

# For God and Country? Religion and Citizenship

Theology 486  
Boston College, Spring 2007

## Professor Erik Owens

Class meets: Tuesdays 2:00-4:30pm  
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## Course description:

This course explores the religious-ethical dimensions of citizenship, with particular attention to the points at which religious and political allegiances conflict (or appear to conflict). Drawing upon diverse faith traditions, historical periods and geographic regions, we will consider the nature of this conflict, attempts to resolve it (in theory and practice), and contemporary issues that exemplify it. In the process we will ask such questions as: Are patriotism and faith compatible? What is the difference between a good person and a good citizen? (And can we be one but not the other?) What are the limits of religious tolerance in a diverse society? When, if ever, is civil disobedience required?

In Part 1 of the course we will examine the development of citizenship as a legal, political and civic concept. From the homogeneous city-states of ancient Greece to the vast multi-ethnic states of the 21st century, the dominant form of political community has changed dramatically, and with it the meaning of citizenship. We will see how this change occurs over time, and how citizenship is defined today in Europe, Asia and North America. In Part 2 we will consider citizenship and civic obligation from a theological perspective, drawing upon the work of important Jewish, Muslim and Christian writers. Turning to the contemporary United States, in Part 3 we will explore in depth a series of issues that exemplify the tension between religious and political allegiances, including patriotism, civic education, tolerance and civil disobedience.

## Course Outline

### Part 1: Citizenship as a legal, political and civic concept

- Jan 16: Introduction; What is citizenship?
- Jan 23: Citizenship in ancient and modern Europe
- Jan 30: Citizenship in the United States
- Feb 6: Citizenship in the contemporary global context

### Part 2: Religious reflection on civic obligation

- Feb 13: Scriptural resources
- Feb 20: Augustine and Aquinas
- Feb 27: Reformation views on the religious citizen
- Mar 13: Selected contemporary theological arguments
- Mar 20: **Midterm exam [in-class]**

### Part 3: Religion and citizenship in conflict

- Mar 27: Civic engagement
- Apr 3: Public education
- Apr 10: Patriotism [**Paper proposals due**]
- Apr 17: Tolerance
- Apr 24: Incivility and civil disobedience
- May 1: Conclusion and Review
- May 11: Final papers due

## Required Texts:

Most of the course readings will be articles or chapters placed on online reserve. Where possible, the entire books or journals from which these articles were taken have been placed on reserve as well.

**The following texts have been ordered at the BC bookstore**, and are also on reserve at the library:

- Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship* (NYU, 2004).
- Martha C. Nussbaum, *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, Joshua Cohen, ed. (Beacon, 1996).
- Nancy L. Rosenblum, ed. *Obligations of Citizenship and Demands of Faith: Religious Accommodation in Pluralist Democracies* (Princeton, 2000).
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility* (USCCB, 2003).

Suggested readings are also provided for many topics we will discuss. (When we read part of a book, the rest of the book is also recommended, although I do not state so in the syllabus.) These are intended primarily to serve as additional bibliographical support for your research papers; you will not be expected to read them, and you will not be tested on them.

## Course requirements:

1. **Participation: 10% of your grade** will be based on your participation in class discussions. Diverse points of view will be presented in the course readings, and they are likewise welcomed in the ensuing discussion. In the interest of maintaining an ongoing, constructive dialogue about topics that can be rather contentious, you are expected to demonstrate mutual respect and civility in the classroom.
2. **Midterm exam:** A midterm examination, worth **25% of your grade**, will be taken during class on March 20. You will be required to answer essay questions by reflecting upon (and referring to) the texts from parts 1 and 2 of the course.
3. **Student presentations:** Each student will lead discussion of an article or book in Part 3 of the course. You will be graded on your knowledge of the text, ability to summarize it for the class, and the questions you pose for discussion. This assignment is worth **15% of your final grade**. You will select the topic of your presentation in early February to give you ample time to prepare.
4. **Final paper:** You are required to construct a well-written scholarly argument (12-15pp for undergrads, 15-20pp for grad students) about an aspect of religion and citizenship that you find challenging, compelling, or curious. Your paper must draw upon the course readings; although additional research is welcomed when appropriate, it is neither required nor expected. This assignment is worth **50% of your final course grade**.
5. **Extra credit opportunity:** Many of the events we sponsor at the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life directly address the questions we will take up in this class. You can receive a **5-point bonus on your final paper grade** if you attend a Boisi Center event this semester and write a 400-500 word reflection on that event, with special attention to its implications for religion and citizenship.

