

STML 564: RELIGION IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE
WINTER 2011
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
(3 CREDIT HOURS)

FACULTY

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course explores the complex relationship of spiritual and religious values to the common life in the United States, and particularly the symbols, meanings systems and cultural mythologies that have informed, and continue to inform, the nation's life, rhetoric and political decision-making process. Employing tools and perspectives from a number of fields in the social sciences and humanities, this course will help students create their own template for understanding the complex impact spiritual and religious systems, ideas, feelings and individual and community forces have had in shaping America's past and present. The course will also explore the social and cultural changes that are dramatically altering the relationship of religious and spiritual values to the public commons, particularly the introduction of new religious forces through forces like immigration. Lastly, students will devise strategies for integrating their leadership goals with their own spiritual and religious values, and the values permeating American society.

This course will explore the history, dynamics, and role of religious and spiritual values in the public domain. While the First Amendment's doctrine of separation of church and state has kept the influence of religious institutions on American culture minimized in recent decades, religious and spiritual values have always permeated political and cultural symbols, ritual, conversation, and the nation's common life. In Western society, a so-called *secularization thesis* grew in dominance during the latter half of the 20th century, trying to push religion into a "privatized" corner so it could have no influence on politics or culture. More recently, the so-called Religious Right garnered a great deal of media attention and seemed to have a goal of dominating the culture. In reality, the U.S. has always had a tapestry of religious and spiritual influences and values, and trying to keep these in a private domain, as the secularists would desire, is probably functionally impossible. At the same time, if the United States ever had a Christian hegemony in the public square, those days are gone. This course will look at the worldwide renewal of interest in religion, and the U.S. manifestation of this phenomenon, along with the history of a "shadow culture" of religious and spiritual practices and beliefs in America and its growing influence on the nation since the 1970s.

One of the goals of the class is to increase students' awareness of the "civil religious language" that has underpinned U.S. society and culture since its origin, and to provide students the opportunity to begin to develop, reflect upon, deepen and articulate their own personal "civil spiritual" or civil religious" language. The development of this "public language" is intended to prepare students to share their deepest values, their keenest insights about life and its meaning, and their vision of a more humane and just world in environments that are unwelcoming to a "religious or spiritual orientation or framework" toward life. This runs counter to strong forces in American society that seek to "privatize" religious and spiritual values and insight. Students will read from a number of sources about the role of religion in American culture; but, they will also spend time working on "translating" one language into another, the first grounded in the particularity of their religious or spiritual worldview, and the other transcending this conceptual framework to make it intelligible to communities outside the students' particular grounding context. Such a type of translation was done by people like Harriet Tubman, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B Anthony, Walter Rauchenbush, Dorothy Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr. They discovered ways to challenge the nation with the values they had developed in their spiritual or religious context, by bringing those values carefully and persuasively into important conversations in the public square. In so doing, they touched the hearts and minds of people outside their worldviews, providing a message of hope at trying periods of history, and

empowering a nation to dare to believe in the possibility of a better world. Their language for sharing spiritually-informed values operated within the dynamics and limitations of a political culture shaped by the unique U.S. doctrine of the separation of church and state.

Religious and Spiritual Values in the Public Square will explore the spiritual and religious heritage of the U.S., and place students' personal spirituality or religious grounding in dialogue with it. Students will be challenged to develop a personal language for bringing their spiritual and religious values into the public forum in an appropriate way, to find creative ways to engage others at the core of their value system, and to engage in public conversations against a horizon of ultimate concern and the ultimate meaning of life. Part of the challenge of creating your personal religious or spiritual civil language is that it must work within the limits of a democratic culture shaped by the separation of church and state clause in its U.S. Constitution.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith is Changing the World, by John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, Penguin Press, 2009.

God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture, Eric Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy, Routledge, 2011.

Restless Souls: The Making of American Spirituality, Leigh Eric Schmidt, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2005.

A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religious Diverse Nation, Diana Eck, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2001.

The Case for Civility: And Why Our Future Depends On It, Os Guinness, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2008.

IMPORTANT DATES IN THE QUARTER:

January 3: First Day of Class for Winter Quarter

January 17: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday. No Class

February 18-21: President's Day Weekend. Friday classes before 4:30 p.m. cancelled; Monday classes before 4:30 p.m. cancelled, classes after 4:30 p.m. are held as scheduled.

March 21-25: Spring break.

ARTICLES:

Civil Religion in America, Robert N. Bellah, *Dædalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, from the issue entitled, "Religion in America," Winter 1967, Vol. 96, No. 1, pp. 1-21. See: http://www.robertbellah.com/articles_5.htm.

