Course Description
In the twentieth century God seemed to be dead – at least politically. Class and nation were the icons of a secular age. But then came rumblings. An Islamic Revolution in Iran. Catholics in Poland denouncing Communist rule. Finally, Sept. 11th and an apparent new era of militant faith. Now we must reconsider: what are the touchstones of modern political identity?

SOC 127a examines three identities influential in global affairs -- religion, ethnicity and nationalism -- and the tensions and ties among them.

Learning Goals
The class is divided into two sections. In the first section students will read theoretical literature on the social role of religion (considering the ideas of major sociologists of religion) and on the nature of nationalism (in which we consider the ideas of important theorists of nationalism, including Weber, Gellner, Anderson, and Greenfeld).

The study of religion's social role will focus on the "secularization thesis" and its critics. The class will read the most influential articulation of the secularization thesis -- Peter Berger's *The Sacred Canopy* -- and consider how well this thesis accounts for the secularization of Western European politics.

The theoretical section of the class will also examine the nature of nationalism. Did nationalism represent a fundamental break with the medieval "society of orders," or did modern nationalisms gradually grow from the institutions of medieval societies? Are all nationalisms founded on ethnic identity? If not, how do we draw distinctions between ethnic and non-ethnic nationalisms? Are "religious nationalisms" in fact grounded in shared ethnicity rather than shared religious faith? Is a "civic religious nationalism" possible?

In the second half of the class, students will consider societies in which religion, ethnicity and nationalism comprise elements of identity in different ways. Having considered the rise of
secular nationalism in Western Europe, students will have the chance to look at examples from parts of the world where societies are not as decidedly secular.

It is hoped that these examples will give students evidence from the historical record to use in seeking answers to questions raised and sharpened in the first section of the class.

Course Requirements & Grading
The course is designed in combination lecture-seminar format. The course design is meant to allow students to master the subject-matter through a combination of lectures, classroom discussion and research for a final paper.

The grade composition of the course is as follows: a take-home test (30%); class participation, including participation in working groups (20%); brief written reactions to other working group presentations (20 %); and a final research paper (30%).

Here are the important dates:

- The take-home test will be distributed on **Feb. 5** and will be due on **Feb. 12**;
- The working groups will begin after the February break; you will be given some chance to choose your group.
- The final paper will be due at my office by 4 pm on **May 5**. Please bring a hard copy.

Please note that the grade for class participation includes both regular and timely attendance, as well as demonstrated preparation of the reading assignments. In other words, the grade for class participation does not simply rely on regular attendance, but is based on the expectation that students will participate regularly in class discussions in order to demonstrate preparation of the readings through the capacity to critically analyze and apply the readings to broader discussions that draw on course readings and contemporary discussions.

Please also note that this class will feature working groups, modeled on research teams in the Department of State, which will present studies of contemporary potential points of conflict over religious and political issues. You will be asked to work with a group to prepare a presentation on one topic and also to write short responses on Latte to the other presentations. The topics to be addressed include:

- Has the Islamic party, the AKP, undone the secularism of Turkey’s nationalism?
- Has Serbia now tamed the aggressive elements of its national identity?
- Is Iran now irreversibly an “Islamic Republic?”
- Does the India disprove the idea that nationalism is a secularizing force?
- Can Pakistan tame the Islamic radicalism it has fostered?
- Is the Hindu nationalist BJP inherently a party of Hindu chauvinism?
- Can Burma be democratic and multi-religious?
Final Research Paper

Students are required to write a final research paper. The paper should be between 10-15 pages in length, using double space, 12-point font, and one-inch margins on top, bottom, left and right of paper. Students are strongly encouraged to expand on one of the case studies considered in class but may also write a comparative paper that brings what they have learned to bear on another topic. Students are expected to describe clearly the relationship among identities of religion, ethnicity and nationalism in their case studies and to analyze how those identities have contributed to the construction of political agendas, especially global agendas.