# Course Schedule

## Part 1: Citizenship as a legal, political and civic concept

**Jan 16: What is citizenship?**

**Jan 23: Citizenship in ancient and modern Europe**

Required reading:

- Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship* (NYU, 2004), p. 1-87.

Suggested reading:

- J.G.A. Pocock, "The Ideal of Citizenship Since Ancient Times," in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Citizenship* (SUNY, 1995), p. 29-52.
- Michael Ignatieff, "The Myth of Citizenship," in *Theorizing Citizenship*, p. 53-77.

**Jan 30: Citizenship in the United States**

Required reading:

- Rogers Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in American History* (Yale, 1997), p. 1-40 (Intro & Chap 1).
- Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life* (Harvard, 1998), 1-10 (Intro), 240-293 (Chap 6), 294-314 (Conclusion).

**Feb 6: Citizenship in the contemporary global context**

Required reading:

- Silvio Ferrari, "Islam and the Western European Model of Church and State Relations" [in W.A.R. Shadid and P.S. van Koningsveld, eds., *Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State: The Position of Islam in the European Union* [(Peeters, 2002), p. 6-19].
- Jonathan Laurence & Justin Vaisse, "From Muslims into French Citizens" [in *Integrating Islam: Political and Religious Challenges in Contemporary France* (Brookings, 2006), (p.135-191)
- Will Kymlicka and Wayne Norman, "Citizenship in Diverse Societies: An Introduction" [in Kymlicka and Norman, eds., *Citizenship in Diverse Societies* (Oxford, 2000), p. 1-40].

Suggested reading:

- Martha Nussbaum, "Religion and Women's Equality: The Case of India" [in *Obligations of Citizenship*]
- Tariq Ramadan, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (Oxford, 2004), Chap. 7.

## Part 2: Religious reflection on civic obligation

**Feb 13: Scriptural resources**

Required reading:

- Selections from the Torah and Prophets: Exodus 20-23 (Decalogue and Covenant Code); Amos (entire); Jeremiah 31.31-34 (new covenant).
- Selections from the Christian Gospels and Pauline letters: Matthew 5 and Luke 6 (Sermon on the Mount/Plain and Beatitudes); Mark 12.13-17, Luke 20.20-26, Matthew 22.15-22 (Paying taxes); John 18.33-37, 19.19-22 (earthly and divine kingship); Romans 13.
- Selections from the Qur'an (suras on the political values of a Muslim polity).

**Feb 20: Augustine and Aquinas**

Required reading:

- Augustine, intro and selections from *The City of God*, in Oliver O'Donovan and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, eds, *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought 100-1625* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 104-13 , 137-63.
- Thomas Aquinas, intro and selections from *Summa Theologica* in *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, p. 320-27, 342-61.

**Feb 27: Reformation views on the religious citizen**

Required reading:

- Martin Luther, "On Temporal Authority," in *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp. 581-95
- Michael Sattler, "The Schleithem Confession" (aka Schleithem Articles), in *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp. 631-37.
- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV.20, in *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp.662-66, 668-681.

[Feb 28] Optional: **Boisi Center panel discussion: "The 'Theocons' in American Public Life"**  
Gasson 305, 4:30 PM, with Damon Linker, Jorge Garcia and Alan Wolfe

**Mar 13: Selected contemporary theological arguments**

Required reading:

- USCCB, *Faithful Citizenship*, p. 1-30.
- Charles T. Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life During the World* (Cambridge, 2007), selections from p. 1-36 (Introduction), 151-180? (Intro to Part II).
- Paul Griffiths, "Religious Allegiance and Political Sovereignty: An Irreconcilable Tension?" in John Carlson and Erik Owens, eds., *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics* (Georgetown, 2003), p. 247-55.

Suggested reading:

- Abdulaziz Sachedina, "The Role of Islam in the Public Square: Guidance or Governance?" ISIM Papers vol. 5 (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).
- John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Sheed and Ward, 1960).
- Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Abingdon, 1989).
- Joshua Cohen and Deborah Chasman, eds., *Islam and the Challenge of Democracy* (Princeton, 2004).
- J. Budziszewski, "Religion and Civic Virtue," in John Chapman and William Galston, eds., *Virtue*, NOMOS XXXIV (NYU, 1992).

