

GLOBAL POLITICS AND RELIGION

Degree Type: Certificate

The study of religion and public life, nationally and internationally, is of growing interest among scholars at Northwestern and beyond. The graduate certificate program in Global Politics and Religion is an interdisciplinary initiative co-sponsored by the Department of Political Science and the Department of Religious Studies that responds to interest in this emergent field of study. It offers a coordinated program of study for graduate students interested in the interrelations between religion, politics, culture, law, and governance in different parts of the world, and in global and transnational perspective.

Rather than approach religion and politics as discreet entities that 'influence' one another, or are even mutually constitutive, this program interrogates the very basis of their conceptual and disciplinary separation. Religion is approached as part of a complex and evolving, shifting series of fields of contemporary and historical practice that cannot be singled out from other aspects of human activity and yet also not simply identified with these either. Resisting the adoption of any singular, stable conception of religion, this program acknowledges the vast and diverse array of practices and histories that fall under the heading of religion as the term has evolved and as it is used today. From this angle, law, political institutions, and other tools of collective governance do not possess procedural autonomy 'above the fray' of religious lives. Unpacking the sense of inevitability and neutrality of received understandings of secularism, disestablishment, law, toleration, minority rights and other familiar templates of late modern governance makes it possible to carve out new spaces for the study of religion, law, diversity, and governance—and the complex interrelations between them.

Building on existing strengths across fields at Northwestern, this certificate brings focus and concentration to this dispersed interest. It provides students with the theoretical grounding in the necessary disciplines to support their research, develop professional networks, and prepare them for academic positions in this area of inquiry. Affiliated with the Global Religion and Politics Research Group (<https://globalreligion.northwestern.edu/>), Global Politics & Religion Graduate Student Workshop (<https://globalreligion.northwestern.edu/student-working-group/>), and the Religion, Law and Politics Study Area (<https://religious-studies.northwestern.edu/graduate/study-areas/religion-law-and-politics.html>) in the WCAS Department of Religious Studies, the program strengthens coordination and cross-fertilization across fields and departments among Northwestern faculty and graduate students working in this field, establishing Northwestern as a robust participant in a global conversation. Because this conversation transcends long-standing disciplinary divides, a strong institutional response requires creative programmatic innovation as well as new thinking at the boundary between the study of religion and the study of global and transnational politics, law and history.

Additional resources:

- Certificate website (<https://globalreligion.northwestern.edu/>)

Certificate Offered

- Global Politics and Religion Certificate (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/global-politics-religion/global-politics-religion-cert/>)