

Faith, Politics and Press In Our Perilous Times

Few if any books introducing students to news provide much attention to the religious dimension. Given the prevalence of religion in the news, this book is both for beginning courses on news and media, and for advanced or specialized offerings in journalism, policy or communications programs.

This book will provide guidance for journalists or policy-makers wanting to understand how religion influences the day's news. The project arises from a premise that this awareness should be part of any reporter, editor, producer or blogger's learning experience.

This is especially so as news organizations have cut back on specialized beats, making it more important that generalists be prepared to field assignments where religion comes into play. It also is intended to be a resource for religion specialists, and for students who may pursue careers in international affairs, political leadership, or religion and philosophy.

Here is some of what's in the book. Phil Bennett, the Washington Post's former managing editor, writes about how one of the world's great newspapers encountered Islam after Sept. 11, 2001. Jack Miles has taken time from editing a Norton series on world religions to contribute a chapter on the religious forces in and around Iraq. Ben Hubbard, editor of the important early primer in the field, "Reporting Religion," ties the history of the religion beat to current national events. Debra Mason of Religion\Newswriters, explains how the Internet has changed reporting on religion, and offers guidance on new resources.

The book is divided into three sections: religion and the news in the post- Sept. 11 world; covering religion in the 21st century with special attention to new technology and web resources; and covering the new religious landscape. It's designed so that instructors easily can select and assign any number of the essays, or use the entire volume, all depending on course needs. There are questions at the end of each section for student discussion.

At Northeastern's School of Journalism, the book will be used as a supplement in a beginning course called "Interpreting the Day's News," and for students closer to graduation, some assignments will be made in an upper-level course on journalism standards. For instructors who can imagine how this book can supplement their offerings, please let us know the name of your course and academic term offered, its registrar's course number, and how many copies you would like ordered.

Prof. Burgard's assistant, James Gachau, would be pleased to take this information, and also help get answers to any questions. His e-mail address is: gachau.j@husky.neu.edu

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