Secularism and the Problem of Authority
Professors Kosmin and Keysar
Spring 2008
Course PBPL – 342

The aim of the course is to foster a comprehensive understanding of two of the central issues confronting the contemporary world, secularism and authority. Hopefully, participants will emerge more knowledgeable about the provenance and scope of secularism and better informed to make choices as citizens and as leaders.

The course is interdisciplinary and ranges across a number of humanities and social science disciplines. You should approach it with this fact in mind.

The course will be intellectually demanding and there will be a considerable amount of reading involved prior to each class. You should expect around 2 hours of preparation in advance of each class requiring “reading for meaning”. The assigned reading is compulsory since the teaching will be Socratic in style and involves seminar discussions. The readings will facilitate class participation. Research reports with short verbal presentations and written papers will also be expected.

There are 3 parts to the course:
1. Introduction to concepts
2. Political secularism
3. Secularism in society and culture

The course will be team taught by the course instructors and in addition some guest presentations will also be included – see schedule.

Assessment and grading will be based on the following schema:
25% class participation
25% quizzes & short papers
25% midterm
25% exam

You will be provided with a free copy of the course volume Kosmin and Keysar’s Secularism & Secularity: Contemporary International Perspectives and other assigned readings. No books will have to be purchased.

In order to acquaint yourself with some of the issues and topics to be discussed you should visit the website of ISSSC – Institute for the Study of secularism in Society & Culture http://www.trincoll.edu/secularisminstitute/
### PART I: INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPTS

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<td>1</td>
<td>Types of Authority, Definitions</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mapping the Territory of Secularism &amp; Secularity</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Laws, Rules, Regulations, Principles &amp; Conventions: 10 Commandments and Sports as case studies</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Powers of Reason and Revelation - Habermas and Ratzinger</td>
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<td>The Authority of Sacred Texts – Bible, Koran &amp; Commentaries/ Debate Guest: Prof. Ron Keiner</td>
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### PART II: POLITICAL SECULARISM

| 6     | Political Authority & Theocracy – Plato, Augustine, Marsilius of Padua, Calvin, Divine Right of Kings |
| 7     | The English Revolution – Common Law, Laws & Liberties of Massachusetts, John Locke |
| 8     | The American Revolution – Declaration of Independence, Preamble to Constitution, Virginia Bill of Rights |
| 9     | The Authority of Learning & Enlightenment: les philosophes & l’Encyclopedie/ Guest: Prof. Jean-Marc Kehres |
| 10    | The French Revolution |
| 11    | Human Rights and Universal Values I/ Guest: Dr Frank Pasquale |
| 12    | Human Rights and Universal Values II/ Guest: Dr Frank Pasquale |
| 13    | Leadership, Charisma & the Authoritarian Personality |
| 14    | The Marxist Revolutions/Joseph Stalin |
| 15    | Islam: The Ataturk Revolution & Turkish Secularism |
| 16    | Separation of Religion & State |

### PART III: SECULARISM IN SOCIETY AND CULTURE

| 17    | The Authority of Science |
| 18    | Science & Secular Values |
| 19    | Public Opinion Polls |
| 20    | Family, Patriarchy, and the Emancipation of Women |
| 21    | Secularity in the U.S., U.K., Canada & Australia |
| 22    | The Authority of the Media/ Guest: Prof. Mark Silk |
| 23    | Catholic Americans & Church Authority in Social Policy |
| 24    | The Authority of the Market: The Secularization of the American Sunday |
| 25    | The Secularization Debate |
Class Readings

Class 1 - Types of Authority, Definitions

Class 2 - Mapping the Territory of Secularism & Secularity

Class 3 - Laws, Rules, Regulations, Principles & Conventions:
10 Commandments and Sports as case studies

Reading:

Class 4 - The Powers of Reason and Revelation - Habermas and Ratzinger

Readings:

Class 5 - The Authority of Sacred Texts – Bible, Koran & Commentaries/ Guest: Prof. Ron Keiner

Readings:

Class 6 - Political Authority & Theocracy – Plato, Augustine, Marsilius of Padua, Calvin, Divine Right of Kings

Readings:
Class 7 - The English Revolution – Common Law, Laws & Liberties of Massachusetts, John Locke

Reading:

Class 8 - The American Revolution – Declaration of Independence, Preamble to Constitution, Virginia Bill of Rights

Reading:

Class 9 - The Authority of Learning & Enlightenment: les philosophes & l’Encyclopedie/Guest: Prof. Jean-Marc Kehres

Readings:

Class 10 - The French Revolution

Readings:

Class 11 - Human Rights and Universal Values I/ Guest: Dr Frank Pasquale

Readings:
Class 12 - Human Rights and Universal Values II/ Guest: Dr Frank Pasquale

Readings:

Class 13 - Leadership, Charisma & the Authoritarian Personality

Readings:

Class 14 - The Marxist Revolutions/Joseph Stalin

Reading:

Class 15 - Islam: The Ataturk Revolution & Turkish Secularism

Readings:

Class 16 - Separation of Religion & State

Readings:
3. Borden v. East Brunswick Board of Ed. – Full Text
4. Borden v. East Brunswick Board of Ed. – Martin Pachman letter to Jo Ann Magistro
Class 17 - The Authority of Science
AND
Class 18 - Science & Secular Values

Readings/Video:
7. www.climatecrisis.net (Al Gore – An Inconvenient Truth)

Class 19 - Public Opinion Polls

Reading:

Class 20 - Family, Patriarchy, and the Emancipation of Women

Reading:

Class 21 - Secularity in the U.S., U.K., Canada & Australia

Reading:
Class 22 - The Authority of the Media/Guest: Prof. Mark Silk

Reading:

Class 23 - Catholic Americans & Church Authority in Social Policy

Reading:

Class 24 – The Authority of the Market: The Secularization of the American Sunday

Reading:

Class 25 – The Secularization Debate

Reading: