




POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Lesson 3 – Religion and Spirituality




Home learning due

- Find a song that links to Politics.
 - Research the context in order to explain the political view of the songwriter.
- 



Religion and Politics

- Religion is defined as belief in, worship of, or obedience to a supernatural power/s considered to be divine or to have control of human destiny.
 - During the enlightenment, religion was separated from politics. The power of the monarchy (as sanctioned by God) was replaced with the power of the nation-state (as sanctioned by the nation democratically).
 - As a liberal, John Locke argued that the 3 branches of the state (executive, legislature and judiciary) should be separated in the constitution to prevent this centralisation of power that characterised the monarchy.
- 



Current justices on the US Supreme Court

Nominated by Republican president



John Roberts



Samuel Alito



Clarence Thomas



Neil Gorsuch



Brett Kavanaugh



Amy Coney Barrett

Nominated by Democratic president



Stephen Breyer



Elena Kagan



Sonia Sotomayor

BBC

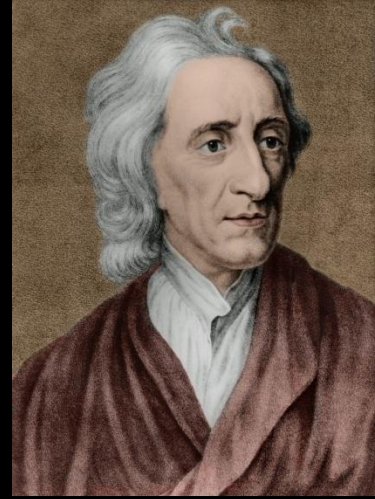


Who? What?
Where? When?
Why?

Scottish Bishops Warn of 'Gender Reform' Bill

- The Scottish bishops' statement also pointed out that the bill could have implications for other sections of broader society, including celebrants at weddings. They said: "The freedom to hold the reasonable view that sex and gender are given and immutable and disagree with the idea of gender as fluid and separable from biological sex should be upheld. Particularly for those who work in education, health care, the prison service, or as marriage celebrants who, from both reasonable and religious perspectives, hold an understanding of marriage as a union between one man and one woman. We urge members of the Scottish Parliament to uphold these freedoms and to oppose this bill."
- [Scottish Bishops Warn of 'Gender Reform' Bill | National Catholic Register \(ncregister.com\)](http://ncregister.com)

Toleration



- Originally toleration was merely a biological term - e.g. the amount of poison can a human tolerate.
- Due to John Locke's religious application of the term in 'A Letter Concerning Toleration' (1689), toleration became an influential political virtue.
- "It is not the diversity of opinions, which cannot be avoided; but the refusal of toleration to those that are of different opinions . . . that has produced all the bustles and wars, that have been in the Christian world, upon account of religion."
- He argued that the state should not coerce a religious view, since even Jesus himself didn't do so.
- "If the Gospel and the apostles may be credited, no man can be a Christian ... without that faith which works not by force, but by love."
- As a result, the USA included religious freedom as a core principle within its codified, entrenched constitution.
- This line of thinking was later used to justify toleration of many other discriminated groups in Politics – e.g. ethnic groups, unions, transgender people.

Toleration

Joseph Loconte, Ph.D.

“As historians such as John Marshall (and this reviewer) have argued, a likely catalyst for Locke’s role as a champion of religious freedom was his close association, personally and intellectually, with the Christian humanist tradition of Desiderius Erasmus. The “philosophy of Christ” articulated by Erasmus, which Locke encountered in England and in the Netherlands during his political exile, was itself a reaction against the violent, authoritarian impulses of Christendom. “Let us not devour each other like fish,” wrote Erasmus. “The world is full of rage, hate, and wars. What will be the end if we employ only bulls and the stake? It is no great feat to burn a little man. It is a great achievement to persuade him.”

“A core tenet of the American political order—freedom of conscience—traces its origins to biblical religion.”

[Locke’s Radical Claims for Conscience | The Heritage Foundation](#)

Should Politics be separate from religion?

