

Religion in a Secular World

Syllabus

Fall 2019

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Course description

This is an elective, 4 credits, 152 hours course will draw upon the variety of materials from Europe, post-Soviet Eurasia, Middle East, the Americas, and the Southeast Asia, and explore the vicissitudes of religion, and even more broadly, of the sacred, in today's world which is supposedly secular and still increasingly "disenchanted." The course will cover the basic ideas of the process of secularization that started, admittedly, since the 16th century, and still continues. We will follow the story of how the distinction between "secular" and "religious" has been constructed in the modern times and the Enlightenment, and how the boundaries between the two have been moving. However, we will also deal with the criticism of secularization paradigm based upon the positions of current postmodern and postcolonial approaches, as well as upon new evidences from across the world that support the ideas of "de-secularization" or "post-secularism." What is going on, in fact, is not a linear development but a variety of simultaneous processes of constant redefining, reconstructing, and reformatting of the sacred, in its connection with culture, knowledge, power, and violence. These processes engage traditional religious actors, new spiritual entrepreneurs, and political players.

The special focus of the course will be the post-Soviet space, including Russia, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and some areas. The multiple processes in these areas will be placed within a general theoretical framework.

The students are supposed to prepare one oral presentation, one book/article review and one term essay.

Learning Objectives

The main learning objectives are:

- ✓ students acquire knowledge of major approaches in the studies of religion in the modern time, from various disciplinary perspectives, such as history, anthropology, sociology, political science, or cultural studies;
- ✓ students learn to use currently recognized tools and methods in the social scientific study of religion;
- ✓ students are supposed to search and read relevant academic texts in the English language and be able to make their reviews, summaries, and oral presentations.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the class, students will develop the following competences

Universal competences and skills:

- ✓ Understanding complexity of social interactions;
- ✓ Searching and analyzing primary sources such as mass media, analytical reporting, qualitative narratives, quantitative and statistical data;
- ✓ Critically analyze particular cases in connection with theory

Special competences and skills:

- ✓ Basic knowledge of the theories of secularization and de-secularization; understanding the content and functions of the sacred in today's societies;
- ✓ Understanding the history of the term "secularity" and its applicability to modern and today's societies;
- ✓ Knowledge of differences between various national and cultural perceptions of the secular/religion divide, and its applications to various current cases;
- ✓ The ability to distinguish academic analytical understanding of religion from political uses of religion in various countries;
- ✓ The knowledge about the religious processes in the area of the former Soviet space, in comparison with other world regions.

Class schedule:

Lecture 1. Introduction. Religion in the modern world. The genealogy of the secular and the modern representation of "religion."

Lecture 2. The classic theories of secularization. The process of secularization. The critique of the classic paradigm. The ideas of de-secularization and post-secularism.

Lecture 3. Dimensions of secularity in the West. Religion's transformations in the West. History of ideas.

Seminar 1. Discussing assigned texts.

Lecture 4. Dimensions of secularity in the West. Science, arts, economics, nation-state, everyday life.

Seminar 2. Discussing assigned texts.

Lecture 5. Dimensions of secularism: Secular state and law. Various forms of secular state.

Seminar 3. Discussing texts on secular state and political culture in the west.

Seminar 4. Oral presentations – 1

Seminar 5. Oral presentations – 2.

Lecture 6. Religion and secularity beyond the West.

Seminar 6. Discussing texts on non-western cases - 1

Seminar 7. Discussing texts on non-western cases – 2

Lecture 7. Religion and secularism in Russia and post-Soviet Eurasia.

Seminar 8. Discussing texts on religion and secularism in post-Soviet Eurasia.

Lecture 8. Overview of the course.

Assignments and criteria of evaluation:

Oral presentation: Presenting (about 15 minutes) a case illustrating the functions of religion in today's society. The case can be taken from any country or any section of society or culture: state institutions, law, arts, education, business, everyday life, philosophic discourse, etc. The presentation may be linked to the final written essay, being a preliminary mapping of the case under study: its main historical background, overview of sources and methods, and a hypothesis to be further explored in the written essay. The criteria of assessment include ability of presenting and interpreting data: clarity, logic, responsiveness (when questioned).

Book/article review: Reviewing an academic text from the list of optional literature or a relevant text found elsewhere. The review (about 1000 words) delivers the main ideas of the text, showing the author's evidences and arguments, and adding possible criticism and/or making relevant discussion of how the text may be connected to the overall material of the course. (Comment: successful review of an article can give up to 20 pts; of a book, up to 30 pts). The criteria of assessment are clarity of writing style, thorough documentation/reference style, creating logical structure of the review.

Written essay: The final (term) essay (about 2000 words) is the continuation of the oral presentation. It may include elements of the presentation but add more analysis of the empirical evidences/texts/events under study and with an attempt of conceptualizing the case using the knowledge acquired during the class. The criteria of assessment are clarity of writing style, thorough documentation/reference style, creating logical structure of the essay.

Grading:

As a maximum, each students gets 100 points, including:

Class participation: 20 points

Oral presentation: 20 points

Book/article review: 30 points (see comment in the assignment description).

Written term essay: 30 points

Literature: required

Habermas J. Faith and Knowledge: an Opening. Speech while accepting the Peace Price of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association, Paulskirche, Frankfurt, 14 October 2001

Taylor Ch. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007

Журнал «Государство, религия, церковь в России и за рубежом», №2 (2012), целиком посвященный секуляризму.

