LDST 390-01: Special Topic: “With God on Our Side”: Religion, Politics, and American Public Life
Fall 2019

Instructor: Prof. Corey D. B. Walker

Course Information: LDST 390-01 (CRN 18151)

Class Meeting Time: MW 12:00-1:15 pm

Email: cwalker3@richmond.edu

Office: Weinstein Hall 102K

Office Hours: R 12:00-2:00pm and by appointment

“Oh my name it ain’t nothin’
My age it means less
The country I come from
Is called the Midwest
I was taught and brought up there
The laws to abide
And that land that I live in
Has God on its side”

Bob Dylan

Seminar Description:
From war memorials to public school curricula to displays in public buildings, religion raises a number of substantive issues for politics and American public life. This seminar will focus on the complex and contested relationships between religion, politics, and American public life with an acute focus on the closing decades of the twentieth and opening decades of the twenty-first centuries. The seminar will critically examine the significant conceptual, methodological, philosophical, and political issues in this contested arena. Seminar topics include religion and democracy, religion, race, and public life, religion, politics, and capitalism, and religion and democracy in an age of political extremes.

Seminar Objectives:
• Students will gain a critical understanding of the complex role of religion in American public life during the last half of the twentieth century and opening decades of the twenty-first century.

• Students will become familiar with the broad cultural, economic, historical, and political forces that shape and inform the intersection of religion and politics in the United States.

• Students will understand how and in what ways religion raises a number of substantive issues for democratic societies.

• Students will critically assess how and in what ways religion shapes and informs politics, political leadership, and cultures and philosophies of contemporary political struggles in the United States.

Required Books:
(Cambridge University Press, 2014).
Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., *To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Harvard University Press, 2018).

**Other Select Books:**
Tom Bailey and Valentina Gentile, eds., *Rawls and Religion*
Étienne Balibar, *Secularism and Cosmopolitanism: Critical Hypotheses on Religion and Politics*
Jason C. Bivens, *The Fracture of Good Order: Christian Anti-liberalism and the Challenge to American Politics*
José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*
Jean L. Cohen and Cécile Laborde, eds., *Religion, Secularism, and Constitutional Democracy*
Romand Coles, *Visionary Pragmatism: Radical and Ecological Democracy in Neoliberal Times*
William E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*
Heather D. Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians: American Evangelicals and Global Aid*
Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*
Darren Dochuk, *Anointed With Oil: How Christianity and Crude Made Modern America*
Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Sovereignty: God, State, and Self*
Frances Fitzgerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*
Brantley W. Gasaway, *Progressive Evangelicals and the Pursuit of Social Justice*
David S. Gutterman, *Prophetic Politics: Christian Social Movements and American Democracy*
Benjamin Gregg, *Thick Moralities, Thin Politics: Social Integration Across Communities of Belief*
Jürgen Habermas, *Between Naturalism and Religion*
Jürgen Habermas, *Religion and Rationality: Essays on Reason, God, and Modernity*
Martin Hägglund, *This Life: Secular Faith and Spiritual Freedom*
Frederick C. Harris, *Something Within: Religion in African American Political Activism*
Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*
James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*
Richard J. Neuhas, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America*
Matthew Avery Sutton and Darren Dochuk, eds., *Faith in the New Millennium: The Future of Religion and American Politics*
David R. Swartz, *Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism*
Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*
Ronald F. Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life: A Dilemma for Democracy*
Garry Wills, *Under God: Religion and American Politics*
Alan Wolfe and Ira Katznelson, *Religion and Democracy in the United States: Danger or Opportunity?*

**Seminar Requirements:**
Each seminar member is expected to attend all seminar meetings, read carefully and closely all assigned readings, and actively participate in seminar discussions. Each seminar member will also be responsible for keeping a seminar notebook that will contain the significant text passages, questions and ideas for seminar discussion along with other reading and research notes and critical observations. Each seminar member will
write and submit periodic critical response papers to key questions, issues, and themes engaged in the seminar.

In consultation with the professor, each seminar member will be responsible for leading a seminar conversation. The conversation leader will provide three to five page précis that will assess the central ideas of the assigned reading through a rigorous engagement with the arguments advanced in the text and offer a critical evaluation of the text in conversation with the themes of the seminar. The précis will be sent to each member of the seminar by e-mail no later than 6:00pm on the Sunday or 6:00pm on the Tuesday preceding the seminar meeting. At the conclusion of the seminar, each member will submit a ten to twelve page critical essay exploring a select theme explored in the seminar.