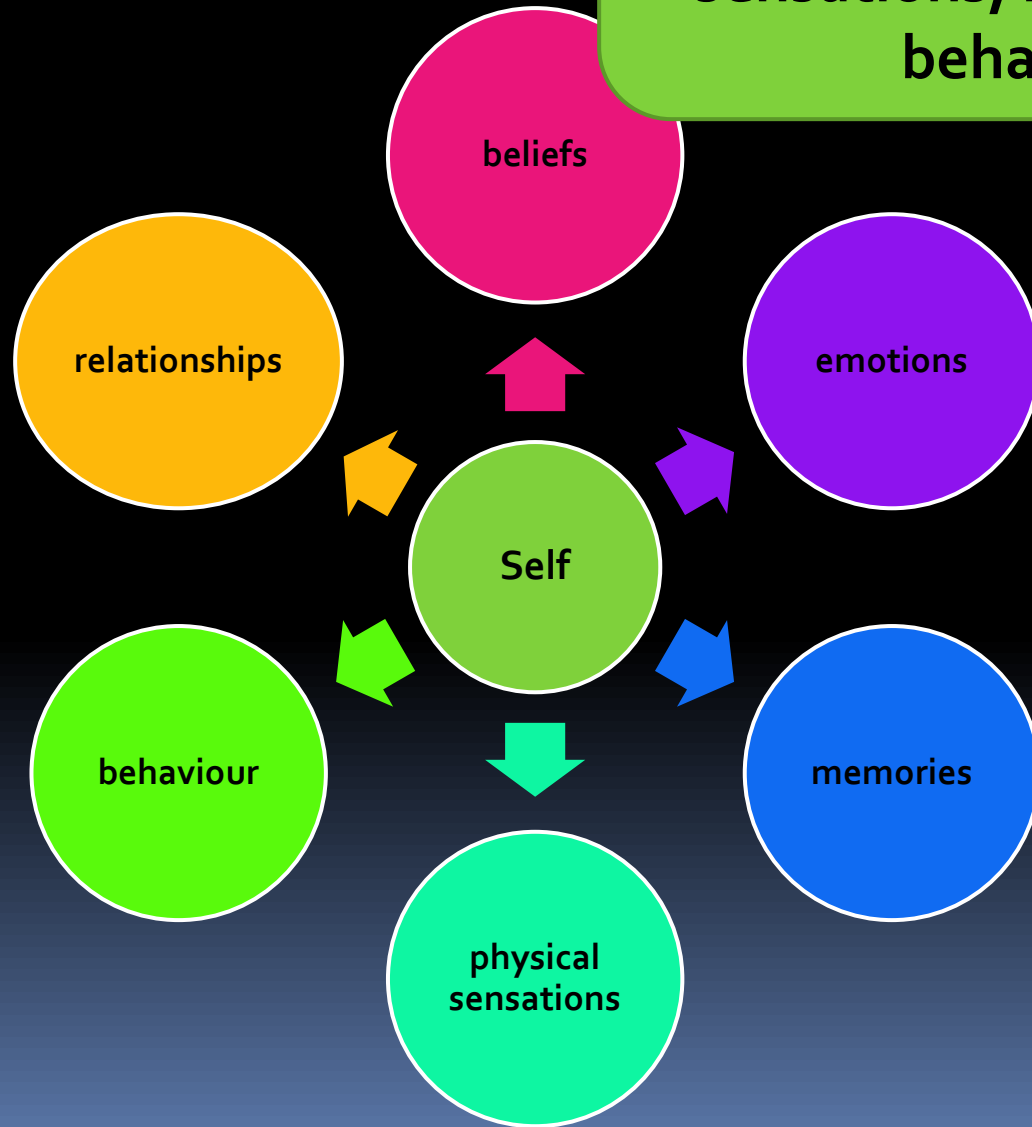
- In the UK Parliament, there are Lords Spiritual (26 Church of England Archbishops and Bishops) in the House of Lords – why is this significant?
- How might this be a positive and a negative?
- How else might religion and Politics be connected?

