

Lehman College
Leh300-RO2
Prof. Regina Joyce
Spring 2007

A Tale of Two Forces:
Religion and Global Politics

Texts:

Revenge: A Story of Hope-Laura Blumenfeld
A Mighty Heart-The Brave Life and Death of My Husband Danny Pearl-Mariane Pearl
Religion in Global Politics-Jeff Haynes

Supplementary Texts:

The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the 21st Century-Robert Cooper
The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation-R.Scott Appleby
The Dignity of Difference-Jonathan Sacks
Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations-Michael Waltzer
Islam and War: A Study in Comparative Ethics-John Kelsay
Development as Freedom-Amartya Sen
Islam and Democracy in the Middle East-Ed. Diamond, Plattner, and Brumberg
A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory-Ed. Dirks, Eley, Ortner
Islam in Transition-John Donohue, John Esposito
Mirror for Humanity-Conrad Phillip Kottak
Philosophy of Religion-Brian Davies
Buddhism-Smith and Novak
Engaged Buddhist Reader-Ed. Arnold Kotler

Course description:

This course will provide an overview into sociopolitical movements and religious issues displaying a number of common yet complex features reaching across cultural boundaries. Throughout history, world religions have functioned as sacred grounds for meaning, while being subject to radically different interpretations and conflicts as well as differing social and political realities. Even though Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism all have long traditions, in the postmodern era, they have also been very concerned with fundamentalism although not entirely dominated by it. Since the world is in a period of widely differing religious interpretations spurred by micro and macro economic changes within individual countries as well as under the far reaching umbrella of globalization, an understanding of religions has become an urgent necessity. Therefore this course will consider a wide range of texts trying to not only reach an understanding of these varied areas but also to analyze religion and contemporary and comparative politics in order to comprehend privatized beliefs reappearing as actors in the public sphere.

Schedule of Courses:

February

February 1:

Introduction- What is religion and culture? What is the relationship between politics and power?

February 8:

“A Cleric’s Journey Leads to a Suburban Frontier”-Andrea Elliot
“A Church’s Challenge: Holding On to its Own”- David Gonzalez
“Building a Church, and Paying off a Sacred Debt”- David Gonzalez
“A Sliver of a Storefront, a Faith on the Rise”- David Gonzalez

February 15:

Haynes- Chap. 1- Religion in Global Politics and Chap. 2- USA

February 22:

Latin America

Film: La Vendedora de Rosas- (try to see: Maria Full of Grace)

March

March 1:

Haynes-Chap. 3-Latin America
Discussion of the two films
Case Study-“Rose Trade and the Environment”

March 8:

Western /Eastern Europe
Chap. 4 and 5-Jeff Haynes
Discussion of Communism and Islam
Case Study: Islam in France

March 15:

Africa: *Film-Hotel Rwanda* (try to see: Blood Diamonds)

March 22:

Discussion of films
Chap. 6- Jeff Haynes

March 29:

Chap. 7 and 8 –Jeff Haynes- group presentations on
The Middle East and Central Asia

April

April 12:

Film: Munich

April 19:

Chap. 9-India- Jeff Haynes

Group Presentations

April 26:

Chap. 10- South East Asia- Jeff Haynes

Group Presentations

May

May 3- A Mighty Heart- group presentations-individual reaction paper

May 10- Revenge-group presentations- individual reaction paper

May 17-Final Exam

Grade Determination:

The final grade for this LEH course will be calculated using the following formula:

20%- attendance and participation in class

30%- 3 reaction essays (3 pages each) corresponding to the films viewed in class

20%- presentation and corresponding essay- Mighty Heart (5 pages)

20%- presentation and corresponding essay- Revenge (5 pages)

10%- group chapter presentation