POL 305
Religion and Politics
S1 Day 2013

Modern History, Politics and International Relations

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### General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit convenor and teaching staff</th>
<th>Unit Convenor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ian Tregenza</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ian.tregenza@mq.edu.au">ian.tregenza@mq.edu.au</a></td>
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<td>Contact via <a href="mailto:ian.tregenza@mq.edu.au">ian.tregenza@mq.edu.au</a></td>
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| Credit points | 3 |

| Prerequisites | 39cp or (6cp in HIST or MHIS or POL units at 200 level including 3cp in POL) |

| Corequisites |                      |

| Co-badged status |            |

| Unit description | Since the eighteenth century enlightenment philosophers have predicted that religion would vanish as capitalism, science and, and state separation from religion progressed. To some extent this has happened in some European countries, but, on the whole, the 'secularisation thesis' has not come true. Not only is religion still with us, but in many regions of the world it has grown more numerous and its impact more intense. This unit examines the nature of the relationship between religion and politics by analysing the history of political thought, as well as recent developments in global and national politics. |

### Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at [https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates](https://students.mq.edu.au/important-dates)

### Learning Outcomes

1. The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.
2. Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary texts on the relation between religion and politics.
3. Think more critically and systematically about politics and religion, and related ideas such as secularism and secularisation.
4. Appreciate the historical and philosophical subtleties of ideas such as secularism, the secular state, and religious pluralism.
5. Place contemporary debates and controversies within broader philosophical and historical contexts.

**Assessment Tasks**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Minor Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Friday March 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Tuesday 7 May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Test</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Tuesday 4 June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>week 2 to week 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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**Minor Essay**

*Due: Friday March 22*  
*Weighting: 20%*

Read the compulsory readings for week 2 (Taylor, Cavanaugh, Asad) and answer the following questions in essay form:

What is distinctive about the way that the concepts "religion" and the "secular" are understood in the modern world? What political implications, if any, do you think follow from the way that these concepts are generally understood and used in public discourse?

You can use these questions to structure your essay but you are to write one integrated essay, not two.

You can read further into this topic by looking at the extra readings for week 2 but you must stay focused on the core readings. Marks will be awarded according to your ability to build your own argument by drawing on these readings.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary texts on the relation between religion and politics.
- Think more critically and systematically about politics and religion, and related ideas such as secularism and secularisation.
- Appreciate the historical and philosophical subtleties of ideas such as secularism, the secular state, and religious pluralism.
• Place contemporary debates and controversies within broader philosophical and historical contexts.

Major Essay
Due: **Tuesday 7 May**
Weighting: **40%**

A 2500 word essay. Questions and instructions to be supplied in week 5 of unit.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
• The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.
• Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary texts on the relation between religion and politics.
• Think more critically and systematically about politics and religion, and related ideas such as secularism and secularisation.
• Appreciate the historical and philosophical subtleties of ideas such as secularism, the secular state, and religious pluralism.
• Place contemporary debates and controversies within broader philosophical and historical contexts.

Class Test
Due: **Tuesday 4 June**
Weighting: **20%**

A 1.5 hour test in the lecture in week 13 of the unit. The test will be based on material covered from week 8 to week 12.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:
• The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.
• Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary texts on the relation between religion and politics.
• Think more critically and systematically about politics and religion, and related ideas such as secularism and secularisation.
• Appreciate the historical and philosophical subtleties of ideas such as secularism, the secular state, and religious pluralism.
• Place contemporary debates and controversies within broader philosophical and historical contexts.
Quizes

Due: **week 2 to week 12**
Weighting: **10%**

Two random quizzes in lecture time

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary texts on the relation between religion and politics.
- Appreciate the historical and philosophical subtleties of ideas such as secularism, the secular state, and religious pluralism.

Class participation

Due: **Ongoing**
Weighting: **10%**

Tutors will look for evidence of student knowledge of the unit readings, analysis of those readings expressed in verbal form, and willingness to work with other students in set tasks. Students who miss more than three tutorials without evidence of an unforeseen and serious disruption (e.g. illness, supported by a medical certificate) will be excluded from the unit.

This Assessment Task relates to the following Learning Outcomes:

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.
- Read and critically interpret some classic and contemporary texts on the relation between religion and politics.
- Think more critically and systematically about politics and religion, and related ideas such as secularism and secularisation.
- Appreciate the historical and philosophical subtleties of ideas such as secularism, the secular state, and religious pluralism.
- Place contemporary debates and controversies within broader philosophical and historical contexts.
Delivery and Resources

Delivery:

Day

This unit will use:

iLearn, iLecture

Times and Locations for Lectures and Tutorials

Lectures: Tuesday 10am-12pm. E5A120

For timetable information consult the MQ timetables website:

https://students.mq.edu.au/student_admin/timetables.jsp

Resources:

This unit will use a book of readings that can be purchased from the co-op bookshop

Unit Schedule

Week 1. (week commencing 25 February)

A Secular Age?