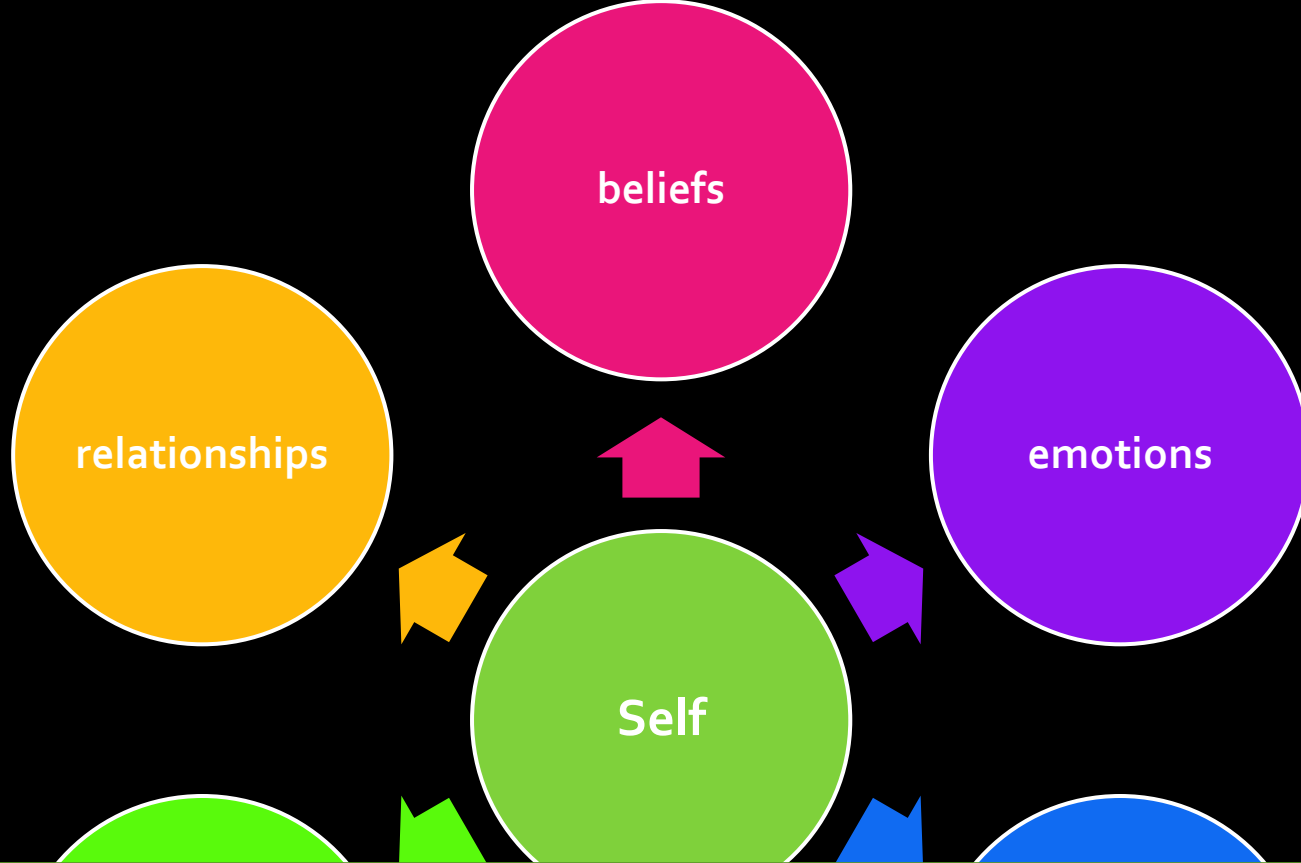
End



■ What is spirituality?

Task: Who are you?
Give examples of your beliefs, emotions, memories, sensations, relationships, behaviour.





None of these experiences (beliefs, emotions, memories, sensations, relationships, behaviour) is the true self.

They can all change but you will still be you.

So the true self is the thing that experiences, the observer, the spirit.



So what is the self?

- [The Egg - A Short Story – YouTube](#)

How does spirituality link to Politics?

