Overview
American religious life has a rich and diverse history. It has evolved some, 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. Religious disaffiliation and unbelief also have political implications. 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 the 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 high quality political science research and writing. 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 significant efforts to master research and writing about the literature as well as writing about empirical observations. Most of you have some experience already with summarizing and synthesizing literature. However, few of you have experience with writing about quantitative data. Numbers can be powerful—they are much more powerful when clearly presented. 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 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 for the Political Science 200 prerequisite. Concurrent enrollment in 328 is allowed. Exceptions to the 328 prerequisite can be made for students who have taken comparable coursework from other departments such as Econ 378. Please speak with me if you have any questions about this. You will be unhappy in this course without completing or concurrently enrolling in the appropriate prerequisites because you will find it difficult to produce a research paper that satisfies the course expectations.

**Learning Outcomes**

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. **Effective and Professional Writing.** In this course, you will learn how to complete an article-length research project using appropriate methods of analysis and a professional standard of writing. In doing so, you will draw heavily from your learning in previous courses. In this section of the course, 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 or qualitative). To accomplish this objective, you will write drafts of your longer course paper as well complete assignments to hone other writing and presentation skills. Your final written paper should be a manuscript worthy of publication.

2. **Effective Oral and Visual Communication.** You will learn how to present your research findings in a high-quality oral and visual presentation, and how to give and receive feedback in a community of scholars.

3. **Political Process, Theory, and Thought.** By studying a specialized topic together as a smaller class, 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.
4. **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).

5. **Substantive Knowledge.** You will deepen your understanding of American political behavior, especially as it relates to theories of how religion affects political attitudes and behaviors. You will also develop 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**

Required reading material for the topics listed below will be made available via a class Dropbox folder.

**Requirements**

Your grade will be based on the following:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Research Project</td>
<td>80 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory and Research Design Paper</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis Paper</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polished Draft Paper (for peer review)</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Reviews of Polished Draft Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster and Presentation</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (with cover memo)</td>
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This is not a traditional course. There are no exams and fewer traditional lectures. You will notice that your grade is largely 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 first-rate original research. The remainder of your grade is dependent on your preparation and participation in class discussion. The discussion-oriented format and research focus of the class mean that the class members will carry much of the burden for 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 5-10 hours a week during a regular semester.

**Course Research Project:** The major product of this class is the research project and component papers. Do not underestimate the amount of time needed to do original research! It always takes more time than you originally estimate to do it well. It will be very difficult to do well if left to the last minute. Early and consistent work on your papers 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 inferior results and a disappointing grade.

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 document that describes the individual components of the course research project in more detail.

Course Participation: Your participation grade will be based on the extent to which you productively engage with in-class discussion and demonstrate command of the readings. Your participation in class meetings is important for you to master concepts needed for your research project. Simply attending class without participating productively is not acceptable. To provide a strong incentive to participate, each class period two class members will be randomly selected to lead out in the class discussion. To succeed at discussion leading about a particular reading you should come prepared to spend a minute or two summarizing the main question of the article or chapter(s), the general empirical approach, and then have at least one question ready to start the discussion with the rest of class. If you are selected as a discussion leader, I will look to you first as I prompt discussion from the class until I am satisfied that you have displayed an appropriate level of preparation or you have displayed evidence that you are unprepared.

Here are some ways you might prepare for your potential discussion leader role:

- Compare/contrast different authors (within the same week or by referring back to earlier reading). Discuss how each approaches a similar question.
- Discuss how the readings apply to your research topic or to current events.
- Critically assess the author’s theory, methods, or empirical analysis.
- Extend the readings by developing an idea that picks up on a point made by the author. For example, create a testable hypothesis provoked by reading the work. Or, articulate a hypothesis discussed in the reading, then offer a related or implied hypothesis suggested by your understanding of the work.
- Explain how a hypothesis you identify in the work could be tested.

You will have the opportunity to exercise one “pass” without penalty when you are randomly selected to be the discussion leader. If you are absent when your name is selected, I will exercise a “pass” for you (if you still have one left). When this happens, the next unique name in the random order will be selected until someone accepts the challenge.
Beyond your participation in class discussion, additional course participation credit will be given to students who complete the course evaluation at the end of the semester. To receive credit for completing the course evaluation, you must “release your name” to the instructor. You can complete the evaluation by logging into Route Y and entering the “Student Ratings” section. After you have completed the evaluation for this course, a checkbox will appear on the course list allowing you to release your name. This allows me to know that you have completed your evaluation. Your name will only be shown if there are more than 5 people in the class that have completed the evaluation. Your name is never linked to your evaluation. In other words, after submitting my grades, I will see the evaluations as well as a list of who completed them, but I will never know who said what. I strongly encourage you to give thoughtful attention to the course evaluation. I carefully consider student feedback as I revise the course, and I appreciate your constructive comments.

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.

Computer Policy: I have so far resisted the urge to ban laptops and other devices from my classroom to enable you to access course readings electronically during class. However, please do not abuse this privilege. During class discussion time, please avoid accessing any material not related to the class on your computer. Please turn off your internet connection during class to help you avoid this temptation. Accessing materials on your computer not related to the class during class time will distract you and those around you, negatively affect class engagement, and thus negatively affect your participation grade. I reserve the right to change this policy for any students or the entire class if I find it being violated.

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. I will notice instances of 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 at http://honorcode.byu.edu by clicking on the tab labeled “Honor Code Statement.” This includes some examples of various forms of academic misconduct and a brief explanation of plagiarism.

Violating BYU’s academic honesty 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 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/ for more information.

