RELC 5559-004—Religion and the Common Good

University of Virginia, Spring 2019

Professor: Nichole M. Flores
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Class Meetings: Thursday 2:00-4:30pm
Class Location: Pavilion V, 109
Office Hours: M & Th, 12-1pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

How is a democratic and religiously pluralistic society to pursue a societal common good? This graduate seminar explores responses to this question within religious ethics at local, national, and global levels. Readings will address major contributions to this topic within political philosophy before pivoting to responses in religious and theological ethics. Major themes include theories of democracy, citizenship, justice, solidarity, and the common good.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **PARTICIPATION (10%):** Students are expected to attend each seminar session and come prepared to engage in critical discussion of the assigned text. Students will be evaluated on the overall quality of participation and demonstrated capacity for collegiality and professionalism.
- **PRESENTATIONS (10%):** Each student will offer a presentation of major theses arising from three course text (schedule determined during the first week of semester). The presentation will be accompanied by a two-page document outlining (1) 3-5 central theses from the text, (2) 3-5 discussion questions emerging from the text, and (3) 3-5 sources for further reading/research. Theses/question sheets will not be more than two pages long, no exceptions. More than simply reading the prepared theses and questions, the presenter should be prepared to elaborate on the document and frame our seminar conversation on the text for the week. Two-page documents to accompany presentation should be **emailed** directly to Prof. Flores on **no later than Thursday at 9am.**
- **WEEKLY RESPONSES & FORUM COMMENTS (10%):** In weeks when the student is not responsible for the presentation, she will submit a brief response to the text for the week, identifying interesting aspects of the readings and at least one question for discussion. Additionally, each student will read and comment on at least one (1) other forum response each week. These comments can be brief (1-2 sentences). Weekly response should be **posted to Collab Forum** by **Wednesday no later than 6pm;** Forum responses should be **posted to Collab Forum** on **Thursday no later than 9am.**
- **RESEARCH PAPER (70%):** A final research essay of no more than 20-pages should be **emailed** to Prof. Flores by **May 2 at 6pm.** Students are invited and encouraged to post their paper abstracts and questions pertaining to their research to the Collab forum for classmate and professor feedback.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES:

File Labeling Policy:

- Essay should be submitted in Microsoft Word using the following file format:

LastName_FinalResearchEssay (i.e. Gonzalez_Reflection4, Jones_FinalResearchEssay)

Research Paper Extension Policy:

- Final research essay extensions will be considered under extenuating circumstances, but **a new deadline will be assigned and enforced.** Submissions that do not adhere to the new deadline will be subject to a third of a letter grade reduction.

AUDITOR EXPECTATIONS:

- Auditors are expected to register as auditors through UVa SIS.
- Auditors are expected to attend every seminar.
- Auditors are expected to complete all readings and participate in every aspect of the seminar, including book presentations and responding to essays via Collab.

COURSE TEXTS:

1. Danielle S. Allen, ***Talking to Strangers: Anxieties of Citizenship Since Brown v. Board of Education*** (University of Chicago Press, 2004) ISBN: 9780226014661
2. Seyla Benhabib, ***Another Cosmopolitanism*** (Oxford University Press, 2006) ISBN: 9780195183221
3. Luke Bretherton, ***Resurrecting Democracy: Faith, Citizenship, and the Politics of a Common Life*** (Cambridge University Press, 2014) ISBN: 9781107641969
4. Miguel A. De La Torre, ***Embracing Hopelessness*** (Fortress Press, 2017) ISBN: 9781506433424
5. Patrick J. Deneen, ***Why Liberalism Failed*** (Yale University Press, 2018) ISBN: 9780300223446
6. Alejandro García-Rivera, ***Community of the Beautiful: A Theological Aesthetics*** (Michael Glazier, 1999) ISBN: 9780814659236
7. Eddie S. Glaude, ***In a Shade of Blue: Pragmatism and the Politics of Black America*** (The University of Chicago Press, 2007) ISBN: 9780226298252
8. David Hollenbach, ***The Common Good and Christian Ethics*** (Cambridge University Press, 2001) ISBN: 9780521894517
9. Cathleen Kaveny, ***Prophecy Without Contempt: Religious Discourse in the Public Square*** (Harvard University Press, 2016) ISBN: 9780674495036
10. Julie Hanlon Rubio, ***Hope for Common Ground: Mediating the Personal and Political in a Divided Church*** (Georgetown University Press, 2016) ISBN: 9781626163089
11. Alan Wolfe, ***The Future of Liberalism*** (Vintage, 2009) ISBN: 9780307386250
12. Iris Marion Young, ***Justice and the Politics of Difference*** (Princeton University Press, 2011) ISBN: 9780691152622

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (1/17) – **No Seminar Meeting**

Week 2 (1/24) – Seminar Introduction

Week 3 (1/31) – **No Seminar Meeting**

Week 4 (2/7) – Wolfe, *The Future of Liberalism*, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, & 9
Benhabib, *Another Cosmopolitanism*, pp. 13-36, 45-74 (Feel free to take a quick look at any of the comment essays that appeal to you)

Week 5 (2/14) – Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed*
Watch Patrick Deneen's Lecture at UVa's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, "The End of Liberalism" (featuring a response from Jackson Lears):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLPpqCAPd7Y

Week 6 (2/21) – **No Seminar Meeting**

Week 7 (2/28) – Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6
Allen, *Talking to Strangers*

Week 8 (3/7) – Kaveny, *Prophecy Without Contempt*

Week 9 (3/14) – **No Seminar Meeting (Spring Break)**

Week 10 (3/21) – Bretherton, *Resurrecting Democracy*

Week 11 (3/28) – Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*

Week 12 (4/4) – Rubio, *Hope for Common Ground*

Week 13 (4/11) – De La Torre, *Embracing Hopelessness*

Week 14 (4/18) – Glaude, *In a Shade of Blue*

Week 15 (4/25) – García-Rivera, *Community of the Beautiful*

Research Paper Due: 5/2 at 6pm (Email directly to Prof. Flores. Label file LastName_FinalResearchEssay)