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**Office Hours:** 2 to 3 pm M-W-F; 10 to 11 am T-T; and by appointment

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- **One cannot fully understand past or present politics in the United States without studying the significant influence of religious conservatives.** The religious right is relevant to American politics far beyond the contemporary church and state issues of public school prayer and legalized abortion. Throughout U.S. history, religious conservatives have entered the political arena in organized efforts to shape public policy on a wide range of issues.
- **Religious conservatives are a diverse grouping of evangelicals, fundamentalists, and pentecostal-charismatics, whose theological differences have relevance for their political objectives and tactics.** Therefore, an important objective of the course is to better understand how the various strains of religious conservatism contribute to American political culture.

### COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

- **The study of religion and politics has value to both believers and skeptics,** to those who applaud the connections between religion and politics as necessary and proper as well as to those who see this connection as the root of mischief and tragedy.
- **Class meetings are intended to maximize class discussion.** In order for the latter to prove valuable, you will need to complete the assigned readings on time and to come to the class with questions and observations in mind.
- In discussing such a sensitive topic as religion, it is crucial that each of us respect views different from our own. As part of that respect, remember that **this class is not intended as a place for proselytizing or conversion.**
- This course attempts to identify and analyze both the noble and the unfortunate sides of the religious element in politics. In doing so, **the course adopts a social scientific approach** that rejects both the tendency to explain religion only in terms of supernatural forces as well as the opposite tendency to reduce all religious attitudes and behaviors to biological or genetic traits. Instead, the focus is upon those psychological, economic, and social factors that shape religious activity in the political system.

### TEXTBOOKS

- Clyde Wilcox. 1996. *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Mark Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, editors. 1998. *God at the Grassroots: The Christian Right in the 1998 Elections*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

## TESTS AND GRADING

Your course grade will be based in equal thirds on a midterm examination, a final examination, and a journal-article abstract. The three components of the final course grade are combined before a course letter grade is determined, using the following scale:

- A = 90–100% of total possible points
- B = 80– 89% of total possible points
- C = 70– 79% of total possible points
- D = 60– 69% of total possible points
- F = 00– 59% of total possible points

***Any form of cheating on any graded work will result in an automatic grade of F for the course, no matter what the quality of all other course work.***

## REQUIRED ATTENDANCE

If you are an in–state student, the tuition that you pay accounts for less than *20 percent* of the total cost of your academic program at UNCW (or any other state university in NC). The taxpayers of North Carolina pay the difference. This public assistance amounts to more than \$6000 dollars per year (think of it as tuition stamps) for each in–state, full–time student. These taxpayers (most of whom are not college graduates) have a right to expect that you attend classes, since you are spending their money.

- In the real (job) world, unforeseen circumstances (alarm clock doesn't go off, car trouble) are accepted as legitimate excuses for *short and infrequent* absences from work. Similarly, in this course *two* unpenalized absences (equivalent to one week's attendance) will be allowed. ***For each additional absence, your final course grade will be reduced one letter grade.***
- ***No makeup exams will be given for absences occurring under normal circumstances. Such an absence will result in a grade of zero for that exam.***
- If late to class, it is your responsibility to ensure (*immediately after class*) that you are recorded present on the class attendance roll. Should you fail to ask to be marked present after class, you will have used up one of any remaining unpenalized absences. Your being late to class is not a problem *as long as this happens infrequently*. ***If you are tardy, see me immediately after class to make sure that your name was counted on the roll -- otherwise, you will be marked absent.***
- In the real (job) world, frequent or lengthy absences are excused only in cases of serious illness or injury, death in the immediate family, or other catastrophic events. Similarly, in this course, ***truly extraordinary circumstances that rarely occur may warrant special arrangements that will be made on a case-by-case basis. Requests for excused absences must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation.***
- ***The following circumstances do not constitute an excused absence: job conflicts, car trouble, or an alarm clock that doesn't go off; save your two "free cuts" for situations like these.***
- Once in class, it is expected that you will stay until dismissed or unless some foreseen or unforeseen emergency occurs. In the former case, please advise me ahead of class; in the latter case, leave class as quietly as possible and inform me as soon as possible of the circumstances that led to your unexpected departure. ***Otherwise, you will be marked absent for that day.***

THESE ARE THE TERMS OF THIS COURSE.

YOUR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT WILL SIGNIFY THAT YOU UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THEM.

I WISH YOU SUCCESS AND WILL PROVIDE EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT TO ASSIST YOU.