗教研究方法中宗教和全球政治的主要主題。本課程的首要目標是讓學生熟悉現有的理論文獻和田野式研究。第二個目標是評估最近關於宗教行為者、機構和意識形態在政策制定、國家建設、民主政治、社會運動和其他政治進程中的作用的研究。

Course Syllabus

Week 1 Intro 4/9

What's religion? What's politics? What's global politics got to do with religion?

Week 2 Rethinking and Unlearning Religion 11/9

Wilson, Erin K. *Religion and World Politics: Connecting Theory with Practice*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2023.

- Chpt 1 Unlearning Religion as (We Think) We Know It
- Chpt 2 Relearning Religion Connecting Theory with Practice

Week 3 Against “Clash of Civilisations” 25/9

Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1993.

Edward W. Said, “The Clash of Ignorance,” *The Nation*, October 22, 2001.

Guo, Ting. 2024. “Saba Mahmood: 伊斯蘭，信仰，她者的自由”，*Initium Media* 端傳媒

<https://theinitium.com/article/20240711-opinion-her-country-saba-mahmood-freedom>

Further reading:

Saba Mahmood, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*, 2015. Intro.

Najla Said, *Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family*. Riverhead Books, Riverhead Books.

Guo, Ting. 2022. 專訪伊朗裔女性學者：不止於頭巾、不止於女性，我們對抗的是政權本身，*Initium Media* 端傳媒

<https://theinitium.com/article/20221226-opinion-international-iran-revolution>.

Week 4 Religion and Democracy 2/10

Elshtain, Jean Bethke. 2009. "Religion and Democracy." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 5–17.

Michael J. Altman and Jerome Copulsky, 2021, Introduction: A Religious, Yet Religiously Incoherent Event: <https://uncivilreligion.org/>

Guo, Ting. "Meiguo de zongjiao yu zhengzhi yu huaren jidujiao baoshouzhuyi." 美國的宗教與政治與華人基督教保守主義 (Religion and Politics in the US and Sinophone Christian Conservatism). *Reflexion* 思想, no. 42 (2021): 243–250.

Further reading:

Mahmood, Saba. 2011. Epilogue, in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Week 5 Religion and Democratisation 9/10

Kuo, Cheng-tian 郭承天, "Introduction." *Religion and Democracy in Taiwan*, 1–14. New York: SUNY, 2009.

Kim, Young Jae, "Unsung Religious Politics after Korea's Democratization: Analysis of Empirical Evidence." *Asian Survey* 57(6): 1159–1179, 2017.

Week 6 Religion and Nationalism 16/10

Andrew L Whitehead, Samuel L. Perry, and Joseph O. Baker, "Make American Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election," *Sociology of Religion*, May 2018.

<https://uncivilreligion.org/home/part-i-christian-nationalism-on-january-6>

Zhang, Chenchen. 2023. "Postcolonial nationalism and the global right." *Geoforum*.

Week 7 Religion, Social Engagement, and Political Activism 23/10

Ziad W. Munson, *The Making of Pro-Life Activists*. Chicago UP, 2009. Intro.

Week 8 Midterm Survey 30/10

Week 9 Religion and Social Movements 6/11

Christian Smith (ed.), *Disruptive Religion: The Force of Faith in Social Movement Activism*, Routledge 1996. Intro.

Frydenlund, Iselin et al. "Religious Responses to the Military Coup in Myanmar." *The review of faith & international affairs* 19.3 (2021): 77–88.

Edoardo Siani, Co-opting the stars: Divination and the politics of resistance in Buddhist Thailand, *Journal of Southeast Asia Studies*, 2023.

Film clip: *Letter to San Zaw Htway*, 2021.

Week 10 Religion and Identity in East Asia 13/11

Rausch, Franklin. 2014. "Violence against Catholics in East Asia: Japan, China, and Korea from the Late Sixteenth Century to the Early Twentieth Century." *Oxford Handbook Online*.

Deuchler, Martina. "Elitism and Ideology", in *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology*. Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992.

末本文美士, 《日本思想史》, 王頌, 杜敬婷譯。北京大學出版社, 2022.

- 葛兆光, 導言, 王權與神佛: 日本思想史的兩極

- 第一章, 如何把握日本思想史

Further reading:

李孟衡評《海東五百年》 | 李氏朝鮮與韓國式的儒教化,

https://m.thepaper.cn/quickApp_jump.jsp?contid=13641310

Week 11 Religion and Politics in Hong Kong 20/11

Guo, Ting and Justin Tse (eds.), special forum on religion and social movements in Hong Kong, *Journal of Asian Studies*, https://read.dukeupress.edu/journal-of-asian-studies/search-results?fl_TocHeadingTitle=Religion+and+Social+Movements+in+Hong+Kong.
 Guo, Ting. 2023. “Beyond Sing Hallelujah to the Lord: Diffused Religion and Religious Co-Optations through Hong Kong.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfad006>.

Week 12 guest lecture 27/11

Prof. Lawrence Lau, NCCU 台灣國立政治大學
 劉宇光, 《僧鬘與僧兵：佛教、社會及政治的互塑》，2020.導論。

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on honesty in academic work submitted by students, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating and plagiarism. Any related offence will lead to disciplinary action including termination of studies at the University. All student assignments in undergraduate and postgraduate programs should be submitted via VeriGuide: <https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/>.

Learning outcomes

After completing this course, students should:

1. Develop a nuanced understanding of the religious role in the modern world;
2. Identify main ways in which religious communities and political institutions interact;
3. Develop an understanding of the diversity of religious organisations and experiences across the globe;
4. Identify various concepts of secularism and the primary criticisms secularisation theory faces;
5. Distinguish religion as a system of belief, a formal institution, an element of group identity, a part of civil society, a diffused everyday practice, and an actor at the local, national, and international level;
6. Develop stronger written and verbal communication skills and critical thinking skills

Assessment method

Type of Assessment	Weighting	CILOs to be addressed	Description of Assessment Tasks
Attendance and Engagement	10%	1, 6	To acquire skills of analysis applicable to other academic studies and in everyday life and gain confidence through classroom discussions and presentations.
Midterm survey	20%	1,2,3,4,5,6	To assess if students are able to understand critical issues discussed in class thus far and analyze the required and suggested texts.
Presentation	70%	1,2,3,4,5,6	To encourage the students to apply theories discussed in class to real-world politics and present their ideas and viewpoints in the presentation.

Attendance and engagement: 10%

Some examples of how your participation performance will be evaluated in the class, e.g. Class Discussion, Feedback to the Class Presentation etc) in lectures

Midterm survey 20%

In-class, open-book survey questions related to discussions in class.

Presentation: 70%

- Starting week 4, 2~4 students will take present in a group in tutorials (depending on class size and weekly readings, and the presentation time as well)
- In your presentation, introduce the following aspects of your reading:
- Author, publisher, date, journal
- Key points
- Terminologies
- Key sentences that you consider important
- Interesting examples/ case studies
- Questions and/or how you connect this reading with real-world events
- We will decide the presentation order in Week 3
- Students may present in either English or Chinese

Grade Descriptor:

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Further readings

Erin K. Wilson, *Religion and World Politics: Connecting Theory with Practice*. Routledge, 2023.