

# For God and Country? Thinking about Religion and Citizenship

Theology 486  
Boston College, Fall 2008

## Professor Erik Owens

Class meets: Tuesdays 1:30-4:00pm  
email: erik.owens@bc.edu

Office: Boisi Center, 24 Quincy Rd.  
Office Hours: Mon. 2-4pm & by appt.  
Office phone: (617) 552-1861

## Course description:

This course explores the religious and ethical dimensions of citizenship, with particular attention to the points at which religious and political allegiances conflict or appear to conflict. With an eye toward the contemporary American context, we will draw upon diverse political philosophies, faith traditions, historical periods and geographic regions for insight. We will consider the nature of this conflict between God and country, attempts to resolve it in theory and practice, and contemporary issues that exemplify it. Among the many questions we will ask: Are patriotism and faith compatible? What is the difference between a good person and a good citizen? (Can we be one but not the other?) What are the limits of religious tolerance in a diverse society? How can we educate the next generation to sustain the values and institutions we hold dear?

## Required Texts:

Most of the course readings are articles or chapters that will be posted electronically on our course site on BC Share. **The following texts have been ordered at the BC bookstore**, and are also on reserve at the library:

- Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship* (NYU, 2004).
- Martha C. Nussbaum, *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, Joshua Cohen, ed. (Beacon, 1996).
- Nancy L. Rosenblum, ed. *Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith: Religious Accommodation in Pluralist Democracies* (Princeton, 2000).

Suggested readings are also provided for each class session. While I do in fact suggest that you read each of these articles or books at some point, doing so each week would be an outsized accomplishment. I list them here primarily to offer additional bibliographical support for your research papers. You will not be expected to read them, and you will not be tested on them.

## Course requirements:

1. **Participation: 10% of your grade** will be based on your participation in class discussions. Diverse points of view will be presented in the course readings, and they are likewise welcomed in the ensuing discussion. In the interest of maintaining an ongoing, constructive dialogue about topics that can be rather contentious, you are expected to demonstrate mutual respect and civility in the classroom.
2. **Reflection papers:** Two reflection papers, each approximately 1,000 words in length and worth **15% of your grade**, will be due on the Friday following completion of Parts 1 and 2 of the class. You will be asked to draw upon the readings in that section of the course to reflect upon a choice of topics provided by the instructor.
3. **Student presentations:** Students (alone or in pairs, depending on enrollment) will lead the class discussions in Part 3 of the course. This assignment is worth **20% of your final grade**. You will be graded on your knowledge of the texts, ability to summarize it for the class, and the questions you pose for discussion, all of which should be reflected in a summary document you post on the course wiki. You will select the topic of your presentation early in the semester to give you ample time to prepare.

4. **Final paper:** You are required to construct a well-written scholarly argument (~15pp for undergrads, ~20pp for grad students) about an aspect of religion and citizenship that you find challenging, compelling, or curious. Topics are subject to approval by the professor; paper proposals must be submitted by class 12 (November 18), and the final paper is due—in print—by 4pm on Tuesday December 16. Your paper must draw upon the course readings; although additional research is welcomed when appropriate, it is neither required nor expected. This assignment is worth **40% of your final course grade**.

## Course Outline

### Part 1: Citizenship as a legal, political and civic concept

1. Sep 2: Introduction: What is citizenship?
2. Sep 9: Civic republican theories of citizenship
3. Sep 16: Civic liberal theories of citizenship
4. Sep 23: Civil religion and church-state separation in the United States
5. Sep 30: Contemporary American citizenship
- Oct 1: *short reflection paper due*

### Part 2: Religious reflection on civic obligation

6. Oct 7: The sacred and secular in political theology and theological politics
7. Oct 14: Theologies of public life
8. Oct 21: The rhetorical politics of church and state
9. Oct 28: Religious voter guides as public theology
- Oct 31: *short reflection paper due*

### Part 3: Religion and citizenship in conflict

10. Nov 4: Religious freedom and free speech
11. Nov 11: Religious freedom and public education
12. Nov 18: Patriotism  
*Paper proposal due*
13. Nov 25: Prophetic religion and civil disobedience
14. Dec 2: (a) The family as civic and religious institution  
(b) Conclusion: Thinking about religion and citizenship
- Dec 16: *Final paper due*

# Course Schedule

## PART ONE: CITIZENSHIP AS A LEGAL, POLITICAL AND CIVIC CONCEPT

### (1) Sep 2: What is citizenship?

#### Required reading:

- None.

