Course Overview

Semester: Semester 1 - 2009
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods: Lecture, Integrated Learning, Tutorial

Brief Course Description
This course covers religion in contemporary societies, and in particular the impact of religion on the political arena. Topics include right-wing "fundamentalisms", left-wing religious movements of resistance to social oppression, and religious responses to the environmental crises. Case studies are drawn from various societies (e.g. USA, Middle East, India, Sri Lanka, and Latin America). The aim is to enable students to reach a sympathetic yet critical understanding of the place of these developments in contemporary societies.

Contact Hours
Tutorial for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term
Lecture for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term

Learning Materials/Texts
There are no set texts for this subject. The book of readings must be purchased and brought along to the tutorial every week. Students are expected to do at least 20 pages of the readings for each week,
and discussion in tutorials will be based on the readings. The book of readings can be purchased from UPrint, which is located in the Shortland Building, next to the back stairs and under the Godfrey Tanner Bar.

Course Objectives
1. To enable students to understand the variety of religious expressions in the contemporary world.
2. To equip them to make informed and intelligent judgments and appreciations of such expressions.
3. To enable them to understand the social, political and cultural conditions which give rise to such expressions.
4. To enable them to understand the impact on the political process, local and global, of such expressions, in particular in regard to processes of identity formation at individual and group levels.
5. To enable the students to acquire an informed and critical understanding of key concepts employed in this field, including "globalisation," "secularisation" and "fundamentalism".
6. To aid in the development of high-level oral and written communication skills.

Course Content
Topics include right-wing "fundamentalisms", religious revivalism, left-wing religious movements of resistance to social oppression as well as religious and spiritualist responses to modernization, secularization, globalization, social insecurities and the environmental crises. The interactions between religious and political institutions will be discussed and issues such as identity construction, public policy and violence/terrorism will be addressed. Case studies are drawn from various societies (e.g. USA, Middle East, India, Sri Lanka, Latin America). The aim is to enable students to reach a sympathetic yet critical understanding of the place of these developments in contemporary societies.

Assessment Items
| Assignment | Group/tutorial participation and contribution | worth 10% |
| Assignment 2 | Essays / Written Assignments | worth 40% |
| Assignment 3 | Essays / Written Assignments | worth 50% |

(see the Essential Assessment Criteria Section for more details)

Assumed Knowledge
40 units of study at 100 level (SOCA 1030 recommended)

Replacing Courses: SOCA2520; Students who have successfully completed SOCA2520 are not permitted to take this course.

Callaghan Campus Timetable

SOCA3902
RELIGION & POL. IN CONTEMP SOCIETY
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 1 - 2009
Lecture and Tutorial Wednesday 1:00PM - 2:00PM [SRLT3] Commencing WEEK 1
or Wednesday 4:00PM - 5:00PM [MCG25] Commencing WEEK 1

Plagiarism
University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one's own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
- using another's ideas without due acknowledgment;
- working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.
Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Student Academic Integrity Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University uses an electronic text matching system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

- Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
- Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).
- Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

Written Assessment Items

Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Marks and Grades Released During Term

All marks and grades released during the term, are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School on the recommendation of the School Assessment body.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- **Requests for Special Consideration** must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
- **Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items** must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.
- **Requests for Rescheduling Exams** must be received no later than ten working days prior the
Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. In the first instance, students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

**Changing your Enrolment**

If students are enrolled after the census dates listed below they are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2009

For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2009

For Trimester 1 courses: 18 February 2009

For Trimester 2 courses: 9 June 2009

For Trimester 3 courses: 22 September 2009

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students

[https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au](https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au)

**Faculty Information**

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

**Callaghan Campus**

- Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building
- Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre

**City Precinct**

- City Hub and Information Common: Ground Floor, University House

**Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)**

- Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria

For Port Macquarie students, contact your program officer or EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au, phone 4921 5000

For Singapore students, your first point of contact is your PSB Program Executive

**Faculty websites**

Faculty of Education and Arts

Contact details

Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie
Phone: 02 4921 5000
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah
Phone: 02 4348 4030
Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)
Phone: 02 4348 4123
Fax: 02 4348 4145
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline

No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator.

Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.
Essential Criteria in Assessment

It is part of the essential requirement of the course that students attend tutorials. Students need to prepare for their tutorials by doing the relevant reading from the book of readings and should contribute to tutorial discussions. Students are expected to attend all workshops/tutorials. A satisfactory attendance record of at least 80% of scheduled classes must be met to pass the course. Tutors will keep attendance records for their classes. Students are expected to be punctual; lateness of more than 15 minutes will be considered absence, and students must attend the whole duration of the tutorial to be considered present.

