Overview
American religious life has a rich and diverse history. Over time it has evolved and changed, but religion continues to be an integral part of our national culture. At both the elite and mass levels, most Americans claim to be a part of some religious group. Americans are unique in the developed world because we exhibit relatively high levels of religious belief and devotion and this in turn means that many Americans view the political world through religious lens. The substance of this class is focused on understanding the relationship between religion and political behavior (political participation, voting behavior, public opinion, etc.). Each of you will select one facet of this relationship between religion and political behavior for a detailed analysis in a research paper.

Because this class partially fulfills the university’s advanced writing requirement, this class also focuses on improving your writing ability. Specifically, we will concentrate on producing a high quality piece of political science research. A political scientist writes to express, clarify, and solidify thoughts to share with other political scientists. You may be asking yourself, “If I do not plan to become a political scientist, how does this class benefit me?” The truth is that good writing is a skill that when learned well will carry over to every part of your life. As you share your thoughts in writing through this class, you will further develop your ability to clearly express yourself in other areas.

In this class you will undertake a significant effort to master writing about empirical observations. For most of you this will mean writing about quantitative data or numbers; an especially useful skill with which most of you have limited experience. Numbers are powerful—they bring order out of chaos. They are more powerful when clearly presented. While you may not be pursuing a career in political science, many careers involve the effective use and presentation of empirical data.

Research and writing in political science can serve a number of purposes including description, explanation, prediction, evaluation, and prescription. Empirical political analysis usually concerns the systematic description and explanation of political variables. Effective empirical political science research includes the following characteristics:

- It is explicit (the rules for inquiry are clearly stated).
- It is systematic (based on observation not ad hoc explanations)
- It is controlled (the observations are made with as much control as possible by the researcher).
These characteristics are the essence of the Scientific Method. In other words, political scientists test ideas about how the world works using observable evidence and systematic methods in which each step in the process is made explicit. To the degree possible given your limited resources, your research project and writing for this class should embody these characteristics.

Prerequisites
Required prerequisites for this course include successful completion of both Political Science 200 and 328. Political Science 200 is the first half of our department’s sequence to fulfill the university’s advanced writing requirement and provides necessary background in writing and research for this course. Political Science 328 is a required course for political science major and provides knowledge of important tools for conducting independent empirical research as well as practice in writing up empirical research results. No exceptions will be made to the requirement to have taken Political Science 200. Exceptions to the 328 prerequisite can be made for students who have taken other comparable coursework necessary to complete their course paper. Please speak with me if you have any doubts about this.

I also strongly recommend that you have completed Political Science 310 (Theories of American politics) or a comparable theory course (350, or 370).

Objectives
This course is about both substance and skills. It is where you bring all of the academic knowledge and skills you have developed thus far to bear on a research topic of interest to you to produce knowledge instead of just consume it. Along the way you will develop additional skills and knowledge. These include:

1. **Writing skills.** You will learn appropriate techniques for writing in the “genre” of an empirical social science paper. This includes further development of professional writing skills such as the ability to construct a persuasive argument using logic, appropriate evidence, and good mechanics. You should also understand how to appropriately present empirical data (quantitative and qualitative) both orally and in writing. You will write short papers, drafts of your long course paper, and also complete assignments to hone other writing and presentation skills. Your final written paper should be a publication worthy manuscript.

2. **Analytical skills.** You will further develop your critical thinking and analytical skills. This involves the ability to identify patterns in specific facts, to compare and contrast patterns and concepts, and to identify the implications of a particular argument.

3. **Research skills.** You should develop your ability to independently set up and carry out a sophisticated research project in which you seek to explain some phenomenon by comparing the influence of different variables and in which you reach some well-reasoned conclusions supported by systematic evidence. In this class you will test hypotheses and analyze data (quantitative or qualitative).

4. **Substantive Knowledge.** You should develop a knowledge of the major theories of religion and American political behavior as well as familiarity with all of the major
American religious traditions and detailed knowledge of the political behavior of at least one tradition or denomination

**Required Readings**
The following books are available for purchase in the BYU Bookstore.


Additional required reading material will be distributed in class or made available via Blackboard.

**Recommended Readings:**


These two books can help you greatly improve your writing. I have chosen not to require them to save you the expense. Writing books do not go out of date quickly like many political science books; you may find that an earlier edition suits your budget and academic needs well.

**Requirements**
Your grade will be based on the following:

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Response Emails</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Discussion Assignment</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Research Project</td>
<td>80 %</td>
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<td>Proposal</td>
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<td>Theory and Research Design Paper</td>
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<td>Analysis Paper</td>
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<td>Polished Draft Paper (for peer review)</td>
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<td>Peer Reviews of Polished Draft Papers</td>
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<td>Class Presentation</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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This is not a traditional course. There are no exams and few traditional lectures. You will notice that your grade is almost entirely determined by the course project and its component assignments. The research project is designed to provide you opportunities to interact with me and each other to produce a first rate final paper. The remainder of your grade is dependent on your preparation and participation in class discussion. The discussion oriented format and original research components of the class mean that the class members will carry on the bulk of the class discussion. My role is to ask questions, facilitate the discussion, and keep things moving. I expect you to spend a significant amount of time outside of class on reading, research, and writing. This should be between 8 to 20 hours a week depending on the assignments due each week.