#### Suggested reading:

- Patricia Houlihan, "Citizenship for Sale?" *Chicago GSB Magazine*, 7 June 2008.
- Michael Ignatieff, "The Myth of Citizenship," in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship* (SUNY, 1995), p. 53-77.
- J.G.A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Classical Times," in *Theorizing Citizenship*, p. 29-52.

### (2) Sep 9: Civic republican theories of citizenship

#### Required reading:

- Iseult Honohan, *Civic Republicanism* (Routledge, 2002), p. 1-18, 39-44, 75-81, 102-110, 145-79. [71 pp total]
- Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship* (NYU, 2004), p. 1-41 (skim), 55-64.
- Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton, 2007), p. xi-xii, 212-223.

#### Suggested reading:

- Jonathan Laurence & Justin Vaisse, "From Muslims into French Citizens," in *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Brookings, 2006), p.135-191.

### (3) Sep 16: Civic liberal theories of citizenship

#### Required reading:

- William Galston, *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 3-11.
- Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship*, p. 65-87.
- John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1685), excerpts.

#### Suggested reading:

- John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (Columbia, 1993).
- Alan Wolfe, *The Future of Liberalism* (Knopf, 2009).
- Stephen Macedo, *Diversity and Distrust: Civic education in a Multicultural Democracy* (Harvard, 2000).
- Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, eds. *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford, 2000).

**(4) Sep 23: Civil religion and church-state separation in the United States**

Required reading:

- Erik Owens, "Separation of Church and State," vol. 2 of the Boisi Center Papers on Religion in the United States, 2007.
- Harry Stout, "In Search of Christian America," in *Faith and Citizenship in Turbulent Times, Reflections* 94.2 (Fall 2007): 21-25.
- Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Dædalus* 96.1 (Winter 1967): 1-21.
- Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address" (1865)

Suggested reading:

- Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Harvard, 2002).
- Alan Wolfe, "Civil Religion Revisited: Quiet Faith in Middle-Class America," in *Obligations of Citizenship*, p. 32-72
- Martha Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality* (Basic, 2008).

**(5) Sep 30: Contemporary American citizenship**

Required reading:

- Sigal Ben-Porath, "Citizenship in Wartime," in *Citizenship Under Fire: Democratic Education in Times of Conflict* (Princeton, 2006), 9-32.
- Russell Dalton, *The Good Citizen: How a Younger Generation is Reshaping American Politics* (CQ Press, 2007), p. 1-52.
- Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (Harvard, 1998), p. 1-10, 294-314.

Suggested reading:

- Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in American History* (Yale, 1997), esp. Intro and Chap. 1.
- Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), p.1-80.

**Oct 3: Reflection paper #1 due**

- Electronic submission by 3pm.

## PART TWO: RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS ON CIVIC OBLIGATION

### (6) Oct 7: The sacred and secular in political theology and theological politics

#### Required reading:

- E.J. Dionne, "Theologies of Democracy in a New Century" in Faith and Citizenship in Turbulent Times, *Reflections* 94.2 (Fall 2007): 10-15.
- Michael Sattler, "The Schleithem Confession" (aka Schleithem Articles), in Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, eds., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought 100-1625* (Eerdmans, 1999), p. 631-37.
- Paul Griffiths, "Religious Allegiance and Political Sovereignty: An Irreconcilable Tension?" in Carlson and Owens, eds., *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics* (Georgetown, 2003), p. 247-55.
- Michael McConnell, "Believers as Equal Citizens" in *Obligations of Citizenship*, p. 90-110.

#### Suggested reading:

- Graham Walker, "Illusory Pluralism, Inexorable Establishment," in *Obligations of Citizenship*, p. 111-126.
- Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Abingdon, 1989).
- Joshua Cohen and Deborah Chasman, eds., *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy* (Princeton, 2004).

