# Religion in the Public Square - (PH 321)

**PH 321**

Fall 2013

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## Course Objectives:

To provide students with a basic understanding of various political philosophies and how those philosophies impact various systems of government.

To provide students with the ability to evaluate and analyze the worldviews of various political philosophies and political systems.

To provide students with a practical understanding of how various political systems work.

To provide students with an understanding of the various theories of the proper relationship which should exist between politics and individual Christians.

To provide students with an understanding of the various theories of the proper relationships which should exist between the government and the church.

To help students formulate a personal theory on their relationship to culture and politics and the relationship of the church to culture and politics.

## Course Outcomes

The student will have a better grasp of politics in America, so that he or she will be better able to be involved in the political arena.

The student will be able to discourse more intelligently about the role of religion in American politics.

The student will be able to make more discerning decisions about how economics, religion, and politics interact.

## Reading

The following books must be read in their entirety and will be subject of class discussion and will be included in materials tested on the midterm and final examinations.

Francis J. Beckwith. *Politics for Christians: Statecraft and Soulcraft*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010.

Chad Brand. *Flourishing Faith: A Baptist Primer on Work, Economics, and Civic Stewardship*. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2012.

Chad Brand and Tom Pratt. *Clash of Titans: Atlas Shrugged, John Galt & Jesus Christ*. Creative Commons, 2012.

Chad Brand and Tom Pratt. *Awaiting the City: Poverty, Ecology, and Morality in Today's Political Economy*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012. ePub available for download at http://store.kregel.com/productdetails.cfm?PC=3043

Richard Land. *The Divided States of America: What Liberals and Conservatives Get Wrong about Faith and Politics*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007.

### Assignments

1. Examinations

There will be three examinations given in this class. The examinations will include true/false, matching, multiple choice, fill-in-the blank, and essay questions.

2. Position Paper

A five-to-seven page position paper on the relationship between church and state will be due November the first class day in November. Students should also discuss the relationship, if any, between the Christian commitment and political life. This paper should follow the form, style and content requirements found in Appendix 1 (pp. 135-37) of *The Southern Seminary Manual of Style (3rd Edition).* A copy the style manual is on reserve at the Reserve Desk in the library.

3. Notebooks

The students will summarize three significant political issues each week of class from one of the following newspapers or news magazines: **Newspapers** (*Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, New York Times, or Courier-Journal)* or **News Magazines** (*Newsweek, U. S. News and World Report, Time, World, National Review, or Nation).* The above magazines and newspapers can be found in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Library.

The summary of each political issue should include the following: a summary of the article, any bias displayed by reporter or author of the article, the importance of the political issue to Christians, the key political figures involved in issue, how the political issue comports with a biblical worldview, and whether student supports or opposes this issue and why.

The notebooks will be due on the final day of class.

Late assignments. **No examinations will be taken late unless the student has prior approval of the professor**. **Any paper turned in late, in this case the worksheets and book review, will be docked five points per week day.** Work must be turned in on time.

**No extra-credit work** will be accepted or assigned in this class under any circumstances. The existing assignment schedule allows all students ample opportunity to succeed in passing the course.

## Grading

Examinations – 45% (15% each)
Position paper – 20%
Notebook - 20%
Reading – 20%

Grading Scale:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | 91-100 |
| B | 81-90 |
| C | 71-80 |
| D | 61-70 |
| F | below 61 |

This system presumes that students will complete **all assignments**. Any student not completing all major exams, the three worksheets, and the book review will not pass the class.

## Attendance

Students are expected to attend class every day. Attendance will be checked at each class session. A student who misses more than twenty-five percent of class meetings will forfeit credit for the class and receive a failing grade. Students are also expected to be in class on time. If a student is late to class three times it will count the same as an absence. If a student has a legitimate reason for missing a class for an extended period of time

(such as an illness or accident) it is the student's responsibility to notify the professor so that missed tests and assignments may be made up.

## Classroom Policies

Students must **turn all cell phones and pagers off or to silent notification** at the beginning of the class session. In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a **disabling condition** requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course.

For instructional purposes the professor may employ the use of film, readings, and outside guests, however, this use does not constitute an endorsement by Southern Seminary of these sources.

## Schedule

Week 1: Historical models for political economy: Pericles, Antigone, Plato
Reading: *Politics* Chapter 1; *Awaiting* Chapter 1

Week 2: Historical models: Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas
Reading: *Politics* Chapter 2; *Awaiting* Chapter 2

Week 3: Historical models: Machiavelli, Luther, Calvin
Reading: *Politics* Chapter 3; *Awaiting* Chapter 3

Week 4: Historical models: Hobbes, Montesquieu, Locke, Kant, Marx
Reading: *Politics* Chapter 4; *Awaiting* Chapter 4

Week 5: Politics: Political Theories Classical and Modern
Reading: *Politics* Chapter 5; *Awaiting* Chapter 5

Week 6: Politics: Nations, States and Governments; Constitutions; Democracy, Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism
Reading: *Awaiting* Chapters 6-7

Week 7: Politics: Political Ideology
Reading: *Divided* Chapters 1-3

Week 8: Politics: Political Economy (Inflation, Gold Standard, Taxes, etc.)
Reading: *Divided* Chapters 4-6

Fall break:

Week 10: America: American Foundations

Reading: *Divided* Chapters 7-11

Week 11: America: American Government
Reading: *Flourishing* Chapters 1-4

Week 12: Church and State: A History of Church and State Relations
Reading: *Flourishing* Chapters 5-7, Epilogue

Week 13: Church and State in America; The Baptist Contribution
Reading: *Clash* Chapters 1-7

Week 14: Church and State: Models for Understanding (Christian America, Theonomy, Absolute Separation, Accommodation)
Reading: *Clash* Chapter 8-14, Epilogue

Final: Finals week

Final Examination on schedule issued by administration; Position paper due day of final; Notebooks due **day of final.**