Science and Religion in American Media

Film 46 Topics in Television
Sociology 49.13 Special Topics

Spring 2014
001 Black Family Visual Arts Center (Lower Level)
MWF 11:15-12:20 (11)

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Office Hours:	TTh 2:00-3:00p, or by appointment (visit, say hi!)
X-hours:	Used occasionally, see course schedule

Course Description

The public life of religion and science seems to be characterized by escalating conflict and intractable polarization. In this course we draw on several different scholarly disciplines to consider the public intersection of science and religion with our responsibilities and obligations as citizens in a democratic polity, paying particular attention to problems of participation, representation, and deliberation as they are mediated through the press, new media, film, television, and public spaces. We will examine case studies from current controversies over stem cell research, cloning, reproductive genetics, environmental policy, human origins, and sexuality to explore who is creating and maintaining these public controversies, and for what purposes. Most importantly, we will unpack the various ways that "science and religion" is a defining confrontation in the development of American democracy, whether in the contested separation of church and state, the rise of conservative religious movements in electoral politics, or the supposed decline of American scientific and technological dominance in the world.

Distributive: Social Analysis (SOC). World Culture: Western Cultures (W).

Course Goals

The overall course goal is to acquire basic competence in evaluating contentious public debates as institutional contests of credibility that shape what we can talk about, what we know about it, how we talk about it, and what we can do about it. This competence is important for any future endeavor involving participation in public life, such as advertising, social activism, public relations, religious leadership, filmmaking, marketing, public policy, electoral politics, journalism, or global rock superstardom.

An additional course goal is to develop digital scholarship skills such as media archive search, digital media analysis, metadata production, infrastructure design, digital curation, online collaboration, and digital publishing. Such skills are personally valuable and professionally desirable. To provide evidence of your abilities to others, the course implements a digital badging system where badges are earned as skills are acquired and demonstrated. Once earned, badges can be displayed (or not, your call) in social media, web pages, or email to communicate your abilities and achievements.

Course Meetings

Regular class meets MWF. Usually Monday and Wednesday will be a combination of me lecturing and us discussing interesting things in class. Technically this course is a Topics in Television course, so you can expect "lecturing" to include screening of short video excerpts. Usually Friday will be reserved for student-led presentation and discussion of course readings, which we may enliven further with the help of guest lecturers and/or discussants. We will sort out assignments for these presentations in the first week or so.

X-hours will be used occasionally for digital scholarship sessions. We will meet in the regular classroom or Jones Media Center to spend time developing digital scholarship skills through a variety of workshops and exercises in content creation, commentary, and publishing. These sessions will be linked to course themes and material, so we will develop our digital scholarship skills as part of learning about science and religion. Details of required meetings and locations can be found in the Course Schedule.

Note that the course also makes extensive use of Canvas (e.g. weekly quizzes, assigned readings, etc.). Students are responsible for gaining access to Canvas and staying current with material on the course Canvas site outside of class meetings.

Learning Objectives

The course is divided into three modules, each with its own learning objectives. In parallel with these modules, the digital scholarship lab sessions will pursue an additional learning objective.

In Module One, we discuss theories of the public sphere and credibility. The basic objective is to understand how and why science and religion bother to participate in American public life in the first place. Upon completion of this module, students will be able to describe theories of the public sphere, compare and contrast the concepts of truth and credibility, identify multiple ways that public sphere activity shapes everyday social life, critically evaluate the role of "the public" in public debate, identify patterns of consumption and production in American media, describe the consequences of these patterns for the public sphere, and relate the participation of science and religion in American media to the pursuit of credibility.

In Module Two, we consider apparent public conflicts between science and religion as episodes in the development of American democracy. The basic objective is to understand how and why arguments about science and religion in the public sphere are also efforts to work out how we are going to resolve conflicts in a pluralistic democracy. Upon completion of this module, students will be able to analyze participation in public life in terms of moral projects, compare and contrast the "knowledge deficit" model and its alternatives, distinguish between moral and epistemological arguments in the public sphere, relate the historical trajectory of religion and science in American electoral politics to concepts of credibility (from Module One), and evaluate the role of legal institutions in settling public arguments about science and religion.

