Leadership and Religious Values  
LDST 387  
Spring 2011  
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Douglas A. Hicks  
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Office hours: Wednesday, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.  
and by appointment

Class meeting time: Wednesday and Friday, 9:00 – 10:15 a.m.  
and location: Jepson Hall 102

Learning Objectives

This course seeks to enable students:

- to think critically about how religious values, symbols, and ideas complicate and contribute to leadership in a variety of public spheres;
- to understand how leaders and followers have drawn, in direct and indirect ways, on their religiously based moral convictions;
- to understand the interrelationship of the moral and legal dimensions of religion in different aspects of public life; and
- to increase their own competency to lead and follow with persons from multiple religious, moral, and other perspectives.

Statement of Course and its Purposes

Religious expression is vital to quality of life for many citizens. Among an increasingly diverse U.S. population, strong majorities continue to affirm belief in God or the divine. While many of these persons may consciously or unconsciously “compartmentalize” religion to a separate, private realm, a significant portion of citizens attempt to live out their religious convictions in their public activities: in the workplace, in political life, and in civil society.

Both leaders and followers face questions about the function of religion—for themselves, for other members of their groups and organizations, and for those bodies as a whole. How do persons appropriately integrate their religious worldviews and commitments into the various activities of their lives? How do public agencies, schools, and businesses “negotiate” religion? In a society marked more by scandal than by good leadership, what place should religiously based moral convictions play among leaders and followers? Does religious diversity necessarily create a new Tower of Babel in which no one can understand each other? Or does such diversity create a leadership opportunity in which moral consensus can be reached, as engaged leaders and followers openly express their religiously based moral convictions, along with various other
perspectives? How have recent events, from September 11, 2001, and onwards, altered the role of religion for leaders and public life in general?

These are some of the central questions of this course. The focus here is not leadership within religious organizations in which persons generally (but not wholly!) agree on essential matters of faith. Rather, it considers how religious values do and should operate in leadership situations in broader “public” life in which people from various religions and no religions live together—in politics, the workplace, universities, public schools, media, and so on.

Political, civil-society, social-movement, military, and even business leaders have often invoked religious language and imagery to further their ends—whether personalized or socialized. Leaders’ appeals to God and to Christian and Jewish scriptures gave the civil-rights movement a significantly greater claim to authority and legitimacy than it otherwise would have had. Many followers in the civil-rights movement, too, acted for justice out of faith. In response to recent terrorism, religious faith was a resource for many persons seeking consolation and a sense of community. At the same time, it is important to ask whether and how some uses of religion that serve political, economic, or other ends become abuses—either because the means or the ends do not reflect good leadership. Leaders and followers have long had to think critically about appropriate uses of religion in public life.

The questions raised thus far involve largely moral responses to the sociological reality of widespread religious conviction and diversity. There are also a host of legal questions that must be considered—at least in overview—when discussions of “religion in public” are tackled. The two “prongs” of the religion clause of the First Amendment, addressing religious freedom and religious establishment, have produced perhaps the most tortured legal reasoning by the Supreme Court throughout this century. The questions of establishment, traditionally (and incorrectly) referred to as “church-state” issues, are now more complex than ever. It is important to ask: Which religious institutions and which bodies of government are involved in particular cases? Can these issues be cleanly separated from the other “prong,” dealing with the religious freedom of persons? How are the moral and legal dimensions intertwined? Even leaders wishing to create a culturally and religiously expressive culture must attend to the legal issues—at least as constraints on what is possible for their organization or group. How to negotiate religion in an increasingly diverse society is a leadership challenge in all sectors and contexts of public life.

These and other issues have been taken up in a variety of fields. Thus, like many other Jepson courses, the challenge for this course is not to create a literature ex nihilo (out of nothing), but rather to draw together strands of scholarship to offer an interdisciplinary approach to leadership and religious values. The course ties into central questions of leadership studies. Indeed religious values, seen in one light, create a case study writ large of the negotiation of values and worldviews that all groups and their leaders/followers must address. Or, seen alternatively, is there something about religious values that make them completely distinct from other kinds of values?

The material of the course ties into the literature in ethics and leadership that considers, as Dr. Joanne Ciulla has most succinctly stated, “good” leadership as both effective and moral. The
struggle to determine what is good leadership—along the lines of both effectiveness and morality—must analyze religion explicitly and seriously.

**Texts**

Required texts of the course, available for purchase at the UR bookstore, include:


Additional required readings will be on reserve at Boatwright Library and online.

**Notes on Grading Procedures and the Honor System**

The deadlines for assignments are designed to create a framework in which students are treated fairly and equally and in which they are able to complete all assignments during the course of the semester. Requests for extensions will be granted only under dire circumstances. Assignments are due at the beginning of class and will be penalized by one full letter grade for each day they are late. Unexcused absences from the final examination may not be made up. Please note that any difficulties or problems should be brought to the instructor’s attention as soon as possible—and before the deadline or exam.

