

Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar: Protest and Progress

090:292:06

Rutgers University
W 9:50-12:50 pm
Honors College S126
<https://sakai.rutgers.edu>

Fall 2016
Dr. William Field
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Office hours: M 10-12 Hickman 509
W 1:30-4:30 SAC

American history is marked by frequent episodes where individuals and groups claim that divine law trumps human law. These challenges to the social order come from both "left" and "right" on the American political spectrum. What is unusual about the US, perhaps, is the extent to which groups claim divine support for what are essentially ordinary political arguments, whether these arguments are over membership in the body politic, over access to freedoms already granted to other groups or exemptions from generally recognized obligations.

High levels of religiosity in the United States compared to other wealthy countries suggest we are an anomaly. This course argues otherwise. We will explore periods of protest in art, history, and contemporary politics to explore the source of the law. The fundamental question underlying this course is whether the law inherently and only human. For individual cases we will ask whether appeals to divine law add increased legitimacy to otherwise mundane political demands and whether they increase the chance of success of the demands being made. A broad question, especially relevant given today's clashes over LGBT rights, is whether appeals to divine law tend to accelerate or inhibit progress. We will explore these questions in a variety of historical time periods and modern political systems starting with the ancient Greeks and ending with present day political conflicts in the United States and Europe.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to

1. identify the main common features of American social movements;
2. explain the role that religious inspiration has played in major social change in the United States;
3. assess public policy positions in terms of "justice" and "freedom"; and
4. make a coherent argument in written and spoken form.

Note: this course will count toward the political science major and minor for those who are pursuing the major or minor. This course also counts toward the Core Curriculum requirement WCd, "Writing in the Discipline", even though it is an explicitly interdisciplinary course, crossing the boundaries between political science, history, and philosophy.

Student assessment

Students are expected to attend each class and to participate in discussions by offering questions, answers, and comments on the questions and answers offered by other students and by the instructor. Specific projects are also required of students and class performance will be based on these factors, as follows:

First presentation	10%
Second presentation	15%
First paper	15%
Participation	20%
Final paper	40%

Required texts (all are rather old, in hopes you can get used copies)

Freeman, Jo, and Victoria Johnson (eds), *Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

Mooney, Christopher, *The Public Clash of Private Values* (New York: Chatham House, 2001).

Putnam, Robert, and David Campbell. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).

Stone, Deborah, *Policy Paradox*, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 2012).

Wald, Kenneth D., and Allison Calhoun-Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States* 7th edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014).

Course Schedule

Week 1, September 7: "The Progress of the Human Mind"

Week 2, September 14: the idea of progress (all but the first from Classics of Western Thought)

- Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress*, Introduction and chapter 6
- Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding"
- J. S. Mill "On Liberty"
- Mooney, *The Public Clash of Private Values*, chapter 1

Week 3, September 21: liberalism (all from American Social and Political Thought)

- Hartz, "The Liberal Tradition in America" (In American Social and Political Thought)
- Shklar, "The liberalism of fear" (In American Social and Political Thought)
- Rawls, "Political Liberalism" (In American Social and Political Thought)
- Stone, *Policy Paradox*, chapter 5

Week 4, September 28: The role of religion in American politics

- Shklar, "The Boundaries of Democracy" (on sakai)
- Wald and Calhoun Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, chapters 2-4
- Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapter 3

Week 5, October 5: Legalism and antinomialism

- Shklar, *Legalism*, Introduction and Part I (on sakai)
- Nozick, Robert, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, ch. 7 (on sakai)
- Rawls, "A Theory of Justice" (on sakai)

Week 6, October 12: A framework for policy and political action

- Stone, "*Policy Paradox*", chapters 1-4 and 6
 - Student presentations on chapters 2, 3, 4, and 6
- **PAPER 1 DUE**

Week 7, October 19: Social Movements: an introduction

- Freeman, *Waves of Protest*, chapter 1
- Ackerman and Duvall, *A Force More Powerful*, chapter 8

Week 8, October 26: Defining problems in public policy

- Stone, "*Policy Paradox*", chapters 7-11
 - Student presentations on chapters 7-11

Week 9, November 2: Choices of solutions for public policy problems

- Stone, "*Policy Paradox*", chapters 12-16
 - Student presentations on chapters 12-16

Week 10, November 9: Possible roles of religion in public life

- Wald and Calhoun Brown, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, chapters 5-6
- Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapter 11

Week 11, November 16: Morality politics

- Mooney, *The Public Clash of Private Values*, chapters 2, 3, 5
- Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapter 8

Week 12, November 30: Student presentations and possible topics

- Civil rights
- Prohibition
- Abolition
- Abortion
- HIV/AIDS
- Gay rights
- Same sex marriage
- Physician assisted suicide/"death with dignity"
- Women's suffrage
- Women's rights
- Black lives matter

Week 13, December 7: Student presentations

Week 14, December 14: Student presentations (if needed) and course conclusion. Religion, social movements, and 2016

<http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/teaching-trump-to-college-students/498158/>

December 21: final paper due