In Module Three, we discuss how public debate reflects and creates divisions and contention within American institutions, even while revealing similarities between apparently opposed institutions. The basic objective is to understand how and why public arguments involving science and religion are also contests between diverse possibilities within science and within religion. Upon completion of this module, students will be able to evaluate the effects of uncertainty and doubt on credibility (from Module One), use examples from science and religion to show how internal institutional conflicts are escalated by American media, identify sources of commonality in public discourse, and evaluate the probable success of efforts to use media to achieve social change.

In the Digital Scholarship sessions and exercises, we will develop our digital scholarship skills as part of learning about science and religion in American media. The basic objective is to gain competence in digital scholarship. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to search and retrieve archival content from a variety of digital archives, apply critical knowledge and communication skills, and use the Mediathread publishing platform to generate digital publications that integrate original analysis and commentary with archival textual, video, and interactive content. Students will demonstrate this competence by producing a digital scholarship project using Mediathread.

Texts and Resources

There are two required books, available at Wheelock Books (and elsewhere):

> *Science in Public: Communication, Culture, And Credibility*, by Jane Gregory and Steve Miller (Basic Books).

> *The God Strategy: How Religion Became a Political Weapon in America*, by David Domke and Kevin Coe (Oxford University Press). Be sure to get the updated 2010 edition.

All other required course readings are available electronically through the course Canvas page. In the printed course schedule these readings are marked with <C>.

We will also make use of Mediathread, which is a web-based application that will have course-specific access available to enrolled students.

Badges

In addition to the usual grades, you will have the opportunity to earn digital badges that provide an online visual record of course achievements. Early in the quarter you can earn badges by attending Mediathread training workshops, completing Mediathread exercises, and providing feedback on the Mediathread platform. This track culminates in a Digital Media Analysis badge. Later in the quarter you can earn badges by completing a series of response memos, and by designing and executing a digital scholarship project. This track culminates in a Digital Scholarship badge.

Grading

Your final course grade will be calculated in Canvas's Grade Center on the basis of the following five course requirements:

1. Class participation (20%). Participation includes attendance at class periods and specified X-hours, active class discussions, and delivering a presentation on an assigned course reading to the class. If you miss four or more class periods (including X-hours), you will automatically receive zero points for this component of your grade. I will record a letter grade (+/-) for participation in Canvas.

2. Weekly on-line quizzes (10% combined). A new quiz will be available each Monday after class through the course Canvas page. Each quiz will be due before class on the following Monday. You must take all of the quizzes. Every quiz will be automatically graded and assigned a score (out of 10 points) by Canvas. Numeric quiz scores will be added together and converted into a percentage to generate the combined quiz grade for the course.

3. Take-home midterm examination (20%). The written midterm examination will cover material from Module One. It will be distributed on April 7 and due back April 14. I will inform you of the composition and the grading procedure for the midterm before distributing the midterm. I will record a letter grade (+/-) for the midterm in Canvas.

4. Take-home final examination (20%). The written final examination will cover material from the entire course. I will inform you of the composition and the grading procedure for the final examination well in advance of the final examination date. I will record a letter grade (+/-) for the final examination in Canvas.

5. Digital scholarship (30%). You will be required to attend digital scholarship training sessions, complete assigned exercises using the Mediathread platform, and create a project that develops and showcases your skills. The exact contours of each project will vary and will be developed in consultation with the course instructor. All projects will include a diary of your thoughts, collaborations, and decisions. I will record a letter grade (+/-) for digital scholarship in Canvas.

All conversion between letter grades and points will follow Canvas defaults.

Academic Honor

Students are responsible for compliance with the Academic Honor Principle: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/honor/. We will follow Dartmouth College guidelines for responding to suspected violations. Consequences of such violation may include a failing grade in the course.

This course contains both individual and collaborative requirements. I expect that responses to quizzes and take-home examinations will be your own individual work. I expect that digital scholarship will be collaborative, with the requirement that you explicitly credit all sources from which you draw as you develop your project, including people with whom you have collaborated or who have otherwise provided assistance to you. Whatever the assignment, submitting a copy of another person's work (even in part) as your own work violates the Academic Honor Principle.