The major product of this class is the final research paper. Do not underestimate the amount of time needed to do original research! It is very time-intensive and always takes more time than you estimate to do it well. It will be very difficult to do well if left to the last minute. Early and consistent work on the project will allow you sufficient time to hone your ideas, analysis, and writing. Waiting to the last minute to work on each component will lead to second-rate results.

Weekly Response Emails: To ensure better understanding of the readings and quality classroom discussions, you will write a brief response (about 500 words plus references, if any) responding to the readings that we will discuss that week. These papers may summarize key points from the readings, but must analyze those readings in some way. You may choose how to approach each response paper. Some ideas include:

- Compare/contrast different authors by discussing how each approaches a similar question.
- Discuss how the readings apply to your research paper topic or to current events.
- Critique the readings by either criticizing or praising the author’s theory, methods, or analysis.
- Extend the readings by developing an idea which picks up on a point made by the author.

In the subject line of the email, type “PLSC 410:” then the name of the topic we are covering. Do not type your own name in the subject line. I receive many emails in a given day, the subject line will help me sort the emails and make sure you get full credit for your work. Putting the right information in the subject line makes a difference.

Emails are due each Monday by 5pm. I will not accept late responses, but I will drop your lowest score. I prefer that these papers be submitted via email. Please remember to properly attribute all ideas that are not your own in these papers. Provide a complete reference for any citations that are not on the list of required readings for that week.

Group Discussion Assignment: I will lead the discussion for the first four weeks of class. Beginning with week five, small groups will take responsibility for leading class as we discuss each topic. In addition to the required reading, each group should draw upon the supplementary
readings, references in the required readings, and other sources to lead the class through a
discussion of the political behavior their assigned religious tradition or denomination. You are
encouraged to be creative in your approach to this assignment. Your objective is to generate
productive discussion about the political behavior of your assigned religious tradition that
provides the class with new understanding about its political behavior. It should include a brief
descriptive presentation (How is this group defined? Are there any sub-groups? What
characterizes the approach to politics of the group members? How do they behave politically?).
Then lead a discussion in which the small group members are the most active participants.
Instead of individual response papers, the group will jointly produce a group memorandum (2-3
pages single spaced) that I will grade along with the content and quality of the class discussion.
In addition I will also ask each group member to evaluate the quality of the contribution of the
other group members. The memorandum can be turned in via email. The due date for the
memos is also Mondays at 5:00pm.

Course Research Project: For Political Science 410 to fulfill the university’s advanced writing
requirement, you must receive at least a C- on your final research paper. Students with lower
grades on the final paper will receive a “T” grade, signifying ongoing work, and will need to
revise the paper until it reaches a C- standard before the grade will be changed. Rest assured that
I will give D and even E grades to research papers that deserve them.

Several smaller assignments and papers related to the final paper will be completed throughout
the course. These smaller papers will guide you in the developing ideas and data analysis for
your final paper. Each individual assignment is worth a relatively small portion of your overall
grade; however, failure to complete even one of the assignments related to the final paper will
result in a failing grade for the final paper.

Please refer to the separate assignment sheets that describe the individual components of the
course research project in more detail.

Participation: As this course is a seminar, class sessions will consist almost entirely of discussion
of ideas, concepts, arguments, and evidence found in the readings. Regular attendance is
required and active participation in the class discussion is essential for the seminar to be
productive.

Senior Exam: As part of this course, you are required to take the Senior Political Science exam
administered by the BYU Political Science Department. The department uses this as a means of
assessing the knowledge and skills of our graduates. The exam does not count toward your
grade for this class (unless you fail to take it), but you must sign up and complete the exam
during one of the times provided by the department. More details will be distributed as they
become available.

Other Course Policies
Late Work: For assignments where late work is accepted, it will be heavily penalized at a rate of
ten percent of the points possible per working day that the work is late. Exceptions to this policy
are rare and must be cleared with me in advance. When turning in late work please email it to
me (so that a clear record exists for the date and time it is turned in) and then bring a hard copy to my office.

**Email Policy:** All class members are *required* to maintain an active email account. It is your responsibility to ensure that the email address that is listed for you in the BYU directory is accurate. I will communicate important or time-sensitive class announcements via email. Please check your email at least once per day.