- We are spiritual beings with spiritual needs, as well as physical beings.
- This is because spirituality helps us take off our 'human spectacles' and enables us to see the world without the baggage of our current situation (the beliefs, behaviours etc that have helped us in the past).
- This means we can reach a level of objectivity that we can't usually reach, and this helps us overcome problems and shape our lives.
- According to deep ecologists, a spiritual perspective can help us tackle the climate crisis.



I used to think the **top environmental problems** were **biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse** and **climate change**.

I thought that **thirty years** of **good science** could **address these problems**.

I was wrong.

The top environmental problems are **selfishness, greed and apathy**, and to deal with these we need a **cultural and spiritual transformation**.



Gus Speth

And we scientists don't know how to do that.



WRONG



RIGHT

Distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism in Ecologism.

Anthropocentrism is the belief that human interests are of overriding moral and philosophical importance. All conventional political ideologies are based on anthropocentrism, as reflected in an emphasis on human rights (Liberalism), social order (Conservatism), the interests of a nation (Nationalism). Such 'shallow' ecological thinking implies that the non-human world is only of value insofar as it satisfies human ends. This fits the monotheistic position that God gave humans stewardship of nature.



Distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism in Ecologism.

Ecocentrism is a theoretical orientation that gives priority to the maintenance of ecological balance rather than the achievement of human ends. In this view, humans are merely part of nature, contributing to its wellbeing, and have no greater, or separate value. Ecocentrism implies a belief in value-in-nature, which can, for example, be seen in the 'land ethic', a belief that a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of nature, viewed as ethical community. Ecocentrism is embraced by so-called 'deep' ecologists, eco-feminists and some religions—Buddhism, Hinduism (the Jains).


"SELF-REALIZATION CANNOT DEVELOP FAR WITHOUT SHARING JOYS AND SORROWS WITH OTHERS... THE ECOLOGICAL MOVEMENT... ASKS FOR ... A DEEP IDENTIFICATION OF PEOPLE WITH ALL LIFE." ARNE Næss



Liberal environmentalism	Shallow ecology	Deep ecology
Concern for the environment is centred upon the interest of humankind	Humans should care for the environment for its own sake	Humans must develop a new consciousness that sees humankind as an intrinsic part of the natural world
Environmental issues can be treated separately	Different aspects of the natural world are interconnected, so our treatment of nature should take this into account	The Earth is a single, complete organism. Humans are part of that whole
Environmental problems can, in theory, be solved within existing political and economic structures	Existing political and economic structures must be transformed so that they place environmental issues at the centre of their concerns	There must be a total change in all economic, social and political life so that humankind can be placed more naturally within its physical environment
Most environmental issues are fundamentally economic in nature	Ecology is largely scientific in nature	Ecology is a synthesis of science, philosophy and, in some cases, religion or even mysticism

Conspirituallity

- "In 2011, Ward and Voas coined the term "conspirituallity" [in a paper published in the Journal of Contemporary Religion](#). Ward defined it as "a rapidly growing web movement expressing an ideology fuelled by political disillusionment and the popularity of alternative worldviews".
- ...While the overlap of left-wing, magazine-friendly wellness and far-right conspiracy theories might initially sound surprising, the similarities in cultures, in ways of thinking – the questioning of authority, of alternative medicines, the distrust of institutions– are clear.
- ...A report from the [Centre for Countering Digital Hate](#) showed the most-followed social media accounts held by anti-vaxxers increased their followers by more than 7.8m in 2020. They have used the anxiety around Covid vaccines, the speed with which they were authorised, the politics that surrounded them and the systemic racism that led to communities of colour losing trust in the medical establishment, to spread their message."
- [The dark side of wellness: the overlap between spiritual thinking and far-right conspiracies | Health & wellbeing | The Guardian](#)




Should Politics be separate from spirituality?

- How might spirituality link to distrust in political institutions?
- Is this a positive or a negative feature of spirituality?
- Break out rooms.

End





Home learning for next session – 2nd March

- Find a piece of art or literature that is political.
- Be ready to share it and explain the political link next session.



Reminder – student takeover for final session
(30th March)