Catholic Studies Conference 2008:
*Church, Sex, & the Public Sphere: Italy & the United States.*
**UCTV 4520-A, 4520-B, 4520-C, 4520-D**

**UCTV 4520-A. Claudia Mancina.**
_Problems of Secularism in the Italian Political Debate on Family & Bioethics._

Given three major differences from the Italian picture—religious disestablishment as the norm, a historically Protestant rather than Catholic majority, and much larger populations of religious minorities—there are nonetheless some striking similarities between the United States and Italy in the area of church, state and sex in recent history. Like Italy, the United States has seen religious groups play a significant role in the controversies surrounding changing understandings of sex, gender, the family, and the body. While Protestant fundamentalist groups took a back seat in U.S. politics for much of the 20th century, an unlikely alliance of Protestant fundamentalists, Protestant evangelicals and conservative Catholics came roaring into the public arena in the 1970s in a development that is still having important ramifications today.

What could possibly bring such previously disparate groups together? A large part of the answer has been agreement over political issues regarding sex and the family. While divorce had always been legal in the United States due to its Protestant cultural leanings, the United States still experienced major changes in divorce law due to the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Many religious groups saw this change in the law as an "attack" on the institution of marriage and continue to oppose further changes in laws regulating marriage and the family. Most recently the opposition of these conservative religious groups to gay marriage and even to civil unions has figured prominently.

**UCTV 4520-B. Arianna Montanari.**
_Catholic Sexual Morals & Italian National Behavior._

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**UCTV 4520-C. Elizabeth Oldmixon.**

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**UCTV 4520-D. Ann Pellegrini.**
*Sexularism: Religious Freedom, American Style.*

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