

Seminar HS 2021

Global Politics, Religion, and Law

Dr. Maria Birnbaum

Blockseminar: Aarbergerhus Ligerz, December 9 and December 10

Introductory sessions: September 21, 2-4 pm; September 28, 2-4 pm

ECTS: 5

Topic

The seminar will explore several concepts that inform contemporary international legal theory and political practice concerning cultural and religious diversity including pluralism, rights, and toleration. Through the detailed study of cases such as the Malaysian legal debates on the rights to religious freedom, the rulings of the Pakistani Supreme Court outlawing minorities' self-definition as Muslim, or the Russian claim for authority over Orthodox churches in the United States, we explore the histories and political logics of various attempts to conceptualize, institutionalize, and manage social and religious and cultural difference, including religious freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and the creation and protection of religious minorities. Questions to be discussed include: How does modern law and political practice regulate the spaces within which individuals and groups live out their cultural and religious lives? What are the histories and politics of modern constructs of religious rights, toleration, and freedom? The seminar moves back and forth across disciplinary boundaries to explore these questions, drawing on critical legal studies, global politics, anthropology, history, and sociology of religion.

Audience, admission, and requirements

The seminar is open to MA-students from the departments of Law, Political Science, Religious Studies, Theology, and Philosophy. Successful participation includes a preparation paper (10-15 p), a presentation with discussion (15 + 15 min), active participation during block seminar. The number of participants is restricted.

Inclusive Classroom

One of my priorities is to create a learning environment that is welcoming to all students. If you have special circumstances that impact your life as a student (i.e. child or elder care duties, financial or other personal concerns), please inform me as early as possible so that we can work together to ensure your success in this class.

Language

The seminar will be conducted in English

Evaluation

Final grades will be based upon 1) attendance and participation (25%); 2) your presentation (25%); 3) paper (50%).

Office Hours

Please schedule your appointments for office hours during the semester via email at maria.birnbaum@theol.unibe.ch. I encourage you to come to office hours to go over questions or concerns you may have about the course and the preparation of the paper.

Registration

Registration begins on **June 22, 10 am**. Please send an email with the following information: Name, Email, Student Registration Number (Matrikelnummer) and Department as well as the Seminar name to: maria.birnbaum@theol.unibe.ch

Contact

Questions can be directed to:

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Introductory literature

Sullivan, Winnifred Fallers “Law,” *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert A. Segal and Kocku von Stuckrad (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 323-30.

Sullivan, Winnifred Fallers “Justice,” *Vocabulary for the Study of Religion*, ed. Robert A. Segal and Kocku von Stuckrad (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 298-302.

Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman. 2012. “International Politics after Secularism.” *Review of International Studies* 38 (5): 943–61.

Sullivan, Winnifred Fallers, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Saba Mahmood, and Peter G. Danchin, eds. 2015. *Politics of Religious Freedom*. Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press.

Berger, Benjamin L. 2015. *Law’s Religion: Religious Difference and the Claims of Constitutionalism*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

The Immanent Frame: <https://tif.ssrc.org/>