Twenty Years After Bellah: Whatever Happened to American Civil Religion, James A. Mathisen, *Sociological Analysis*, 1989, 50:2, 129-146. (Available on-line through Limeaux Library.)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

<i>Dates/Time</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
Jan. 5	<p><i>The Meaning Structures of Culture and Society: America's Sub-Soil of Religious and Spiritual Values</i></p> <p>a. The problem of religion in the modern world.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religious worldview's conservative approach to change vs. chronic change since the Industrial Revolution 2. Role of the Enlightenment in narrowing our view of the human soul through the homogenized and idealized view of reason. 3. The religious reaction to modern and postmodern culture: apologetics and the insights of missionaries. <p>b. Religion in the U.S. since 1948: An increasingly neuralgic topic.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inconsistencies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Saturation of the culture with religion vs. the lack of treatment of religion in public school textbooks. (Warren Nord's, <i>Religion and American Education: Re-thinking a National Dilemma; Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum</i>) b. Opening prayer in Congress, presidential elections, etc., no prayer in schools. c. Where else do we have inconsistencies? c. The Purpose and Nature of Religion (<i>Religio</i>) d. Civil Religion: Bellah's perspective of religion as a cultural and social force in the U.S. – a tradition that continues in an old and new key. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write a one page essay describing the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life. 2. Write a one-page essay describing religion's role in society, both positive and negative. 3. Read two articles by Bellah referenced in required articles above. 4. Guinness, 1-198.
Jan. 12	<p><i>NO CLASS.</i></p> <p>Two essays are due posted to Angel. On-line discussion conducted about Guinness book.</p>	<p>Micklethwait and Woolridge, "Two Roads to Modernity," 1-139</p>
Jan. 19	<p><i>America's Relationship with Religion</i></p> <p>a. Models of separation of church and state: the French and U.S. experiments, and permutations around the world – an</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in

	<p>introduction</p> <p>b. The Secular Worldview and its Assumptions (Harvey Cox's, <i>The Secular Mind</i>; Charles Taylor, <i>The Secular Age</i>)</p> <p>c. The narrowing tunnel vision of the post-Enlightenment's view of reality. (Huston Smith, <i>Why Religion Matters</i>)</p> <p>d. Distinguishing between different kinds of religious/faith conversation. The distinctions in discussions between faith and morals; between catechesis, theology and religious studies. MATL is a combination of all three – seeking the formational element of catechesis, the “spirituality seeking understanding” of theology, and the social science analysis of religion found in religious studies. A new way to think about issues of spirituality and their role in individual and corporate life.</p> <p>e. The traditional, modern and postmodern mind. Identifying your mind (or fragments of different minds)?</p>	<p>your life.</p> <p>2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative.</p> <p>3. Micklethwait and Woolridge, “God’s Country” and “God’s Empire,” 143-261.</p>
Jan. 26	<p><i>Models of Religion and Spirituality's Relationship to Culture</i></p> <p>a. H.R. Niebuhr's, <i>Christ and Culture</i></p>	<p>1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life.</p> <p>2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative.</p> <p>3. Mazur and McCarthy, p. 1-14; 41-101;103-153.</p>
Feb. 2	<p><i>The Decline of Faith in the 19th and Early 20th century and the Rise of “Theologians of the Profane:” Art, Socialism and Communism and Asian Fascination</i></p> <p>a. The Rise of Atheism</p> <p>b. The Rise of Fundamentalism and the Religious Right</p> <p>c. The Religion of Art</p> <p>d. The Asian Invasion</p> <p>e. The Religion of Socialism/Communism</p> <p>The Decline of Community, (From: Robert Putnam, <i>Bowling Alone</i>.)</p>	<p>1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life.</p> <p>2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative.</p> <p>3. Mazur and McCarthy, 175-178, 197-254; 255-257; 271-321.</p> <p>4. Initial Concept of Final Paper and Presentations</p>

		Due.
Feb. 9	<p>Further “Theologians of the Profane:” Myth, Utopia and Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A Spirituality of Myth (From: Joseph Campbell’s, <i>Hero with a 1,000 Faces</i>; Jordon Peterson’s <i>Maps of Meaning: The Architecture of Belief</i>). b. “Economists: The 20th Century’s New High Priests,” (From: Robert Nelson, <i>Economics as Religion</i>.) c. Music as the Vehicle of Spirituality (Steve Turner, <i>The Gospel According to the Beatles</i>; Jeffrey Symynkywicz, <i>The Gospel According to Bruce Springstein</i>; John Bird, <i>The Spirituality of Music</i>; Jazz as a Spiritual Journey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life. 2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative. 3. Schmidt, 1-179
Feb. 16	<p>The Cultural Roots of America’s Alternative, Emergent, and “New Age” Spiritualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. America’s Spiritual “Shadow Culture. (From Eugene Taylor, <i>Shadow Culture</i>) b. The Foundation of America’s Seeker Culture. (From Robert Bellah, <i>Habits of the Heart</i>; Wade Roof, <i>Spiritual Marketplace</i>) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life. 2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative. 3. Schmidt, 227-290
Feb. 23	<p>Native American Spirituality: From Anathema to Envy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Philip Jenkins, <i>The Dreamcatchers</i> <p>Mixing Religious Fact and Fiction: A National Past Time</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Morris West, <i>Shoes of the Fisherman</i> (1963), <i>The Fools of God</i> (1981). 2. Dan Brown, <i>Da Vinci Code</i> (2003); <i>Lost Symbol</i> (2009) 3. Brian Moore, <i>Blackrobe</i>, 1991. 4. James Redfield, <i>The Celestine Prophecy</i>, 1993. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life. 2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative. 3. Eck 1-293.
March 2	<p>Living in a “Post-Christian” American Culture: Changing the Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Four Chaplains: Will Herberg, <i>Catholic, Protestant, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology</i> b. American Hindus c. American Buddhists d. American Muslims 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life. 2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative.