**Oct 9, 4:30p** **Boisi Center panel discussion: "Catholics and the 2008 Election"**  
Devlin 101 with Amy Sullivan, Michael Sean Winters, and Alan Wolfe

### (7) Oct 14: Theologies of public life

#### Required reading:

- John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Sheed and Ward, 1960), 5-24, 79-96. [36pp]
- Robin Lovin, *Christian Realism and the New Realities* (Cambridge, 2008), 1-18.
- Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life During the World* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 1-27 (Introduction), 145-168 (Intro to Part II: "The Liturgy of Citizenship").

#### Suggested reading:

- Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago, 2008).
- Martin Luther, "On Temporal Authority" (1523).

### (8) Oct 21: The rhetorical politics of church and state

#### Required reading:

- Barack Obama, "A Call to Renewal" (2006) and "A More Perfect Union" (2008)
- Mitt Romney, "Faith in America" (2007)
- John F. Kennedy, "Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association" (1960)

#### Suggested reading:

- Selections from the Christian Gospels and Pauline letters: Matthew 5 and Luke 6 (Sermon on the Mount/Plain and Beatitudes); Mark 12.13-17, Luke 20.20-26, Matthew 22.15-22 (Paying

taxes); John 18.33-37, 19.19-22 (earthly and divine kingship); Romans 13 (obedience to authorities).

- Selections from the Torah and Prophets: Exodus 20-23 (Decalogue and Covenant Code); Amos (entire); Jeremiah 31.31-34 (new covenant).
- Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate* (Yale, 1997), p. 1-55, 67-80, 111-119.
- Mario Cuomo, "Religious Belief and Public Morality: A Catholic Governor's Perspective" (1984)

**(9) Oct 28: Religious voter guides as public theology**

- "An Evangelical Manifesto: A Declaration of Evangelical Identity and Public Commitment" (2008)
- U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" (2007).
- Catholic Answers Action, "Voters Guide for Serious Catholics" (2006).
- Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, "Get out the Vote 2008."
- Council on American-Islamic Relations, "CAIR Universal Voter Guide" (2008).

**Oct 31: Reflection paper #2 due**

- Electronic submission by 3pm.

## PART THREE: RELIGION AND CITIZENSHIP IN CONFLICT

**(10) Nov 4: Religious freedom and free speech**

Required reading:

- Charles Haynes, "The Lively Experiment: Why Religious Freedom Requires the Right to Offend," paper delivered at Boston College, 24 March 2007.
- Adam Liptak, "Unlike Others, U.S. Defends Freedom to Offend in Speech," *NYT* 06-12-08
- Yael Tamir, "Remember Amalek: Religious Hate Speech," in *Obligations of Citizenship*, p.321-334.
- Tariq Ramadan, "Free Speech & Civic Responsibility," *International Herald Tribune* 6 Feb 2006; and "Why I'm Banned in the U.S.A." *Washington Post*, 3 October 2006.

Suggested reading:

- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (1863)
- Cass Sunstein, *Why Societies Need Dissent* (Harvard, 2003).
- Stephen Carter, *The Dissent of the Governed: A Meditation on Law, Religion and Loyalty* (Harvard, 1998).

**Nov 6, 4:30p** **Boisi Center panel discussion: Election 2008 Analysis & Discussion**  
Devlin 101 with Alan Wolfe, Kay Schlozman and Marc Landy

## (11) Nov 11: Religious freedom and public education

### Required reading:

- Kent Greenawalt, *Does God Belong in Public Schools?* (Princeton, 2005), 1-34.
- Michael McConnell, "Education Disestablishment: Why Democratic Values Are Ill-Served by Democratic Control of Schooling," in Macedo and Tamir, eds., *Moral and Political Education*, NOMOS XLIII (NYU, 2002), p. 87-146.
- Brief summaries of *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972); *Mozert v. Hawkins City Board of Ed.* (1987); *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002); *Locke v. Davey* (2004).

### Suggested reading:

- Erik Owens, "Religion and Civic Education in American Public Schools," chapter in Karin Johnston, ed. *Religion, Politics and Policy in the United States and Germany*, vol. 5 (Washington: American Institute for Comparative German Studies, 2007).
- Eamonn Callan, *Creating Citizens: Political Education and Liberal Democracy* (Oxford, 1997).
- Stephen Macedo, "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God vs. John Rawls?" *Ethics* 105 (April 1995): 468-96.