The Jepson School supports and adheres to the provisions of the Honor System as sanctioned by the School of Arts and Sciences. Every piece of written work in this course must have the word, “Pledged,” along with the student’s signature, signifying the following: “I pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”

**Course Components and Requirements**

**Class Contribution** (20% of course grade)
The first mark of a successful course is the active participation of each member of the class. Students are expected to attend—and arrive promptly for—all class meetings and to engage fully
in the discussions and activities. The course may also include required events outside of class time. The key element of class discussion is quality, not quantity, of participation. Each student will be responsible for leading discussions during the course of the semester, drawing upon their weekly essays and other preparations.

Cell phones, BlackBerrys, etc., must be turned off or to “all sounds off” mode. Students are permitted to use their laptops to take notes, but they are not permitted to use any electronic device for texting, sending IM, emailing, Web surfing, etc. It is by now counter-cultural to switch our brains to “all distractions off” mode—but this kind of focus is needed in order to accomplish the goals of our seminar.

**Students will be penalized by three percentage points from their final grade for each unexcused absence beyond one absence.**

**Critical Essay (20% of course grade)**
This essay (of approximately 5 pages) will be due on **Friday, February 18**. Guidelines will be provided at least two weeks prior to the due date.

**Research Project and Paper (30% of course grade)**
A major component of the course is a semester-long research project that explores some dimension of religion in contemporary public life. Students will have a limited choice of topics; a research proposal, which must be approved by the instructor, is due on **Friday, March 4**. Students have a choice of working either individually or as a dyad of two students on a particular project. Every student is encouraged to meet with the professor prior to submitting a research proposal topic. All students (whether working individually or as a dyad) will make a required in-class presentation of their findings on one of three dates (to be assigned by instructor): **April 13, 15, or 20**. The material presented by students during these three days may appear on the final examination. The research paper is due at the beginning of class on the day of the presentation.

**Final Examination (30% of course grade)**
A final exam will be administered from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. on **Friday, April 29**.

**Topics and Assignments (Subject to change as the course progresses)**

**Wednesday, January 12** Introduction to the Course
No reading assignment

**Friday, January 14** Religious Liberty and a Changing America
Hicks, *With God on All Sides*, chapters 1 and 2
Read course syllabus in its entirety.
**Wednesday, January 19**  Religion, Social Movements, and Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, Introduction and chapter 1  
Martin Luther King, Jr., “I See the Promised Land” (on reserve)

**Friday, January 21**  Struggles and Covenants  
Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, chapters 2 and 3

**Wednesday, January 26**  Promised Lands and Leaders’ Visions  
Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, chapter 4 and Conclusion

**Friday, January 28**  Civil Religion, Pre- and Post-September 11, 2001  
Robert N. Bellah, “America’s Civil Religion” (on reserve)  
George W. Bush, remarks at National Cathedral, 9/14/01 (on reserve)

**Wednesday, February 2**  One Classic Argument for Toleration I  
Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, pp. 7-8 and 11-41

**Friday, February 4**  One Classic Argument for Toleration II  
Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, pp. 41-78

**Wednesday, February 9**  The State of American Religion  
Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapters 1 and 5  
Read stories at www.pluralism.org: click on “religious diversity news” and at  
www.firstfreedom.org: click on “newsclips.”

**Friday, February 11**  Religion and Gender, Class, and Ethnicity  
Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapters 8 and 9

**Wednesday, February 16**  Religion and Politics  
Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapters 11 and 12

**Friday, February 18**  Religion and Civic Goods  
Putnam and Campbell, *American Grace*, chapters 13 and 14  
**CRITICAL ESSAY DUE**

**Wednesday, February 23**  Images of a Religious America  
Hicks, *With God on All Sides*, chapters 3 and 4

**Friday, February 25**  Secularism and *Convivencia*  
Hicks, *With God on All Sides*, chapters 5 and 6
Wednesday, March 2  Leadership Approaches  
Hicks, With God on All Sides, chapters 7 and 8

Friday, March 4  Civic Education and Political Strategies  
Hicks, With God on All Sides, chapters 9 and 10 and epilogue  
BRIEF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE at the beginning of class

[Spring Break]

Wednesday, March 16 Islam  
Smith, Islam in America, Introduction and chapters 1 and 2

Friday, March 18 Islam in the American Story  
Smith, Islam in America, chapters 3 and 4

Wednesday, March 23 Islam: Everyday Practices and Challenges  
Smith, Islam in America, chapters 5-7

Friday, March 25 Islam post-9/11 and the “Ground Zero Mosque” Affair  
Smith, Islam in America, chapter 8  
Additional readings TBA

Wednesday, March 30 Religion and Economic Values I  
Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Author’s Introduction and chapters 1-3

Friday, April 1 Religion and Economic Values II  
Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, chapters 4 and 5

Wednesday, April 6 Religion in the Workplace  
Douglas A. Hicks, “Spiritual and Religious Diversity in the Workplace” (on reserve)

Friday, April 8 Catch-up Day  
Reading TBA

Wednesday, April 13 Student Research Presentations I

Friday, April 15 Student Research Presentations II

Wednesday, April 20 Student Research Presentations III

Friday, April 22 Wrap up and Conclusions  
Putnam and Campbell, American Grace, chapter 15  
Additional readings TBA

EXAM DATE and TIME:  
Friday, April 29, 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.