Location and Availability of Course Materials

There are copies of each week’s readings in the course books or on the Latte web site. Students may purchase the course books at the Brandeis bookstore or from an online seller such as Amazon.com. Those books are:

- John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds. *Nationalism.* (Oxford UP, 1994.)

Please note: these books are all available in inexpensive paperbacks. Please do buy them. There’s no point in paying thousands of dollars for a college course, then saving $10 by not buying a required book.

Absences and Late Work

Class participation is a large part of the overall grade and students should be fully prepared for each week’s class. Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to submit work on a timely basis, unless documentation is given excusing an absence or late submission for medical, religious or personal reasons, or for official university business. Late assignments will be penalized by a half-letter grade deduction per day late.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person – be it a world-class philosopher or your lab partner – without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to
indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student.

University Policy on Academic Accommodations
If you are a student who has academic accommodations because of a documented disability, please contact me and give me a copy of your letter of accommodation in the first two weeks of the semester. If you have questions about documenting a disability, please contact Beth Rodgers-Kay in the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Office (x63470, brodgers@brandeis.edu). Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

COURSE OF STUDY AND READINGS

Week One: Religious Nationalism: A New Cold War?

Jan 13 Introduction


Articles about the attack on the French magazine Charlie Hebdo.

Week Two: Religion and the Social Order


Week Three: Theories of Nationalism


Walker Connor, “A Nation is a Nation, is a State, is an Ethnic Group...” (pp. 36-46 in Hutchinson and Smith, Nationalism).

Jan. 29 Elie Kedourie, “Nationalism and Self-Determination,” (pp. 49-55 in Hutchinson and Smith, Nationalism).

Anthony D. Smith, “The Origins of Nations,” (pp. 147-154 in Nationalism).
Ernest Gellner, “Nationalism and Modernization” and “Nationalism and High Cultures”) (pp. 55-70 in *Nationalism*).

**Week Four: Theories of Secularization**

**Feb. 3**  

Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 105-153).

**Feb. 5**  

*Take-home midterm distributed.*

**Week Five: Doubts about the Secularization Theory**

**Feb. 10**  


**Feb. 12**  


*Take-home midterm due.*

Feb 16-20  
FEBRUARY BREAK

**SECTION TWO. Testing Theories: Historical Examples**

**Week Six: Catholicism and Polish Nationalism**

**Feb. 24**  
S. Prothero, *God Is Not One: "Christianity"*


**Week Seven: The Ottoman Empire, Serbia and Turkey**

March 3 Prothero, "Islam."

Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Turks: An Introductory History to 1923*. (Pearson, 1997). Ch. 6, "Imperialism and Nationalism." (Latte).


**Week Eight: Serbia and Turkey, Cont.**


**Working Group One: Has the AKP undone the secularism of Turkey’s nationalism?**


**Working Group Two: Has Serbia tamed the aggressive elements of its national identity? Can it give up Kosovo?**
Week Nine: Iran


Week Ten: Iran Continued


Working Group Three: Is Iran now irrevocably an “Islamic Republic?”

March 26  Discussion of final papers.

Week Eleven: Religion and Nationalism in India and Pakistan

March 31  Prothero, "Hinduism."


Working Group Four: Does the India disprove the idea that nationalism is a secularizing force?

April 2  Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan Between Mosque and Military* (Carnegie Endowment, 2005).  Ch. 1 & 3

April 6-10  APRIL BREAK

Week Twelve: Religion and Nationalism in India and Pakistan

April 14:  Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan Between Mosque and Military*, Ch. 4 & 5, 7

Working Group Five: Can Pakistan tame the Islamic radicalism it has fostered?

April 16:  Maria Mirsa, *Vishnu’s Crowded Temple: India Since the Great Rebellion*.  (Yale 2007).  Ch. 8 (Latte)

**Working Group Six: Is the BJP inherently a party of Hindu chauvinism?**

**Week Thirteen: Buddhism and Nationalism in Burma**

April 21  Prothero, Buddhism.


**Working Group Seven: Can Burma be democratic and multi-religious?**

April 28  Final Discussion