

MANCHESTER  
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The University  
of Manchester



## RELIGION, POLITICS AND THE MEDIA RELT60142 SYLLABUS WINTER 2011

<http://religionandcivilsociety.com>

**Meeting Times:** Mon, 2-4pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Peter Scott

**Readings:** All of the readings for the course have been compiled in a course reader provided here. The assigned readings should be read in advance and you should be prepared to discuss the readings in each seminar. As well, we recommend that you purchase two recent books, *The New Visibility of Religion* Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, and *Religion and Media*, by Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber. Both texts provide a host of key sources for this course and further bibliographical suggestions to aid your research.

**Course Requirements:** 1 x 10 minute presentation (formative), and 1x6000 word essay (summative 100%)

**Online Resource:** <http://religionandcivilsociety.com>

**Course Content:** At one time there was a radical division between religion and public life, but today there is enormous interest in the role of religion in the public sphere. In particular, the relationship between religion and politics is receiving much attention in the media. This phenomenon raises a number of key questions. What counts as religious in various media representations? How do different forms of media effect the information presented (e.g. TV, Radio, Print, Online)? How do different religious traditions employ media for their own aims and agendas? This course aims to furnish students with a critical understanding of key concepts and themes appropriate to this new mediatisation of religion. Students will therefore explore various analytical approaches (e.g. theological, philosophical, historical and anthropological) in order to deepen their research

upon particular mediations of religion in political life. Although rooted in the western tradition, the course will explore a variety of religious traditions or aspects thereof.

Students will be required to write one 6,000 word essay and participate in weekly seminars which will usually begin with a short lecture before going on to discuss key readings. Furthermore, during the last two weeks students will prepare a 10 minute presentation which will introduce their own research topic for discussion and feedback.

**Course Aims:**

1. To provide opportunities and resources for study of the relationships between religions and political activity and of the representation of religions in the media.

**Learning Outcomes:**

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. use appropriate methodological resources for analysing the roles of religions in political activities (local, national, international).
2. use appropriate methodological resources for analysing representations of religions in various types of media (newspapers, tv, radio, film, books);
3. discuss the work of some influential scholars working on these subjects;
4. discuss examples of relationships between religions and politics and/or the media.
5. plan and carry out a research project on an aspect of the relationship between one or more religions and politics and/or the media.