**Mar 20: Midterm exam**

Required reading:

- Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), p.1-80.

[Mar 24] Optional: **Boisi Center conference: "Blasphemy, Free Expression and Journalistic Ethics"**  
Higgins 300, 9am - 3:30pm

### Part 3: Religion and citizenship in conflict

#### Mar 27: Civic engagement

##### Required reading:

- Robert Audi and Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate* (Yale, 1997), p. 1-55, 67-80, 111-119.
- Major speeches on religion and public life by George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, Mario Cuomo and John F. Kennedy. [Handouts]

#### Apr 3: Public education

##### Required reading:

- Stephen Macedo, "Liberal Civic Education and Religious Fundamentalism: The Case of God vs. John Rawls?" *Ethics* 105 (April 1995): 468-96.
- Michael McConnell, "Education Disestablishment: Why Democratic Values Are Ill-Served by Democratic Control of Schooling" [in Stephen Macedo and Yael Tamir, eds., *Moral and Political Education*, NOMOS XLIII (NYU, 2002), p. 87-146].

##### Suggested reading:

- U.S. Supreme Court cases: *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972); *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* (2002); *Locke v. Davey* (2004)
- U.S. federal court case: *Mozert v. Hawkins City Board of Ed.* (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 1987)
- Christopher L. Eisgruber, "How do Liberal Democracies Teach Values?" [in Macedo and Tamir, *Moral and Political Education*, p. 58-86].
- William Galston, "Civic Republicanism, Political Pluralism and the Regulation of Private Schools," in Patrick J. Wolfe and Stephen Macedo, eds., *Educating Citizens: International Perspectives in Civic Values and School Choice* (Brookings, 2004).

#### Apr 10: Patriotism

\*\*\* Paper proposals due \*\*\*

##### Required reading:

- *For Love of Country?* Introduction and p. 1-37 (Nussbaum, Appiah, Barber), p. 66-90 (Gutmann, McConnell, Pinsky), and p. 111-144 (Sen, Taylor, Walzer, Nussbaum).
- Dahlia Lithwick, "One Nation, Under Hallmark, Indivisible," *Slate*, 24 March 2004.
- Leon Wieseltier, "What America Can Learn From Its Atheists," *New Republic*, 12 April 2004.
- Watch "Religious Freedom and the Pledge of Allegiance" online at Boston College Front Row, <http://frontrow.bc.edu/program/newdow/>

##### Suggested reading:

- Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" [in *Theorizing Citizenship*, p. 209-228.]

#### Apr 17: Tolerance

##### Required reading:

- Dahlia Lithwick, "How Do You Solve the Problem of Sharia? Canada Grapples with the Boundaries of Legal Multiculturalism" *Slate*, 10 Sep 2004.
- Dene Moore, "Montreal Man Refuses Religious Divorce..." *Canada.com*, 25 Jan 2007.
- Tariq Ramadan, "Free Speech & Civic Responsibility," *International Herald Tribune* 6 Feb 2006; and "Why I'm Banned in the U.S.A." *Washington Post*, 3 October 2006.
- Michael McConnell, "Believers as Equal Citizens" in *Obligations of Citizenship*, p. 90-110.
- Yael Tamir, "Remember Amalek: Religious Hate Speech," in *Obligations of Citizenship*, p.321-334.

Suggested reading:

- Alan Wolfe, "Civil Religion Revisited: Quiet Faith in Middle-Class America," in *Obligations of Citizenship...*

**Apr 24: Incivility and civil disobedience**

Required reading:

- Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence (1776)
- Susan B. Anthony, Speech at her trial for voting (1873), in Witte/Alexander, eds., *The Teachings of Modern Christianity* vol.2 (New York: Columbia U. Press, 2006), p.248-9, 261-3.
- Mohandas K. Gandhi, selections from *The Essential Gandhi: An Anthology of His Writings on His Life, Work and Ideas*, ed. Louis Fischer (New York: Vintage, 2002), p.173-97.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Prologue [1943]" to *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 1-17.
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail [1963]," from *Why We Can't Wait*, p. 77-100.

Suggested reading:

- Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"

**May 1: Conclusion and Review**

- No reading assignment.

**May 11: Final papers due.**