	<u>Final Presentations</u>	3. Eck, 294-386.
March 9	<p><i>Culture Wars Redux: The Battle Over Worldviews</i></p> <p>a. The Zero-Sum Game in Culture Warring (From: Samuel P. Huntington, <i>The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order</i>)</p> <p>b. The Collapse of Civility and Compromise in Politics (From: Ronald Brownstein, <i>The Second Civil War: How Extreme Partisanship Has Paralyzed Washington and Polarized America</i>)</p> <p>c. Finding a Way to Avoid Each Other (Bill Bishop, <i>The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart</i>).</p> <p><i>Bridge Building: Overcoming the Culture Wars</i></p> <p>a. Reaching Beyond Just Getting Along (From Gustav Niebuhr, <i>Beyond Tolerance</i>; Maria Rosa Menocal, <i>The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain</i>).</p> <p><u>Final Presentations</u></p>	<p>1. Up-date the role of spirituality and spiritual values in your life.</p> <p>2. Up-date the role of religion in society, both positive and negative.</p> <p>3. Micklethwait and Woolridge, 213-373; Eck, 294-385.</p>
March 14	Final Paper Due	

COURSE LEARNING GOALS AND HOW THEY ARE MEASURE

MATL Learning Outcome	How Learning is Evaluated
Demonstrate an ability to think critically about the impact and role of religious organizations, spiritual movements, and spiritually-inspired insights and worldviews in public discourse, particularly in the articulation of public values in the United States, as well as its impact and role in the development of leadership theory and practice.	Class participation based on reading. Growth in depth of personal understanding of religion and spirituality as concepts and realities, and their influence on values experienced in the public square, as expressed in discussion and the final writing assignment.
Demonstrate an understanding of the role and dynamics of human “meaning-making” in framing worldviews, and in impacting individual and collective human values formation, ethical and other forms of decision-making, and leadership ideals, goals and methodologies.	Class participation on readings and final written assignment.
Demonstrate a <i>reflective</i> capacity for analyzing and articulating the student’s personal spirituality and “meaning-making” influences and structure, and its impact on the student’s leadership ideals, goals, and methodologies.	Final integrative paper, outlining the student’s “personal language” for understanding religious and social values in the public sphere.
Demonstrate an ability to <i>integrate</i> course material with your personal meaning structure and spirituality, and your ideals and goals for leadership.	Final integrative paper, which sharpens your “personal language” for understanding religious and social values in the public sphere and how it impacts or will impact your ideals and goals for leadership, also class participation.
Demonstrate a capacity speak publically with ease and	Final presentation of paper and class

clarity.	participation.
Demonstrate a capacity to write appropriately to serve the people to whom they are accountable.	Final written assignment.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND EVALUATION

In this course evaluation will be based on the following dimensions:

- Demonstration of reading the course material and wrestling with both the articulation of a personal spirituality and spiritual values and the role of religion and spirituality in American culture.
- Referencing accurately historical patterns, concepts, and theory as surfaced in the readings and class mini-lectures, both in classroom conversation and the final paper and presentation.
- Timely presence and active participation in all sessions and presentations;
- Papers and presentations turned in on time. Late papers reduce the grade.

Grading Criteria:

- 65% Presence in class and active participation in discussions
- 35% Final written assignment

Academic Honesty

The School of Theology and Ministry strictly adheres to the Academic Policy concerning Academic Honesty as published in the Seattle University Student Handbook. (see the Seattle University website).

Students with disabilities

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/ or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740.

Final Paper Creating Your Own Civil Spiritual and Civil Religious Language

Students will write a 10-15 page final paper attempting to begin a process of translating a personal spirituality into a civil religious or spiritual language.

Analysis of Personal Spirituality:

What are the rituals, intellectual resources, songs, communities that sustain your personal spirituality and values? Who are your heroes, the people modeling the kinds of action you would like to do?

Identification of the Values Influenced by this Spirituality:

How has this spiritual or religious tradition(s) influenced what you value most? Write the five things you value most because of the influence of your religious tradition?

Analysis of Readings and Research:

Having looked at your own inner world briefly, what aspects of the readings and research through the quarter have resonated with your personal spirituality and values? Which aspects challenged your worldview?

Integration:

Pick a public conversation in which you feel drawn to influence in order to make the world a better place. How does your personal spirituality and spiritually informed value system influence what you would like to see happen?

Now, imagine you have been invited to participate in a public discourse on this issue, and afterwards to create an organization to struggle for realizing your intended outcome. Prepare a 10-minute presentation you will give at the Seattle Public Library. Weave into your conversation your spiritual insights and values? How will you talk about them? What will you avoid because of the limitations of church and state? What will you avoid because people might misunderstand it?

A wealthy donor hears your speech and offers to bankroll your public effort. How will you use the funds?