**Religion 471/Political Science 490/21**

**Religion & Modernity**

Winter Quarter 2015

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 Robert Orsi (r-orsi@northwestern.edu)

Thursday 12:00-2:00

Ripton Room, Scott Hall 201

Office hours: Orsi W 1:00-3:00; Hurd M 1:00-3:00

**Introduction** This course examines the ways that particular constructions of “religion” have been fundamental to the formation and authorization of “modernity” and the consequences of this for both politics and religion. While the claim “we have never been modern” may not be an overstatement—at the very least we have to query the “we” here—nonetheless it is now clear that modernity itself is a religious project. The religious project of modernity has taken different forms in various specific historical, geopolitical, and religious contexts, so that it becomes necessary to speak of multiple modernities (although this may occlude commonalities that have taken shape amid asymmetries of global, national, and regional power). But with these assumptions, which have increasingly shaped the conversation about religion and modernity, scholars risk reproducing normative distinctions as critical analysis. The course aims to heighten attention to the uses of the categories “modern” and “religious” with a view towards looking beyond their hermetic pairing.

Topics include religion and the rise of modern nation-states; the making of religious others in early modernity; religion, missions, and colonial education; the politics of religious freedom; and the formation of a necessary modern disciplinary vocabulary of religious exclusion (e.g., “superstition,” “syncretism,” “folk religion.”). The seminar moves back and forth across disciplinary boundaries to explore these questions, drawing on political science, religious studies, law, anthropology, history, and sociology of religion.

**Requirements** The course requires a substantial amount of reading and preparation. Class attendance and participation are important components of the final grade, and comments on the week’s reading are mandatory for all participants.

**Assignments** A final paper (15-20 pp., double-spaced) applying insights from this course to your own developing research interests is due on the first day of finals week, March 16th. It should be a short but solid argument developed in consultation with the instructors that could potentially be turned into a dissertation chapter. Submit your paper electronically to both instructors. Please, no incompletes except in the case of medical or personal emergency.

**Evaluation** Final grades will be based upon attendance, participation, and final paper.

**Required Texts**

Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

David M. Engel and Jaruwan S. Engel, *Tort, Custom, and Karma: Globalization and Legal Consciousness in Thailand*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *A Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

**Schedule**

January 8 Orsi, “My Specific Form of Disorientation”; “Everyday Religion and the Contemporary World: The Un-Modern, Or What Was Supposed to Have Disappeared But Did Not”; “Abundant History: Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity”; "Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion”;

 “Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In?”

 (Bibliographical citations are below. All articles posted on the course website.)

January 15 Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion*

January 22 Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*

January 29 Engel & Engel, *Tort, Custom and Karma*

February 5 Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*

February 12 Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*

February 19 Benjamin Berger, “Belonging to Law: Religious Difference, Secularism, and the Conditions of Civic Inclusion”; “The Cultural Limits of Legal Tolerance.” (Bibliographical citations are below.)

February 26 Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*

March 5 Discussion and presentation of student papers.

**Bibliographical Citations**

Robert Orsi, “Everyday Religion and the Contemporary World: The Un-Modern, Or What Was Supposed to Have Disappeared But Did Not,” afterword to Samuli Schielke and Liza Debevec, eds., *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes: An Anthropology of Everyday Religion* (New York: Berghan Books, 2012): 146-160.

-------------, “My Specific Form of Disorientation,” in Titus Hjelm and Phil Zuckerman, eds., *Studying Religion and Society* (Routledge 2012): 151-162.

-------------, “Abundant History: Marian Apparitions as Alternative Modernity” in

Anna-karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans, eds., *Moved By Mary:*

 *The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World* (London: Ashgate, 2009): 215-225.

-------------, "Everyday Miracles: The Study of Lived Religion,” in in *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, edited by David Hall (Princeton University Press, 1997): 3-21.

-------------, “Is the Study of Lived Religion Irrelevant to the World We Live In?” 2002 Special Presidential Plenary Address,” Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, Salt Lake City,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 2 (June 2003): 169-174.

Benjamin Berger, “The Cultural Limits of Legal Tolerance,” *The Canadian Journal of Law and Jurisprudence,* 21:2 (July 2008): 245-277.

--------------------, “Belonging to Law: Religious Difference, Secularism, and the Limits of Religious Inclusion,” *Social & Legal Studies* (2014): 1-17.