**Programme**

<p><b>Week 1</b> <b>Jan 31</b></p>	<p>Welcome and Introduction to the Course 30-40 min Lecture on Religion and Politics by Dr. Michael Hoelzl.</p> <p>Background reading: Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, "Introduction," in <i>The New Visibility of Religion</i>, London: Continuum, 2008, pp. 1-20 and Hent de Vries "In Media Res: Global Religion, Public Spheres, and the Task of Contemporary Comparative Religious Studies," in <i>Religion and Media</i>, edited by Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 3-42</p>
<p><b>RELIGION, POLITICS AND THE MEDIA: RAISING THE QUESTIONS</b></p>	
<p><b>Week 2</b> <b>Feb 7</b></p>	<p>This week the seminar will run in conjunction with the departmental seminar running on Thursdays from 4-5pm, topic TBA</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> <b>Feb 14</b></p>	<p>Religion, Politics and the Media in the United States (online viewing and discussion led by Dr. Peter Scott) For this week, we will orient ourselves to the problem of Religion, Politics and the Media in relation to the recent presidential elections in the US. One of the debates between McCain and Obama was held at a prominent Evangelical Church pastured by Rick Warren. This debate raises a series of questions:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warren’s use of the unity of faith and politics in opposition to the separation of church and state.</li> <li>2. The scripted nature of the candidates’ responses</li> <li>3. The lack of audience response and participation</li> <li>4. The hidden ideologies of power implied by the event’s location in a church</li> <li>5. It’s reproduction on TV, the Internet, and in the news outlets. In particular, the way in which Obama and McCain tried to manoeuvre not only the debate, but the way it was framed in these various reproductions.</li> </ol> <p>The Saddleback Forum between Obama and McCain can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.saddlebackcivilforum.com/the presidency/">http://www.saddlebackcivilforum.com/the presidency/</a>  Transcript is in the reader but also available at: <a href="http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0808/17/se.01.html">http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0808/17/se.01.html</a></p> <p>You would do well to research as much as possible about this debate online before this session. Further historical reading on the religion and civil society in the United States is available in the reader: Michael Hoelzl and Graham Ward, “Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859),” in <i>Religion and Political Thought</i>, London: Continuum, 2006, pp. 149-160.</p>
<b>MEDIATING RELIGION: FORMS AND MEANINGS</b>	
<p><b>Week 4</b> <b>Feb 21</b></p>	<p>The Politics of Idle Talk, 30-40 min lecture by Professor Jeremy Tambling</p> <p>Jacques Derrida, “Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy,” in <i>Derrida and Negative Theology</i>, edited by Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, New York: State University Press of New York, 1992, pp. 25-29 and 48-57.</p> <p>Jacques Derrida, “Above All, No Journalists!” in Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber, <i>Religion and Media</i>, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, pp. 56-65.</p> <p>Background reading: Martin Heidegger, “Idle Talk (V.35)” in <i>Being and Time</i>, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962, pp. 211-214.</p>
<p><b>Week 5</b> <b>Feb 28</b></p>	<p>Cultural Hermeneutics: Interpreting Religion, 30-40 min lecture by Professor Graham Ward</p> <p>Graham Ward, “The Governing Question III: What is the Relationship between Religious Practices and Cultural Transformation,” in <i>Cultural Transformation and Religious Practice</i>, CUP, 2004, pp. 117-142.</p>
<b>MEDIATING RELIGION: TRADITIONS AND INTERACTIONS</b>	
<p><b>Week 6</b> <b>Mar 7</b></p>	<p>Religion and the Laws of the Land: 30-40 min lecture by Dr. Peter Scott.</p> <p>Rowan Williams, “Civil and Religious Law in England: A Religious Perspective,” available in the reader and at: <a href="http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/feb/07/religion.world2">http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/feb/07/religion.world2</a></p> <p>Bernard Jackson, “‘Transformative Accommodation’ and Religious Law,” <i>Ecclesiastical Law Society</i>, 2009, 131-153.</p>
<p><b>Week 7</b></p>	<p>The Holocaust in the Media: A Secularised Way of Representing Jews?,</p>

<p><b>Mar 14</b></p>	<p>30-40 min lecture by Dr. Jean-Marc Dreyfus Wulf Kansteiner, "Entertaining Catastrophe: The Reinvention of the Holocaust in the Television of the Federal Republic of Germany," in <i>New German Critique</i>, No. 90 (Autumn, 2003), pp. 135-62, also available at: <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/3211113">http://www.jstor.org/stable/3211113</a></p> <p>Further reading: Saul Friedlander, "The Shoah in Present Historical Consciousness" and Andreas Huyssen, "Monuments and Holocaust Memory in a Media Age," in Michael L. Morgan, <i>A Holocaust Reader: Responses to Nazi Extermination</i>, OUP, 2001, pp. 276-90 and pp. 359-63 respectively.</p>
<p><b>Week 8</b> <b>Mar 21</b></p>	<p>Benedict XVI's Regensburg Address, 30-40 min Lecture by Dr. Michael Hoelzl Benedict XVI, "Regensburg Address," available at: <a href="http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/sepember/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html">http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/sepember/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html</a></p> <p>Talal Asad, "Introduction," in <i>Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity</i>, Stanford University Press, 2003, pp. 1-17</p>
<p><b>Week 9</b> <b>Mar 28</b></p>	<p>European Islam 30-40 min lecture by Professor Alan Williams Philip Jenkins, "Making Muslims," in <i>God's Continent: Christianity, Islam and Europe's Religious Crisis</i>, OUP, 2007, pp. 121-47.</p>
<p><b>Week 10</b> <b>Apr 4</b></p>	<p>Student Presentations: Here students will give short 10 minute presentations which introduce their research papers. <b>Easter Break</b></p>
<p><b>Week 11</b> <b>May 2</b></p>	<p>Student Presentation Feedback and Research Essay Preparation</p>