If you have any questions about whether or not something is a violation of the Academic Honor Principle, ask me first!

Student Needs

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related academic adjustments and services are encouraged to see me privately as early as possible in the term. Students requiring disability-related academic adjustments and services must consult the Student Accessibility Services office (301 Collis Student Center, 646-9900, Student.Accessibility.Services@Dartmouth.edu). Once SAS has authorized services, students must show the originally signed SAS Services and Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, if students have questions about whether they qualify to receive academic adjustments and services, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

Students who have a religious observance that conflicts with participation in the course should come speak with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Tentative Course Schedule (may adjust during quarter)

All readings are required readings. I expect you to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day. If a reading is listed under April 15, then you need to complete that reading before class on April 15.

Readings prefaced with <C> are available on Canvas.

Module One: The Public Sphere and Credibility

March 24 – Graven Images and the Watchdog of the Mind: Why Media Matters to Science and Religion

    No assigned reading

March 25 X-period - Intro to Digital Scholarship (VAC001)

    <C> Gavin, Michael and Kathleen Marie Smith. 2009. "An Interview with Brett Bobley." *Debates in the Digital Humanities.*

March 26 - Nietzsche's Typewriter: Technological Determinism and its Critics

    <C> Carr, Nicholas. 2010. "Prologue: The Watchdog and the Thief" pp. 1-4 AND "Hal and Me" Ch. 1, pp. 5-16 in *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (Norton).

    Gregory, Jane and Steve Miller. "Media Issues in the Public Understanding of Science." Ch. 5, pp. 104-131 in *Science in Public: Communication, Culture, and Credibility.*

March 28 – Religion and Science in Public

    <C> Berger, Helen A. and Douglas Ezzy. 2009. "Mass Media and Religious Identity: A Case Study of Young Witches." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48(3):501-514.

    <C> Kirby, David. A. 2003. "Scientists on the Set: Science Consultants and Communication of Science in Visual Fiction." *Public Understanding of Science* 12(3): 261-278.

March 31 – Who or What is "The Public?"

<C> Williams, Bruce A. and Michael X. Delli Carpini. 2011. "Media Regimes and American Democracy." Ch. 2, pp. 16-50 in *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes, Democracy, and the New Information Environment* (Cambridge University Press).

April 1 X-period - Mediathread Basics Workshop (VAC001)

No required reading.

April 2 – Publics: What are They Good For?

<C> Rossman, Gabriel. 2009. "Hollywood and Jerusalem: Christian Conservatives and the Media." Ch. 10, pp. 304-328 in Steven Brint and Jean Schroedel (eds), *Conservative Christians and American Democracy* (Russell Sage Foundation).

Gregory, Jane and Steve Miller. 1998. "Popularization, Public Understanding, and the Public Sphere." Ch. 4, pp. 81-103 in *Science in Public: Communication, Culture, and Credibility* (Basic Books).

April 4 – Publics as Politics

<C> Evans, Michael S. 2009. "Defining the Public, Defining Sociology: Hybrid Science-Public Relations and Boundary-Work in Early American Sociology." *Public Understanding of Science* 18(1):5-22.

<C> Lee, Caroline W. and Zachary Romano. 2013. "Democracy's New Discipline: Public Deliberation as Organizational Strategy." *Organization Studies* 34(5-6):733-753.

April 7 - Wonder Junkies: Why, What, and How We Watch

Midterm examination distributed.

Carr, Nicholas. 2010. "A Medium of the Most General Nature." Ch. 5, pp. 81-98 in *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (Norton).

Gregory, Jane and Steve Miller. 1998. "Science in Public Culture." Ch. 2, pp. 19-51 in *Science in Public: Communication, Culture, and Credibility* (Basic Books).

April 8 X-period - Mediathread Exercise 1 (Jones Media Center)

<C> Fitzpatrick, Kathleen. 2009. "Authorship and Technology." P. 21 in *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy.*

April 9 – The Narrative Construction of Reality: How Stories Shape Us

<C> Green, Melanie C., Timothy C. Brock, and Geoff F. Kaufman. 2004. "Understanding Media Enjoyment: The Role of Transportation into Narrative Worlds." *Communication Theory* 14(4):311-327.