**Grading:**

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Précis and Seminar Presentation</td>
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<td>Reading Notebook</td>
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<td>Response Papers</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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**Seminar Schedule and Readings (Subject to Change)**

**Hosting the Question**

**August 26, 2019**

**Readings**


“A against the Dead Consensus,” *First Things*, March 21, 2019

“A against the New Nationalism,” *Commonweal*, August 19, 2019

“Christians Against Christian Nationalism,” *Baptist Joint Committee*, August 1, 2019

**August 28, 2019**

**Readings**


**September 2, 2019**

**Film**

“*With God on Our Side*: The Religious Right in America”

**September 4, 2019**

**Readings**


**Thinking Religion and the American Political Order**

**September 9, 2019**

**Readings**


September 11, 2019
Readings

September 16, 2019
Readings
Frank Lambert, Religion in American Politics: A Short History, 74-129.

September 18, 2019
Readings

Religion and the Politics of Capitalism in America

September 23, 2019
Film
An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story

September 25, 2019
Readings

September 30, 2019
Readings

October 2, 2019
Readings

Religion and the Politics of Radical Democracy

October 7, 2019
Readings
Paul C. Taylor, “Moral Perfectionism” in Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., 35-57.

Karuna Mantena, “Showdown for Nonviolence: The Theory and Practice of Nonviolent Politics” in Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., 78-104.

October 9, 2019
Readings
Martha C. Nussbaum, “From Anger to Love: Self-Purification and Political Resistance” in Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., 105-127.
Danielle Allen, “Integration, Freedom, and the Affirmation of Life” in Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., 146-160.

October 14, 2019
Fall Break

October 16, 2019
Readings
Michele Moody-Adams, “The Path of Conscientious Citizenship” in Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., 269-289.

Cornel West, “Hope and Despair: Past and Present” in Tommie Shelby and Brandon M. Terry, eds., To Shape a New World: Essays on the Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr., 325-338.

Religion and the End(s) of White Racial Democracy

October 21, 2019
Readings

October 23, 2019
Readings

October 28, 2019
Readings

October 30, 2019
Readings
Robert P. Jones, The End of White Christian America, 147-254

Religion and Democratic Futures

November 4, 2019
Readings


November 6, 2019
Readings

November 11, 2019
Readings

**November 13, 2019**
*Readings*

**November 18, 2019**
*Readings*

**November 20, 2019**
*Readings*
Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*, 1-69.

**November 25, 2019**
*Readings*
Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*, 70-133.

**November 27, 2019**
*Thanksgiving Break*

**December 2, 2019**
*Readings*
Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*, 134-209

**December 4, 2019**
*Readings*
Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*, 210-290.

**Final paper due Thursday, December 12, 2019 at 12:00pm**
**Jepson School of Leadership Studies**
**Common Syllabus Insert**

**Awarding of Credit**
To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.
[registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html](registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html)

**Disability Accommodations**
Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams.
[disability.richmond.edu/](disability.richmond.edu/)

**Honor System**
The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.”
[studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html](studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html)

**Religious Observance**
Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance.
[registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html](registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)
SYLLABUS INSERT REGARDING ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL SUPPORT SERVICES
Hope N. Walton, Director Academic Skills Center

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

Academic Skills Center ([http://asc.richmond.edu](http://asc.richmond.edu), 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. Hours at the Center are: Sunday through Wednesday 3:00-9:00 p.m. and Thursday 3:00-7:00 p.m. On-call tutors are also available.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians ([http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/](http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/) or 289-8876): Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area.

Career Services ([http://careerservices.richmond.edu/](http://careerservices.richmond.edu/) or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

Counseling and Psychological Services ([http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/](http://wellness.richmond.edu/offices/caps/) or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Disability Services ([https://disability.richmond.edu/students/index.html](https://disability.richmond.edu/students/index.html) or 289.8032) The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable that student to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

Speech Center ([http://speech.richmond.edu](http://speech.richmond.edu) or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

Writing Center ([http://writing.richmond.edu](http://writing.richmond.edu) or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.