Preventing Sexual Misconduct: As required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the university prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in its education programs or activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment—including sexual violence—committed by or against students, university employees, and visitors to campus. As outlined in university policy, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking are considered forms of “Sexual Misconduct” prohibited by the university.

University policy requires any university employee in a teaching, managerial, or supervisory role to report incidents of Sexual Misconduct that come to their attention through various forms including face-to-face conversation, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. If you encounter Sexual Misconduct, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at t9coordinator@byu.edu or 801-422-8692 or Ethics Point at https://titleix.byu.edu/report or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours). Additional information about Title IX and resources available to you can be found at http://titleix.byu.edu.

BYU interprets Title IX in a way that classifies most employees as "responsible employees," which means that they are required to inform the Title IX office if they know of or have reason to suspect any sexual misconduct experienced by or perpetrated by BYU employees, students or visitors, regardless of whether the misconduct happened on or off campus. This means that if you share with a faculty member that you have experienced sexual assault while affiliated with BYU, the faculty member is obligated to report it to the Title IX office, regardless of your wishes. The Title IX office will follow-up with you and provide you with resources.

If you need support but are unsure about whether you are ready to report the assault or are concerned about an Honor Code investigation, here are some resources that are confidential:

A) The Center for Women and Children in Crisis (cwcic.org). The CWCIC has a 24-hour Sexual Assault Hotline available at 1-888-421-1100. They will provide you with a victim advocate who will compassionately walk you through all of your options. The CWCIC has no relationship with either BYU or the police, and they will keep all information you share totally confidential.
B) BYU Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.byu.edu or 801-422-3035). Counseling and Psychological Services is the only fully confidential resource on campus. They have crisis counselors available 24 hours a day; if you are calling after hours, call the BYU Police (801-422-2222) and ask to speak with the crisis counselor on duty. You do not need to inform the BYU police that you are calling regarding a sexual assault.

Please seek help from these sources. They have highly-trained staff who will believe you and support you. If you decide you would like to report the assault, the BYU Police (801-422-2222) are well-equipped to handle sexual assault cases with sensitivity and professionalism. Always remember that sexual assault is not your fault, and you are a beloved child of God.

**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](http://learningoutcomes.byu.edu). Feedback on the expected student learning outcomes can be given to me or sent to FHSS@byu.edu.

**University Resources:** Many students at BYU struggle with stress, depression, and other emotional challenges. BYU’s office of Counseling and Psychological Services offers a variety of helpful services to deal with these very common issues. Counseling is available to full-time students with concerns such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders, interpersonal conflict, marital problems, self-esteem, social relationships, and stress management. All of these services, consistent with the highest standards of professional psychology, are provided in a confidential manner. For example, the university’s Stress Management Services can help students identify sources of stress and learn how to cope with its physical and emotional effects. Students learn how to relax, restructure stressful thinking, and become more effective in dealing with stress and pressure. Counseling and Psychological Services is located at 1500 WSC and by phone at 801-422-3035. Visit their website at [https://caps.byu.edu/](https://caps.byu.edu/) for more information or to make an appointment.
**Course Schedule**

**Required readings are marked with asterisks (**)**. You should come to class prepared to discuss the required readings in detail. Required readings will be made available through Dropbox as PDF files. Other recommended readings are listed for the benefit of your research papers. Many will also be posted to Dropbox, but if not posted they can easily be obtained on your own.

**Week 1 (September 6): Course Introduction**

Required Reading: course syllabus

**Week 2 (Sept. 11 and 13): Theories of Religion and Politics**


**Week 3 (Sept. 18 and 20): Measurement**

*** Email draft research paper proposal by midnight on Friday, September 22nd.


**Week 4 (Sept. 25 and 27): American Religious Development**


**Week 5 (Oct. 2 and 4): Mormon Political Behavior**


***Campbell, Green, and Monson. 2014. Seeking the Promised Land: Mormons and American Politics. Cambridge. Read chapters 3 and 6. Skim 4 and 5. Chapters 1 and 2 provided in case you’re interested.


Hawley. 2015. “Attitudes toward Mormons and Voter Behavior in the 2012 Presidential Election” Politics and Religion


**Week 6 (Oct. 9 and 11): Voting Behavior, Elections, and Partisanship**


**Week 7 (Oct. 16 and Oct. 18): Political Participation**

*** Component 1 of research paper due by midnight on Friday, October 20th.***


**Week 8 (Oct 23 and 25): Public Opinion**


**Week 9 (Oct. 30 and Nov. 1): Political Tolerance and Democratic Norms**

***Component 2 of research paper due by midnight on Friday, November 3rd.***


Week 10 (Nov. 6 and 8): Social Science Writing


Week 11 (Nov. 13 and 15): Evangelical Political Behavior

***Draft paper (for peer review) due on Friday November 17th by midnight. Email a copy to your peer reviewer and cc Professor Monson.


Week 12 (Nov 20) Peer Review, Writing and Revision / Graphics and Oral Presentations.

Further instruction on data presentation and individual meetings about research projects.

Week 13 (Nov. 27 and 29)
Paper presentations
***Peer Review due in class on November 29th

Week 14 (Dec. 4 and 6)
Paper presentations

Week 15 (Dec. 11 and 13)
Paper presentations

** Class will be likely be canceled on December 13th to accommodate your participation in the Political Science Department’s poster session.

***The Final paper is due at midnight Thursday, December 14th. Email an electronic copy to the instructor. Please figure out how to send the paper as a single file (don’t send separate documents for the title page, text, figures, tables, etc.). However, you may send the cover memo as a separate file.