<C> Mulligan, Kenneth and Philip Habel. 2013. "The Implications of Fictional Media for Political Beliefs." *American Politics Research* 41(1):122-146.

April 11 – Fact or Fiction: Does it Matter?

<C> Kirby, David A. 2013. "Forensic Fictions: Science, Television Production, and Modern Storytelling." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part C: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 44(1):92-102.

<C> Dingwall, Robert and Meryl Aldridge. 2006. "Television Wildlife Programming as a Source of Popular Scientific Information: A Case Study of Evolution." *Public Understanding of Science* 15(2):131-152.

Module Two: Conflict as Democracy

April 14 – Competing for the Future: Visions of America and its Citizens

Midterm examination due.

<C> Kirby, David A. 2009. "The Future is Now: Hollywood Science Consultants, Diegetic Prototypes and the Role of Cinematic Narratives in Generating Real-World Technological Development," *Social Studies of Science*, 40(1): 41-70.

<C> White, Lynn. 1967. "The Historic Roots of our Ecological Crisis." *Science* 155(3767):1203–07.

April 15 X-period - Mediathread Exercise 2 (No meeting. Media Librarian holding office hours at Jones Media Center viewing stations.)

April 16 – Future Crisis as Public Resource

<C> Miller, Jon D. 1998. "The Measurement of Civic Scientific Literacy." *Public Understanding of Science* 7(3):203-223.

<C> Irwin, Alan. 2001. "Constructing the Scientific Citizen: Science and Democracy in the Biosciences." *Public Understanding of Science* 10(1):1-18.

April 18 - Lying Like a Survey: The Uses and Abuses of Public Opinion

<C> Sturgis, Patrick and Nick Allum. (2004). "Science in Society: Re-evaluating the Deficit Model of Public Attitudes." *Public Understanding of Science* 13(1):55-74.

<C> Rughinis, Cosima. 2011. "A Lucky Answer to a Fair Question: Conceptual, Methodological, and Moral Implications of Including Items on Human Evolution in Scientific Literacy Surveys." *Science Communication* 33(4):501-532.

April 21 – Show Business for Ugly People: Media and Electoral Politics

Domke, David and Kevin Coe. 2010. "One Nation Under God, Divisible" Ch. 1, pp. 11-27 AND "Political Priests" Ch. 2, pp. 29-48 in *The God Strategy* (Oxford University Press).

April 22 X-period – Individual Meetings to Discuss Project (VAC 203, sign up in advance)

April 23 – Why There is No Public Controversy About Aeronautics

Domke, David and Kevin Coe. 2010. "Morality Politics" Ch. 5, pp. 99-128 AND "Religious Politics and Democratic Vitality" Ch. 6, pp. 129-150 in *The God Strategy* (Oxford University Press).

April 25 – What Do We Really Want?

        \<C\> Evans, Michael S. 2012. "Who Wants a Deliberative Public Sphere?" *Sociological Forum* 27(4):872-895.

        \<C\> Hibbing, John R. and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2002. "Americans' Desire for Stealth Democracy." Ch. 6, pp. 129-159 in *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs about How Government Should Work* (Cambridge University Press).

April 28 – The Court of Public Opinion and the Rules of Evidence: The Curious Case(s) of Religion and American Law

        \<C\> Leiter, Brian. "Religion." Ch. 2, pp. 27-53 in *Why Tolerate Religion?* (Princeton University Press).

        \<C\> Sullivan, Winnifred Fallers. 2005. "Free Religion." Ch. 5, pp. 138-159 in *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton University Press).

April 29 X-period - No Meeting, First Response Memo due

April 30 – Inheriting *Scopes*: The Evolution of Evolution in Public Life

        \<C\> Numbers, Ron. 1992. "John C. Whitcomb, Jr., Henry M. Morris, and *The Genesis Flood*." Ch. 10, pp. 184-213 in *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (University of California Press).

        \<C\> Rudolph, John L. 2002. "BSCS: Science as Social Progress." Ch. 6, pp. 137-164 in *Scientists in the Classroom: The Cold War Reconstruction of American Science Education* (Palgrave).