Журнал «Логос», №3 (2011), посвященный постсекулярной философии

Literature: optional

The Secular

Appleby, John. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*. Notre Dame University Press, 1999

Asad T., *Formations of the Secular. Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford U Press, 2003

Berger P., *The Sacred Canopy*. Anchor Books, 1990 (1967)

Burchardt, Wohlrab-Sahr, Middell, ed. *Multiple secularities beyond the West*. De Gruyter, 2015

Cady L., E. Hurd, eds. *Comparative Secularism in a Global Age*, New York: Pgrave. McMillan, 2010

Calhoun C., Jurgensmeyer M., VanAntwerpen J., ed. *Rethinking Secularism*. Oxford, 2011

Casanova J. *Rethinking Secularization: a Global Comparative Perspective* // Hedgehog Review. 2006. Vol. 8(1-2). P. 7-22.

Delacoura, Catarina. *The Secular in non-Western Societies*. TIF.

Cox, Harvey. *The Secular City*. 1965

Eggert M., Holscher L., *Religion and Secularity. Transformations and Transfers of Religious Discourses in Europe and Asia*. Brill, 2013.

Engelstein L.. Holy Russia and Modern Yimes. *Past and Present*, 73 (nov. 2001)

Febvres, L., *Le probleme de l'incroyance au 16me sciecles. La religion de Rabelais*. Paris, 1969

Gorski Ph., Kim D., VanAntwerpen J., ed. *The Post-Secular in Question. Religion in Contemporary society*. New York u. Press, 2012.

Hanegraaff W. *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*. Leiden, NY: Brill, 1996

Kleine Ch., *Religion and the Secular in Premodern Japan from the Viewpoint of Systems Theory*. – *Journal of religion in Japan* 2 (2013) 1-34

Losonczi, Singh, eds. *Discussing the Postsecular. Essays on the Habermasian Post-Secular Turn*. Lit, 2010.

Luehrmann, S. *Secularism Soviet Style: Teaching Atheism and Religion in a Volga Republic*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2011

Mendieta, VanAntwerpen, ed. *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*. Columbia, 2011

Molendijk A., J. Beaumont, Ch. Jedan, eds. *Exploring the Postsecular. The Religious, the Political and the Urban*. Brill, 2010.

John Nelson, “Japanese secularities and the decline of temple Buddhism” – *Journal of religion in Japan*, 2012, vol. 1, #1, 37-60

Rosati M., Stoeckl K. , eds. *Multiple Modernities and Postsecular Societies*. Ashgate, 2012

Shterin, M. “Secularisation or De-Secularisation? The Challenge of and from Post-Soviet-Experience.” In: Pollack , D., Pickel, G. & Mueller, O. (eds.), *The Social Significance of Religion in the Enlarged Europe: Secularization, Individualization, and Pluralization*. Farnham: [Ashgate Publishing](#), p. 143-167

Stolz, Konnemann, et al., eds. *(Un)Believing in Modern Society: Religion, Spirituality, and the Religious-Secular Competition*. Routledge, 2016.

Szonyi, M. “Secularization Theories and the Study of Chinese Religions.” *Social Compass* vol 56 (3), 312-327

Taylor Ch. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007.

Warner M., J. VanAntwerpen, C. Calhoun, eds. *Varieties of Secularism in a Secular Age*. Cambridge, 2010.

Wohlrab-SahrM., BurchardtM.. Multiple Secularities: Toward as Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities. *Comparative Sociology* Vol. 11 (2012), 1-35

Yavuz M., *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, Cambrisse: CUP, 2009

Апполонов А. О понятии религия и светское в средневековой европейской традиции. – *Религиоведческие исследования*, №5-6, 2011, 110-130

УзланерД.. О религии и секулярном еще раз. – *Религиоведческие исследования*, №5-6, 2011, с. 131-39

Invention of religion

- Asad t. *Genealogies of Religion*. Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1993
- Byrne P. *Natural Religion and the Nature of Religion: Legacy of Deism*. Routledge, 1989
- Debuiosson D. *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge and Ideology*. Baltimore: the John Hopkins u. Press, 2003
- Deplaned, Vallee, ed. *Religion in History: the Word, the Idea, the Reality*. Waterloo, 1992
- Fitzgerald T. *Discourse on Civility and Barbarity: a Critical History of Religion and Related Categories*. Oxford, 2007
- Harrison P. *“Religion” and the Religions in the English Enlightenment*. Cambridge 1990
- Masuzawa T. *The Invention of World Religions or how European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago, 2005
- Molnar A. The construction of the notion religion in early modern Europe. *Methods and theory in the study of religion*. 2002 vol.14
- Nongbri, B. (2013) *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept*. Yale University. – 275 p.
- Peterson D., Walhof D., eds. *The Invention of Religion: Rethinking Belief in Politics and History*. Rutgers, 2002
- B. Saler. *Conceptualizing Religion*, 1963.
- Smith W.C. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. NYMacmillan, 1962.
- Зенкин С. *Небожественное сакральное*. Москва, 2014

Relevant journals and websites:

The Immanent Frame – a website of the Social Science Research Council. blogs.ssrc.tif

Religion, State and Society; Journal of Comparative Religion; Social Compass; Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion; Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion; Journal of Church and State; Государство, религия, церковь в России и за рубежом; Религиоведческие исследования; Антропологический форум.

There are many other journals dealing with particular *regions*, such as Europe-Asia Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Modern Greek Studies, Asian Studies, etc.