Final grades in this course will be based on 3 assessment tasks:

**Assignment 1: One Seminar Presentation worth 10 %, Weeks 2-6 and 8-12**

You need to demonstrate that you have read and tried to understand the set readings for each week. The best way to do this is, first of all, to decide what you think is the central point of the readings, that is, what is the main claim the author wants you to be persuaded of or to think about, and the main lines of the author’s case for that claim. You should come to seminars with clear notes that outline the major ideas or arguments in the readings and be prepared to make critical comments and assessments on how successful the author has been in making a particular case or explaining an argument. One of the aims of seminars is to develop your *spoken* skills through group presentations, arguments, and discussion with others on the problems we consider. Your participation will be appraised according to the regularity and quality of your participation in the seminars, the quality of your preparation, the cases and questions that your raise, and your willingness to contribute to discussions with your fellow students.

In Week 1, your tutor will divide the tutorial group into 5 small groups. These groups should choose ONE week (out of Weeks 2-6 and 8-12) to present a group seminar at the beginning of each session. The members of each group will collaboratively prepare for their presentation and will start their seminar with presenting a summary of related set readings. Then they will carry on with their presentation by referring to some case studies and extra sources. They need to provide a critical assessment of readings. They are also required to ask the class a few questions during their presentations and answer questions asked by the class at the end of their presentation. Each individual member will be marked in terms of their performance and in accordance with the following criteria:

- Evidence of having read the set readings thoroughly and thoughtfully
- Identification of issues raised in the lecture and readings
- At least, one RELEVANT case study, example or evidence (from outside the Book of Reading) included
- The relevance of the case to the topic is shortly but clearly delineated
- A reasonable number of salient points and stimulating questions are raised

**Assignment 2: Literature Review (Reading Assessment) (1250-1500 words) worth 40 %, due on Thursday 9 April (Week 6)**

Each student will select ONE reading out of the reading set (from Weeks 1-6), summarize the author’s perspective, and use other perspectives from the Reader (reading set) to critique and reflect on his/her approach. The topic of the selected reading MUST BE DIFFERENT from the topic of Seminar Presentation.

You may use examples to illustrate your discussion. At the end of the Review, you should provide a couple of concluding paragraphs assessing the reading you have selected. You should provide details of all your sources including the case studies and quotes. The literature review will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Evidence of having read a reading thoroughly and thoughtfully (the selected reading must be from the set reading related to a week between Week 1 to 6)
- Identification of issues raised in the reading
- Ability to summarize
- At least, one RELEVANT case study, example or real evidence (from outside the Book of Reading) included to examine/evaluate the author’s perspective
Assignment 3: Major Essay (2000 -2500 words) worth 50 %, HARD COPY and ELECTRONIC COPY due on Friday 05 June

Select an essay question from the list of Major Essay Questions (will be distributed later in the semester). You may prefer to develop your own subject. Whether you want to choose a topic from the list or have your own topic, you are required to write an Essay Plan and submit it at your tutorial in Week 7 (Thursday 09 April). We will be discussing your choice and plan at the tutorial.

NB Submitting the essay plan is obligatory although it will not be marked.

Note: the topic of your major essay MUST BE DIFFERENT from the topic of your literature review and seminar presentation.

Your major essay will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Clearly answers the research question
- Addresses the topic and explores its implications
- Depth and breadth of literature review and research; identifies relevant issues in the literature
- Adequate data or information and appropriate empirical evidence/case provided to support the argument
- Not just descriptive, but also explanatory
- Originality of analysis (able to develop an independent and critical argument beyond the set reading, not just repeating the available analyses)
- Appropriate title
- Insightful introduction (clearly shows the aims of essay and outlines its structure)
- Logically structured argument (easy to follow the logic)
- Insightful conclusion (a short clear answer to the research question as well as a short discussion of implications and findings)
- Proper, correct and consistent style of referencing inside the text
- Adequate number of sources with academic quality
- Consistent Bibliography
- Well-written, correct spelling and grammar
- Stylistically consistent

NB You must make a reasonable attempt at ALL assessment tasks in order to get a final grade in this course.

Your final Assignment must be submitted in two formats:

1. A hard copy which must be typed, double-spaced, with a readable font, e.g. Times New Roman 12 pt, with a self-addressed envelope so it can be returned to you after marking. It is your responsibility to include an envelope large enough for your assignment and with the right postage stamps.
2. An electronic copy submission to Turnitin. (see the Important Additional Information for more details).

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - [http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm](http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm)

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the
course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

**Important Additional Information**

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students