INAF 423: AMERICAN DIPLOMACY, RELIGION, AND THE POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
Professor Thomas F. Farr
Georgetown University, Fall 2017
Wednesdays, 2:00 pm-4:30 pm, Berkley Center Conference Room, Suite 200

Office Hours: by appointment
Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, 3307 M. St.
Email: tomf48@gmail.com

Overview of the Course

According to the Pew Research Center, seventy four percent of the world's people live in countries with severe restrictions on religious freedom. Most of those countries are vital to U.S. interests; they include Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, China, India, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Indonesia, to name a few.

In many of these countries individuals, families and entire communities are subject to devastating, violent persecution -- for example, torture, rape, murder (by burning or decapitation), forced conversion, unjust imprisonment, unjust execution, or forced migration -- either because of their religious beliefs and practices or those of their tormentors.

The examples are legion, and mounting. They include the systematic rape of Iraqi Yazidi girls and women by ISIS terrorists who cite their religious beliefs, and recourse to Islamic law, to justify their actions.

They include forced conversions of Muslims to Christianity in the Central African Republic, and the forced migration of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Christians from their homes.

They include an Iranian clerical regime that routinely imprisons religious minorities (including American citizens) and publicly tortures and executes homosexuals because of the regime’s interpretation of Islam.

Should American diplomacy work to counter such horrors by advancing religious freedom in these and other countries? It is required to do so by law (the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act), but is this law and the policy it created a good idea? If the answer is yes, is the reason primarily humanitarian, i.e., to stand with the persecuted and rescue victims of violence? Or are there broader U.S. interests involved, such as combating religious extremism and terrorism, supporting women’s equality, stimulating economic growth, or helping struggling democracies stabilize?

Even if the goal seems important, can it be accomplished by American diplomacy? What is its record since 1998? Are America’s diplomats being trained to succeed in advancing religious freedom?
Or is US International Religious Freedom policy simply a bad idea, as some critics charge, and basically a means of imposing US values on resisting cultures?

What about religious freedom in the West? The same Pew reports show that religious freedom is deteriorating in the nations of Western Europe and in the United States. Should the United States address this issue with its longtime allies, all of whom live in well-established democracies? If so, why?

How does the U.S. government balance its vital national interests -- for example, its interest in encouraging stability in Egypt or Pakistan, its economic dependence on China, or its alliances with the UK or France -- with whatever interest it might have in advancing religious freedom?

In the United States itself, there are signs that religious liberty is no longer considered the "first freedom" of American democracy. If this is true, is it a sign of decline or of progress? Does religious freedom stand in the way of equality in America? Or is it necessary for equality?

Most importantly for this course, does the status of religious liberty in the US have an impact on the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and American national interests?

This course will examine the politics of the U.S. policy to advance international religious freedom. We will explore the origins of the policy, its performance and legacy to date, as well as its prospects for development. Along the way we will explore the attitudes about religion and religious freedom which have helped to mold that policy.

We will ask whether U.S. strategies have actually reduced religious persecution and advanced religious freedom, and what impact those strategies have had on American policy in the greater Middle East, as well as East Asia. In addressing these questions we will draw on various disciplines, including political science, international relations, history, theology, philosophy and sociology.

**Course Format and Requirements**

Our seminar will require you to engage on these topics. You are expected to come to class prepared, not only in the sense of having read the assignments, but also being ready to participate. Of your final grade, 40 percent will be derived from your participation in class and 10 percent from a class presentation on the subject of your term paper.

The term paper itself will account for the other 50%. It should be 5,000-6,000 words in length and include footnotes or endnotes and bibliography. The subject will be some aspect of U.S. IRF policy, focusing either on its domestic sources and processes, on an international case or cases, or some combination of both. Each student should conceive one or more options for papers and discuss them with me by the end of September. The readings are rich with ideas for further exploration, as is the “miscellaneous” folder in the Blackboard for the course. The paper is due on December 12.
You are required to acquire the following book for this course:


Finally, each student will be expected to keep up with domestic and world events that are germane to our course. A very good source of news stories is the International Center for Law and Religion Studies: [http://www.iclrs.org/common/headline.php](http://www.iclrs.org/common/headline.php). You can have their daily list of articles (covering international, Europe, and the US) sent to you by subscribing here: [http://www.iclrs.org/common/user.profile.php?action=subscribe](http://www.iclrs.org/common/user.profile.php?action=subscribe)


**Classroom Etiquette and How to Succeed**

I strongly suggest that you take good notes in this class. I will expect to see our themes, discussions, and debates reflected in your final papers, as well as in your classroom interventions.

I suggest you not bring laptops to class unless you use them to take notes, or have your readings on the laptop and need to consult them in class.

Our classroom discussions will be respectful but vigorous. In general, the way to succeed in the classroom is to read the readings carefully and be ready to draw on them in our class discussions.
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Note: For some classes readings are yet to be listed or may change.

PART ONE: SETTING THE STAGE

September 6: The Definitional Problem: What is Religious Freedom?

