Religion and Politics are the things we U.S.-Americans are expected not to talk about in polite company. The U.S. appears to be deeply divided on a number of issues. But why? The goal of this course is to describe and explain. This course is not about taking partisan political positions, advocating for specific political interests, or arguing about the truth of religious worldviews. The sociological study of religion and politics involves understanding how religion as a worldview and social phenomenon is related to politics as interests and social phenomena, both in the U.S. and globally. Trends in religious identity and practice shape political behaviors, movements, and changes. They have done so in the past and will continue to do so in the future. I'm going to examine a lot of controversial stuff in this course, but I'm going to "take a big step back" to do it. Perhaps it will provide you with the tools to have difficult conversations with friends, family, and strangers; and/or help understand why people disagree on what they disagree on and respond the way they do.

B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES: 08/19/2022 - Present

C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS

1. Addresses cultural shifts in the US as explanations for current unrest and polarization via religious, demographic, and ideological factors.
2. Considers religion and politics in a global context, examining theories of religious change, secularization, and religious marketplaces, as well as how religion influences political views and decision-making processes.
3. Addresses issues in the sociology of religion that have political content, such as religion and the environment, religion, and science.

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)

1. define sociological concepts as applied to both sociology of religion and political sociology.
2. explain the ways in which religion and politics are connected, both nationally and worldwide.
3. apply sociological concepts related to religion and politics to past and present sociocultural shifts and polarization.
4. compare national and global political shifts across religious groups.
5. explain current social, political, and cultural polarization in a broader sociological context.
6. comprehensively discuss religion and politics as social institutions/phenomena, in terms of both theoretical and empirical research.

E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies

None
F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
   As noted on course syllabus

G. SPECIAL INFORMATION
   None noted