May 2 – When What is at Stake is What is At Stake: Arguing about the Rules

        \<C\> Superfine, Benjamin Michael. 2009. "The Evolving Role of the Courts in Educational Policy: The Tension Between Judicial, Scientific, and Democratic Decision Making in *Kitzmiller v. Dover*." *American Educational Research Journal* 46(4):898-923.

        \<C\> Evans, Michael S. and John H. Evans. 2010. "Arguing Against Darwinism:

Religion, Science, and Public Morality." Ch. 13, pp. 286-308 in Bryan Turner (ed.) *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion* (Blackwell Publishing).

Module Three: Diversity and Change

May 5 – Airing Dirty Laundry: Escalating Uncertainty and Internal Conflict

    <C> Oreskes, Naomi and Erik M. Conway. 2010. "Introduction" Pp. 1-9 AND "The Denial of Global Warming" Ch. 6, pp. 169-215 in *Merchants of Doubt: How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (Bloomsbury Press).

May 6 X-period - No Meeting, Second Response Memo due

May 7 – Mass Media and Public Boundaries

    <C> Wright, Stuart A. 1995. "Construction and Escalation of a Cult Threat." Pp. 75-94 in *Armageddon in Waco.* Edited by Stuart A. Wright. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

    <C> Lewis, James R. 1995. "Self-fulfilling Stereotypes, the Anti-cult Movement, and the Waco Confrontation." Pp. 95-110 in *Armageddon in Waco.* Edited by Stuart A. Wright. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

May 9 – Objectivity and Its Alternatives

    <C> Dixon, Graham N. and Christopher E. Clarke. 2013. "Heightening Uncertainty Around Certain Science: Media Coverage, False Balance, and the Autism-Vaccine Controversy." *Science Communication* 35(3):358-382.

    <C> Braunstein, Ruth. 2012. "Storytelling in Liberal Religious Advocacy." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(1):110-127.

May 12 – Furious Agreement: Similarities and Differences in Public Discourse

    Evans, John H. "Introduction" Ch.1, pp.1-36 in *Contested Reproduction*: *Genetic Technologies, Religion, and Public Debate* (University of Chicago Press).

<C> Nisbet, Matthew C. 2005. "The Competition for Worldviews: Values, Information, and Public Support for Stem Cell Research." *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 17(1):90-112.

May 13 X-period – Discussion Meeting (VAC 001) to free up Friday for mayhem, ALSO Third Response Memo due

<C> Evans, Michael S. 2012. "Supporting Science: Reasons, Restrictions, and the Role of Religion." *Science Communication* 34(3):334-362.

May 14 – The Same Reasons for Different Reasons

Evans, John H. 2010."Human Dignity and Equality of Treatment" Ch. 5, pp. 105-126 in *Contested Reproduction*: *Genetic Technologies, Religion, and Public Debate* (University of Chicago Press).

May 16 – NO CLASS MEETING, Green Key Weekend (Be safe. Have fun.)

May 19 – Be The Trouble You Want To See in the World: Media and Social Change

<C> Sobieraj, Sarah. 2011. "'Apparently They Don't Like Succinct and Articulate': Journalists, Activists, and the Battle Over News." Ch. 4, pp. 68-106 in *Soundbitten: The Perils of Media-Centered Activism* (NYU Press).

May 20 X-period - Optional Open Time (VAC001)

No assigned reading.

May 21 – The Language of Being Noticed

<C> Juergensmeyer, Mark. 2003. "Theater of Terror." Ch. 7, pp. 121-147 in *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd edition (University of California Press).

May 23 – The Limits of Knowledge Activism

Final examination distributed.

<C> Waidzunas, Tom J, 2013. "Intellectual Opportunity Structures and Science-Targeted Activism: Influence of the Ex-Gay Movement on the Science of Sexual Orientation." *Mobilization* 18(1):1-18.

May 26 – MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY

May 27 X-period – No Meeting, Final Digital Scholarship Project due

May 28 – Optional open review/discussion (tentative, may adjust during quarter)

June 3 – Final examination due.