

# *Rel. 348 (E,O): Religion, Politics, and Society*

*Spring 2011*

(NOTE: Check this page regularly for assignment updates. Be sure to "Refresh" or "Reload" page each time it is visited so that you get current view. ALL students must read ALL assignments and be prepared to lead the class discussion on them if called upon to do so.)

1. [Syllabus](#) (BE SURE AND READ THIS FIRST!!!)
2. Readings for 1/12/11 (Ethics). Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings linked below in detail:
  - a. [What is Ethics?](#)
  - b. [The Origin of Ethical Behavior](#)
  - c. [A Framework for Thinking Ethically](#)
  - d. [The Ethics of American Youth](#)
  - e. [A Difficult Birth: Navigating Language and Cultural Differences](#)
  - f. Two reflections on the situation: [1](#), [2](#)
  - g. [Applied Ethics Resources on WWW](#) (This link is provided solely as a site for further readings on ethics. It is not a mandatory reading for the first week. During the semester, other site links will be provided as well.)
3. Readings for 1/19/11 (free speech in religion and politics):
  - a. [Religion and Free Speech](#)
  - b. [Campus speech codes](#)
  - c. [The Price of Free Speech](#)
  - d. Obama vs. Free Speech: [1](#), [2](#)
  - e. [Religious Expression at Work](#)
  - f. [What are your religious rights in the workplace?](#)
4. Readings for 1/26/11 (capital punishment):
  - a. [10 Pros and Cons of Capital Punishment](#)
  - b. [Americans Hold Firm to Support for Death Penalty](#)
  - c. [Against the American System of Capital Punishment](#)
  - d. [Religious and moral views on the death penalty](#) - read the first link under "Social Issues" and the five links under "Religious Views." Take notes on this section. No need to print out all the comments.
5. Readings for 2/2/11: Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings linked below. The class will be led by my Class Assistant, Colonel Earl Renfroe, Jr. USAF, Ret., who was a participant in the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the subsequent movement that arose. His presentation will provide a personal perspective and also reveal historical aspects of the Civil Rights movement that are little known

or discussed today.

a. [Alabama Clergy letter to Dr. Martin Luther King](#)

b. [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#)

c. Questions to ponder after doing the reading above:

1. Why is Dr. King disappointed with the white moderate and the white church?
2. How are moral means used to preserve immoral ends?
3. How does Dr. King define an "unjust law?"
4. Does "order" compliment or impede justice?

6. First writing assignment (due Feb. 16 by email - no hard copy). Students are to watch at least ten TV programs, TV commercials (minimum 4), or movies. Nearly every example of these media forms have both positive and negative stereotypes in them. You are to:

1. Identify by race, gender, age, body characteristics, sexual orientation, and any other factor noted, who is presented negatively. This can be overt or subtle.
2. Identify where seen (name of TV program, movie, or product being sold) and explain how the person or persons are negatively depicted and how that characterization fits into the situation.
3. Submit a minimum 750 word (total) write up in which you explain each situation as described above.

7. Readings for 02/09/11 (euthanasia and eugenics). Please remember that 40% of your grade is on your oral participation in class. When students make statements such as "I didn't print that one out" or "I didn't read that one," what I hear is "I didn't come to class prepared to participate today." If you cannot bring the readings on a laptop, notebook, pda, or other device, you can always take detailed notes or print the articles. You have no textbook to purchase, so printing them out is not an excessively added expense.

a. [History of Euthanasia](#) (also read Hippocratic Oath)

b. [Euthanasia: Pro and Con](#)

c. [Legalization or tolerance?](#)

d. Various religions views: [Buddhism and Christianity](#), [Hinduism](#), [Judaism](#), [Islam](#)

e. Eugenics: [1](#) (read pp. 1-7), [2](#)

8. Readings for 2/16/11 (abortion):

a. ["A Defense of Abortion"](#)

b. ["No Middle Ground"](#)

c. [A Summary of Pro-Choice Arguments](#)

d. [Religious views on abortion](#)

f. [Infanticide/Abortion Link](#)

g. [Late Term Abortion -- Beyond The Anecdotes](#)

h. ["An Abortion Rights Advocate Says He Lied About Procedure"](#)

i. [Opinion polls on abortion](#)

j. [Pregnancy timeline](#)

9. Readings for 2/23/11 (drug legalization)

a. [Between Politics and Reason](#)

b. [The Issue of Drug Legalization: Pros and Cons](#) (read all 3 pages)

c. Mexico and the drug war: [1](#), [2](#)

d. [Alcohol and Tobacco: Two Dangerous Gateway Drugs](#)

10. [Mid-Term](#) exam will be here at 7 pm, Friday (2/25/11).

11. Readings for 3/2/11 (multiculturalism)

a. [Multiculturalism](#)

b. [Title VII Bilingual Education in Hawaii](#)

c. [Multiculturalism has failed, says French president](#)

d. [Don't blame tolerance for this multicultural mess](#)

e. [Italian police fine woman for wearing burqa in public](#)

12. Readings for 3/9/11 ("The Causes of War"): readings are in the packet distributed in class on last Wednesday by Colonel Earl, an exceptionally well qualified person to discuss this subject. As an Air Force pilot, he flew 35 combat missions in the Korean War and 107 missions in the Vietnam War. He was awarded The Distinguished Flying Cross and Five Air Medals. His opening presentation involves 9/11 and its causes. Come to class prepared to answer the question below:

a. What is the correct, formal name of the War in Iraq ("The Iraq War" and "Iraqi Freedom" are both incorrect)? Correct answer can be found in the readings.