**Academic Honesty:** All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. While all students sign the Honor Code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in regards to the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation), and other forms of academic conduct will not be tolerated and academic misconduct will be handled according to university policy. A review of the Honor Code as well as various forms of academic misconduct including brief examples can be found at: [http://campuslife.byu.edu/HONORCODE/Honor_code.htm](http://campuslife.byu.edu/HONORCODE/Honor_code.htm). Please review the brief explanation of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty on this page so that you are reminded of your responsibilities as a scholar. If you have any doubt about your academic conduct, I encourage you to consult this web page and/or come speak with me.

All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. While all students sign the Honor Code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in regards to the internet, as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. Cheating, plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper citation), and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated, and they will be handled according to university policy. The Honor Code can be found here: [http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2009-2010ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php#HCOfficeInvovement](http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2009-2010ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php#HCOfficeInvovement). Please review the brief explanation of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty on this page so that you are reminded of your responsibilities as a scholar.

Violating BYU’s academic honestly policy includes “submitting the same work for more than one class without disclosure and approval.” Thus, if you write a paper for another course (past or present) that uses the same topic or material as a paper for this course, you need to approve it with me *first*, and then you must turn in to me a copy of the paper from your other course.

If you have any doubt about your academic conduct, I encourage you to consult BYU’s Honor Code web page and/or come speak with me.

**Disabilities:** I am committed to providing a learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability that may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, you are responsible for making your needs known to me and seeking available assistance from the university in a timely manner. In addition to notifying me, you must contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC) at 801-422-2767, 2170 WSC. The UAC reviews requests for reasonable academic accommodations for all students who have qualified documented disabilities, and any accommodations for this class must be coordinated with the UAC office. See [http://uac.byu.edu/](http://uac.byu.edu/) for more information.
Discrimination/Harassment: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against discrimination and sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well (see: http://www.byu.edu/hr/directory/equal-employment-opportunity). If you encounter sexual harassment or discrimination, please talk to me; contact the Equal Employment Office in D-282 ASB or by telephone at 801-422-3863 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

Learning Outcomes: The BYU Political Science Department has developed a set of expected student learning outcomes. These will help you understand the objectives of the political science curriculum, including this class. See: http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu. Feedback on the expected student learning outcomes can be given to me or sent to FHSS@byu.edu.
Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to revision. If revisions are made, appropriate notice will be given to enable you to be fully prepared for class sessions. You should come to class prepared to discuss the required readings in detail. Required readings not contained in the required textbooks will be posted on Blackboard (http://blackboard.byu.edu) as PDF files. Recommended readings are listed for the benefit of your research papers or group presentations and those not posted should be obtained on your own.

**Week 1: Course Introduction (Jan. 4)**

Required Reading: course syllabus

**Week 2: Measurement and Terminology (Jan. 11)**

Required Reading:
Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chs. 1-2


Recommended Reading:


**Week 3: Development of the American Religious Economy (Jan. 18)**

*** final version of research paper proposal due by email on Thursday, Jan. 20th 5:00pm

Required Reading:
Wald and Calhoun-Brown, ch. 3.

Finke and Stark, entire (especially chapters 1, 3, 5, and 7)

Recommended Reading:


**Week 4: Political Behavior (Jan. 25)**

Required Reading:
Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chs. 5, 6, 7, and 11.


Recommended Reading:


**Week 5: Catholics (Feb. 1)**

**Required Reading:**

Wald and Calhoun-Brown, ch. 9 (section on Catholics) and Chapter 10 (section on Latino Catholics and Protestants)

Wilson, chs. 4 and 7

**Recommended Reading:**


**Week 6: Mainline and Evangelical Protestants (Feb. 8)**

Required Reading:
- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 8 (all) and chapter 9 (section on Mainline Protestants)
- Wilson, chs. 2 and 3.

Recommended Reading:

**Week 7: Black Protestants (Feb. 15)**

Required Reading:
- Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 10 (section on African American Protestants)
- Wilson, ch. 6

Recommended Reading:


**Week 8: (Feb. 22)**

No class, Monday instruction day.

*** Theory and research design paper due today by midnight (turn in via email).

**Week 9: Mormons (March 1)**

Required Reading:
Wald and Calhoun-Brown, chapter 10 (section on Mormons).

Wilson, ch. 5


Recommended Reading:


Week 10: The Unchurched, Seculars, or “Nones” (March 8)

Required Reading:


Wilson, ch. 10

Recommended Reading:


Week 11: Social Science Writing (March 15)

Required Reading:


Week 12: (March 22)

Individual meetings/work on final paper

***Analysis paper due by 4pm***

Week 12 (March 29)

Individual meetings/work on final paper

***Draft paper (for peer review) due in class***

Week 13 (April 5)

Paper presentations

***Peer Review due in class***

Week 14 (April 12)

Paper presentations

***The Final paper is due no later than 4:00pm on Thursday April 14. Turn in a hard copy to the political science department box on the 7th floor and email an electronic copy to the instructor (send the email by 4:00pm to beat the deadline, then turn in the hard copy shortly after that)***