The recent upsurge in religion around the globe has forced many scholars to question the ‘secularisation’ thesis that had, until the past few decades, dominated most sociological and historical accounts of the place of religion in modern world. We will discuss some of the classic secularisation narratives, the criticisms they have attracted, and the extent to which they are still useful in light of recent developments.

Readings:


Berger, Peter, The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), ch.1

Week 2. (4 March)

Inventing ‘Religion’ and the ‘Secular’

This week takes the critique of the secularisation thesis further by exploring the history of the categories "religion" and "secular". In much public discourse these terms appear to have fairly
self-evident meanings and they are usually understood in oppositional or binary terms (i.e. secular and secularism are generally defined as the absence of religion). However, the concept of the secular is itself bound up with theological debates within Western Christendom, and "religion" understood as a body of beliefs about the transcendent and divided into various branches (Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.) is an invention of the modern West. Understanding the complex history of these terms sheds light on their current use.

Compulsory Readings:


Further Reading:


Smith, Wilfred Cantwell, The Meaning and End of Religion (Fortress Press, 1962)

Milbank, John, Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), ch.1

Smith, Graeme, A Short History of Secularism (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), ch.1

Taylor, Charles, A Secular Age (Harvard University Press, 2007)

Week 3. (11 March)
The Augustinian Inheritance. The Two Cities

The distinction between the two cities - heavenly and earthly - has been a feature of Christian social thought since the time of Christ ("render unto Caesar ..."). It was given its most influential articulation in the writings of Saint Augustine in the early fifth century A.D. Seeking to explain the fall of Rome and the Christianisation of the Empire, Augustine wove his account of the two cities into a grand narrative of human history that would have a profound influence in the West, up to and including the rise of the modern liberal state.
Compulsory Readings:

Augustine, *The City of God* (Penguin, 1984), excerpts


Further Reading:


Elshtain, Jean Bethke, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (UNiversity of Notre Dame Press, 1995)

Week 4. (18 March)

Hobbes and the Mortal God.

In the midst in the English civil wars in the seventeenth century Thomas Hobbes produced his masterpiece, *Leviathan*, which laid out the basis of authority in the modern state. For Hobbes, one of the chief sources of disorder of the day was religious strife which he sought to tame by bringing it under the control of the Sovereign authority. Though himself no liberal, many have seen his argument as paving the way for the liberal state. Others, however, have seen Hobbes's political theory as built on a particular construction of religion that has legitimised the (often violent) consolidation of power within the 'secular' state.

Compulsory Readings:

Hobbes, *Leviathan*, excerpts


2007), ch.2

Further Reading:


N.B. Critical Reading Assignments due this week - Friday March 22

Week 5. (25 March)

Locke, Jefferson and Toleration

The idea of religious toleration did not exercise the European imagination in a widespread way until the eighteenth century. An important proponent of toleration in this period was Thomas Jefferson who argued against the establishment of an official church in the United States. Jefferson was building on the work of figures such as John Locke and Pierre Bayle who had championed the idea of toleration in the seventeenth century.

Compulsory Readings:

Locke, John, A Letter Concerning Toleration, excerpt from Political Thought (Oxford, 1999) M. Rosen and J. Wolff (eds.)
Jefferson, Thomas, excerpts from Political Writings (Cambridge, 1999), J. Appleby and T. Ball (eds.)

Further Reading:
Week 6. (1 April)

Religion and the Enlightenment

One of the key components of the 'secularisation' theses is that the decline of religion in the West resulted from the spread of Enlightenment ideals such as reason, freedom, and individuality. However, a close examination of eighteenth and nineteenth century history reveals that the so-called "Enlightenment" was not singular but had several manifestations not all of them hostile to religion. Indeed, for many the Enlightenment simply represented the latest development in the long standing dialogue between faith and reason.

Compulsory Reading:
Gillespie, Michael Allen, The Theological Origins of Modernity, (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2008), ch. 8
Kant, Immanuel, excerpt from The Critique of Pure Reason from Faith and Reason (Oxford, 1999), P. Helm, (ed.)

Further Reading:
Gascoigne, John, The Enlightenment and the origins of European Australia (Cambridge, 2002)

Week 7 (8 April) Reading Week. No classes. Work on your essays.

Mid semester break. April 13 - April 28.