## Nov 13, 4:30p "American Secularism for American Muslims: Challenges and Prospects"

Devlin 101 Abdullahi An-Na'im, Emory University  
*The 9th Annual Prophetic Voices Lecture, The Boisi Center*

## (12) Nov 18: Patriotism

\*\*\* Paper proposals due \*\*\*

### Required reading:

- Martha Nussbaum et al., *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, Joshua Cohen, ed. (Beacon, 1996), p. vii-xiv (preface/intro), 1-37 (Nussbaum, Appiah, Barber), 66-71 (Gutmann), 78-84 (McConnell), 111-121 (Sen, Taylor), and 131-44 (Nussbaum). [~75 pp.]
- Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (Kansas, 2005), p. ix-xiv (preface) and 209-222 (conclusion).
- Summaries of *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* (1940) and *West Virginia State Board of Ed. v. Barnette* (1943)
- Peter Gomes, "Patriotism Is Not Enough," Sermon at the Memorial Church, Harvard University, 6 October 2002.

### Suggested reading:

- Watch "Religious Freedom and the Pledge of Allegiance" online at Boston College Front Row, <http://frontrow.bc.edu/program/newdow/>
- Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" (1852).
- Donald Shriver, *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember Its Misdeeds* (Oxford, 2005), p. 1-14 (introduction) and 263-86 (Chap. 5, "Being Human While Being American: Agenda for the American Future").
- Dahlia Lithwick, "One Nation, Under Hallmark, Indivisible," *Slate*, 24 March 2004.
- Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" [in *Theorizing Citizenship*, p. 209-228.]
- William Willimon, "Can Christians be Patriots?" in Michael Long and Tracy wegner Sadd, eds., *God and Country? Diverse Perspectives on Christianity and Patriotism* (Palgrave, 2007), p. 97-107.

**(13) Nov 25: Prophetic religion and civil disobedience**

Required reading:

- David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow* (UNC, 2004), p. 1-8, 67-104, 179-90.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" (1963).
- Susan B. Anthony, Speech at her trial for voting (1873), in Witte/Alexander, eds., *The Teachings of Modern Christianity* vol.2 (Columbia, 2006), p.248-9, 261-3.
- Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence (1776)

Suggested reading:

- Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (1849)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963)
- Mohandas K. Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work and Ideas*, ed. Louis Fischer (Vintage, 2002).

**(14) Dec 2: (a) The family as civic and religious institution**

Required reading:

- John Witte, Jr., "A Cheerful and Apt Conversation about Marriage," in *God's Joust, God's Justice: Law and Religion in the Western Tradition* (Eerdmans, 2006), p. 295-321.
- Andrew Sullivan, "Why the M Word Matters to Me," *Time*, 8 Feb 2004.
- Packet of articles on the challenge of sharia courts in liberal democracies.

Suggested reading:

- William Stacey Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law and Politics* (Eerdmans, 2007).
- David Blankenhorn, *The Future of Marriage* (Encounter, 2007).

**(b) Conclusion: Thinking about religion and citizenship**

Required reading:

- None.

**Dec 16: Final papers due**

- Print copies only; deliver to my office by 4pm



Many people are atheists because they think there is no evidence for God's existence - or at least no reliable evidence. They argue that a person should only believe in things for which they have good evidence. A philosopher might say that they start from the presumption of atheism. The presumption of Atheism.Â This half-way house between religion and science still had problems for the faithful, since it didn't seem to leave much room for God to intervene in the universe - and certainly it didn't need God to keep things ticking over. God the creator. But the half-way house also provided some support for the faithful. They could look at the universe and see how beautifully made it was, and be reassured that God had demonstrated his existence by creating such a wonderful place. If you think religion belongs to the past and we live in a new age of reason, you need to check out the facts: 84% of the world's population identifies with a religious group. Members of this demographic are generally younger and produce more children than those who have no religious affiliation, so the world is getting more religious, not less - although there are significant geographical variations.Â Geography is important in religion. Asia-Pacific is the most populous region in the world, and also the most religious. It is home to 99% of Hindus, 99% of Buddhists, and 90% of those practising folk or traditional religions.Â There are seven countries where Buddhists form the majority of the population: Bhutan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.