Religion and Political Controversy in the United States  
RELS 162 Fall 2018 (Sec 01 - 48909)  
San José State University  
Humanities Department

Course and Contact Information  
Instructor: Lisa L. Stenmark  
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ONLINE OFFICE: https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/3808799977  
Telephone: Please use Canvas  
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ONLINE Office Hours: Mondays: 5-6  
See Schedule for In Person appts.

Course Format: THIS IS AN ONLINE COURSE, so you will need a reliable internet connection and some familiarity with computers.

Course Description (Catalog): Contemporary issues (e.g., ecology, abortion, war, gender, sexuality and race) as interpreted by a diverse range of American ethno-religious groups.

Course Objectives:  
General Education Area S: Upon successful completion of this course, students shall be able to:
1. Describe how identities (i.e., religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age) are shaped by cultural and societal influences in contexts of equality and inequality.
2. Describe historical, social, political, and economic processes producing diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S.
3. Describe social actions which have led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S. (i.e.: religious, gender, ethnic, racial, class, sexual orientation, disability, and/or age.)
4. Recognize and appreciate constructive interactions between people from different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups in the U.S.

University Policies (Required)  
Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on the Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/

Requirements and Evaluation: The following are the course requirements:

- Venn Diagram: 30 points  
- Online Discussion (12@15 pts ea): 180 points  
- Weekly Assigns/Quizzes (10@20 pts each): 200 points  
- Multimedia Project: 150 points  
- Final Exam: 40 points  
- Total: 600 points  

(379 or less/fail; 380/D; 400/D+; 420/C-; 440/C; 460/C+/ 480/B-; 500/B; 520/B+; 540/A-; 560/A)

Venn Diagram: You first assignment will be to create a Venn diagram that illustrates the relationship between religion and politics (NOT church and state! You might consider what the difference is when you think about the diagram). Include a paragraph that explains/justifies your diagram (you should include discussion of the Corbett reading). NOTE: You can diagram the relationship the way it is, or the way it SHOULD be, but be clear which you are doing.

Online Discussion: Students will make four (4) substantive entries a week discussing readings, films, events in the news, etc. You may initiate a discussion or respond to other posts, and you can talk about anything that you want, as
long as you make specific references to course material. "The reading was too hard" or "Sherman Alexie rocks!" is not substantive. A substantive entry looks like this: "Arendt is hard to understand because she uses terms inconsistently (followed by examples and discussion)" or "Sherman Alexie rocks because his characters project a truly admirable form of masculinity in the face of the dehumanization of racism and poverty" (followed by examples and discussion) or "I disagree/agree with your interpretation of (the text) (followed your reason)." Get the idea? These will be graded weekly, and will be worth 15 points each, and only the top 12 grades will count.

**Note:** Posts that include name calling, insults, hate speech or excessive "shouting" (all caps) will be deleted. Repeat offenders will be denied access to discussions, with resulting repercussions to your grade. To regain access, you will have to speak to me in person (or via Skype). Don't respond to rude or offensive posts. Report the offensive post to me.

**Note:** Don't respond to rude or offensive posts, because when I delete the post, your response will also be deleted (regardless of how respectful or responsive it is) and then your grade might suffer if you end up without sufficient posts. Instead, report the offensive post to me.

### Weekly Assignments/Quizzes
Every week there will be an assignment—usually a quiz, but occasionally some other assignment. These will be worth 20 points each, and only the top 10 will count. See Canvas for details.

### Multimedia Assignment
See Canvas for details.

### Final:
There will be a final, due on the day of the scheduled on-line final. See Canvas for details.

### CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR:
CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR: Use Canvas to contact me, and then only for brief questions that require no more than a sentence or two for a response. In-depth issues should be addressed in person, either during office hours or by appointment. This means you will need to plan ahead (don't procrastinate).