Week 8. (29 April)

Religion and the Public Sphere 1: Defending Separatism
In recent decades political theorists have devoted considerable attention to the issue of how to manage religious differences within the liberal state. One strong strand of theorising has argued that political life should be governed strictly by principles of public reason, or forms of reasoning that everyone (religious and non-religious) can accept. On this view, which we might call 'separatism', all specifically religious or 'comprehensive' world views should remain in the private realm. We look at two influential proponents of this position, John Rawls and Robert Audi.

**Compulsory Readings:**

Audi, Robert, *Religious Commitment and Secular Reason* (Cambridge, 2000) ch.4

**Further Reading:**


**Week 9. (6 May)**

**Religion and the Public Sphere 2: Questioning Separatism**

Critics of the 'separatist' position have argued that the benefits of the religiously neutral state come at too high a price. That is, the restriction of religion to the private sphere narrows public debate and threatens genuine pluralism. The separatist position, so the critics claim, undermines the very neutrality it purports to establish by discriminating against religious communities (such as Islamic communities) that do not recognise the public/private split that the separatist position depends on.

**Compulsory Readings:**

Maddox, Marion ‘An Argument for More, Not Less, Religion in Australian Politics’, *Australian...*
Further Readings:

Connolly, William E., *Why I am Not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999)

Smith, Steven D. *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse* (Harvard University Press, 2010)

Williams, Rowan, *Faith in the Public Square* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2012)

N.B. Essays due this week – Tuesday 7 May

Week 10. (13 May)

Fundamentalism and Modernity 1: Christian Fundamentalism

Though religious fundamentalism is sometimes depicted as a throwback to 'primitive' forms of religion it is in fact an essentially modern development. The origins of fundamentalism are to be found in the early twentieth century reaction to 'liberal' theology among certain American protestant groups. The long standing conflict between creationism and evolution is one of the on-going legacies of this reaction. This week we look at the concept of fundamentalism in general and Christian fundamentalism in particular.

Compulsory Readings:


Further Readings:

Lawrence, Bruce, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), ch.7

Week 11. (20 May)

**Fundamentalism and Modernity 2: Islamic Fundamentalism**

Islamic fundamentalism, no less than its Christian counterpart, is also a product of modernity. However, where Christian fundamentalism emerged out of debates over science and Biblical interpretation, Islamic fundamentalism developed in the Middle East in the mid twentieth century as a response to Western colonialism. From the beginning Islamic fundamentalism was an inherently political movement. This lecture will present a brief history of Islam as background for understanding the development of Islamic fundamentalism from the Muslim brotherhood to Al-Qaeda.

**Compulsory Readings:**


**Further Reading:**


Week 12. (27 May)

**The New Atheism: another fundamentalism?**

In response to the global resurgence of religion in recent times a group of writers has risen to prominence denouncing religion in all its forms. Often labelled the New Atheists figures such as Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and others have written a series of highly polemical best-sellers that have tapped into a mood of public anxiety about religion. However as numerous critics have pointed out these works not only display a strikingly evangelical tone they tend to attack only the most literalistic forms of religion. In other words, the New Atheists seem to be the mirror image of the fundamentalists they attack.
Compulsory Readings:


Further Reading:


Week 13 (3 June).

Class Test - Tuesday June 4

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:


In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/) of Policy Central.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of Academic Student Support Services. Details of these
services can be accessed at: [http://students.mq.edu.au/support/](http://students.mq.edu.au/support/)

**UniWISE provides:**

- Online learning resources and academic skills workshops [http://www.students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_skills/](http://www.students.mq.edu.au/support/learning_skills/)
- Personal assistance with your learning & study related questions.
- The Learning Help Desk is located in the Library foyer (level 2).
- Online and on-campus orientation events run by Mentors@Macquarie.

**Student Enquiry Service**

Details of these services can be accessed at [http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/](http://www.student.mq.edu.au/ses/).

**Equity Support**

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

**IT Help**

If you wish to receive IT help, we would be glad to assist you at [http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/](http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/).

When using the university's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students and it outlines what can be done.

**Graduate Capabilities**

**Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills**

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Class Test
- Quizes
- Class participation
Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Class Test
- Class participation

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Class participation

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Class participation
Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Assessment task**

- Class participation

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

**Learning outcome**

- The ability to analyse and express your judgement about the relationship between religion and politics in oral and written form.

**Assessment tasks**

- Minor Essay
- Major Essay
- Class Test
- Quizes
- Class participation

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:
Assessment task

- Class participation

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment task

- Class participation

Changes since First Published

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>17/11/2012</td>
<td>The Prerequisites was updated.</td>
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