INAF 423 Syllabus (read introduction carefully)

“Some Thoughts and Advice for Our Students and All Students,” A Statement by Professors from Princeton, Harvard, and Yale

What is religious freedom? Senator Bernie Sanders (video to be shown in class)


Optional reading:

“Five Key Findings About Global Religious Restrictions,” from the Pew Research Center’s annual report on Global Religious Restrictions (February 2015). Read the five key findings and familiarize yourself with the annual report.


September 13: Religious Freedom in America (Part One)


September 20: Religious Freedom in America (Part Two)

Steven Smith, Chapters 3-5, and Epilogue in Smith, *The Rise and Decline of American Religious Freedom*. Read 3, 5 and Epilogue carefully. You may skim chapter 4 to get the argument Smith is making.

James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance,” 1785.


Alan Wolfe, "Why the Separation of Church and State is Still a Good Idea."

Optional Reading:


September 27: Religion in Political Life as an Aspect of Religious Freedom

*[NOTE: By this date all students should have communicated with me via email about their papers.]*


Obergefell v. Hodges. Peruse Justice Kennedy’s opinion for the majority (1-28) and Chief Justice Robert’s dissent (1-28).


Optional Reading:

Georgetown Debate on the HHS Mandate, April 2012.

U.S. Catholic Bishops, "Our First Most Cherished Liberty," April 2012
Burwell v. Hobby Lobby (2014). Peruse Justice Alito’s opinion for the majority (1-49) and Justice Ginsberg’s dissent (1-35).


*Supreme Court Decision on the Defense of Marriage Act (US v. Windsor):* Justice Kennedy’s opinion for the majority; Justice Scalia’s dissent.


Senator Barak Obama, "Call to Renewal" campaign speech, June 28, 2006. *Focus on portions of the speech dealing with religion.*


President Barak Obama, commencement speech at Notre Dame, May 17, 2009.

Matt Franck, "President Obama, Professor Rawls, and Father Neuhaus on Faith and Reason,” unpublished paper, September 2012

**October 4: Religious Freedom, Democracy, Economic Growth, and Terrorism**


**Optional Reading:**


**PART TWO: THE EMERGENCE OF IRFA AND IRF POLICY**

**October 11: Thinking About Religious Freedom in Foreign Policy [NOTE: By this date paper topics should have been approved by me.]**


Farr, “The Intellectual Sources of Diplomacy’s Religion Deficit,” chapter 2 in *World of Faith and Freedom*


**Optional reading:**


**October 18: The Development of U.S IRF Policy**


Farr and Dennis Hoover, *Recommendations for the Trump Administration and the Congress*


*The Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016 (Read to discern changes from the 1998 Act)*

**Optional reading:**


**October 25: IRF Policy – Detractors and Supporters**


Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "The Global Securitization of Religion," *The Immanent Frame*

Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, "The Extra-territorial Establishment of Religion," *The Immanent Frame*

Daniel Philpott and Timothy Shah, “In Defense of Religious Freedom”

Thomas Farr, "Where Lies Wisdom, Where Folly?" *The Immanent Frame*

**Optional Reading:**


William Inboden, "A Valuation of Religious Freedom," *The Immanent Frame*


**PART THREE: IRF POLICY IN ACTION**

**November 1: China and Severe Persecution**

Farr, “Riding the Dragon: The Case of China,” chapter 10, *World of Faith*


Department of State, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*, [most recent report - find on www.state.gov], China, Hong Kong, Macau and Tibet


Hong Kong Bishop Talks About Church-State Relations in China, Catholic News Agency, September 4, 2017
Optional Reading:


Carolyn Evans, “Chinese Law and the International Protection of Religious Freedom,” *Journal of Church and State*


**November 8: Pakistan, Blasphemy and the Fueling of Extremism**


Department of State, *(latest)* *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*, Pakistan


Farr, “The Blasphemy of Rimsha Massih” and responses, National Review Online

**November 15: Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism and ISIS**

Farr, “Seeking the Heart of Islam,” chapter 8, *World of Faith*


Department of State, *(latest)* *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom*, Saudi Arabia

Optional:

Carlyle Murphy, “Questioning the Faith in the Cradle of Islam,” *Foreign Policy*, October 29, 1014
November 22: Retrieving the Possibility of Pluralism in the Middle East


Optional Readings:

Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood,” Foreign Affairs (March/April 2007)


Graham Fuller, “Turkey’s Strategic Model: Myths and Realities,” The Washington Quarterly (Summer 2004)

Michel Gurfinkiel, “Is Turkey Lost?,” Commentary (March 2007)

Mustafa Akyol, “Render Unto Ataturk,” First Things (March 2007)


Sam Tadros, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood after the Election" in Current Trends in Islamist Ideology
Khalil Al-Anani, "The Young Brotherhood in Search of a New Path," in *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*


Farr, “Is Religious Freedom Necessary for Other Freedoms to Flourish?”


**Optional Reading:**


**December 6:** Paper presentations