**IF PROBLEMS ARISE:** Please . . . don't e-mail me at the end of the semester asking if you can “make up” most or all of the assignments. You can't. I understand that things happen and if you have personal problems or issues that interfere with your ability to complete the course work and you start falling behind, talk to me as soon as possible. The end of the semester is too late because university policy is quite strict on incompletes and I will likely have to give you an F. I hate this.

### TEXTS:
All texts are available online either as links or as pdfs

In addition, you might want to bookmark these pages – share thoughts as part of online discussion, and can give you ideas for multimedia project.

**Resources**

*Religion and Politics*
*Religion and Culture Forum*
*Pew Research on Religion and Politics*
*Religion News Service*

Often more general, but helpful. You might check out Tobin Grant's old blog for some ideas

*Journal of Religion and American Culture*

*Religion Online*

A collection of writings on religion – including books and articles. They have a section on Religion and Politics and on Social Issues, also a section
SCHEDULE

Week One: Introduction
Week ending Monday, August 27
Read: Corbett "Introduction"
Civil Religion
The Year in Religion and Politics (2016) Atlantic Monthly
DUE: VENN DIAGRAM

Week Two: Civil Religion I
Week ending Monday, September 3
Read: Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity."
Hutchinson
God, Government and Roger Williams' Big Idea
Watch: A New Adam
NOTE: Fri 8/31 last day to drop

Week Three: Church and State
Week ending Monday, September 10
Read: Locke, A Letter Concerning Toleration
Jefferson "Letter to Dabney Baptists"
Gamwell, Democracy and the Religious Question
Watch: A New Eden
NOTE: Monday, Sept 10 last day to add

Week Four: The First Amendment
Week ending Monday, September 17
Read: Free Exercise Clause A, Free Exercise Clause B
Establishment Clause, School Prayer, Public Display, Secular Purpose

Week Five: Civil Religion II
Week ending Monday, September 24
Read: Noll, The Civil War as a Theological Crisis
Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address
Watch: Nation Reborn

Week Six: "Divine Discontent" and Social Reform
Week Ending Monday, October 1
Read: Dorothy Day, Readings from Catholic Worker
Addams, "Subjective Necessity for Social Settlement"
Harrington, "Two Leaders, Two Utopias"

Week Seven: Religion and Race I
Week Ending Monday, October 8
Read: The Artifacts of White Supremacy
The Klan, White Christianity, and the Past and Present
Watch: Making of Birth of A Nation

Week Eight: "Divine Discontent" and Evangelical Shifts
Week Ending Monday, October 15
Read: "The Political Mobilization of Evangelical Protestants"
Randall Balmer: Real Origins of the Religious Right
Week Nine: Religion and Race II
Week Ending Monday, October 22
Read: James Baldwin, Letter from A Region of my Mind

Week Ten: Culture Wars in the Courts
Week Ending Monday, October 29
Read: Hunter, “Culture Wars” Prologue, chap 1
      McGraw Ch12;
      Irons, “One Nation Under God”
Watch: The Soul of a Nation

Week Eleven: “Divine Discontent” in the Fields
Week Ending Monday, November 5
Read: Chávez, “The Mexican American and the Church,” UFW “Pilgrimage to Sacramento,” Dalton,
      “The Moral Vision of Cesar Chávez” (excerpts),
Watch: “Struggle in the Fields”

Week Twelve: Foreign Policy
Week Ending Monday, November 12
Read: Gunn, Friday Dec 14@10:00PM
      Judis, The Chosen Nation
      MLK – On Viet Nam
Watch: Watch Of God and Cesar
NOTE: Veterans Day is 11/12 so this week’s assignments will be due on Tuesday 11/13

Week Thirteen: MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS
Week Ending Monday, November 19
Read: TBA
NOTE: THANKSGIVING is on 11/22. There are no discussions due on Monday, 11/26. Use the time to
work on your projects.

Week Fourteen: MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS
Week Ending Monday, December 3
Read: TBA
Watch:

Week Fifteen: MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS
Week Ending Monday, December 10
Read: TBA
Watch:

FINAL QUIZ: Friday Dec 14@10:00PM