This course explores the relationship between Christianity and politics in the United States. We will look at three fundamental questions: (1) how have religion and politics been related historically? (2) how are they related today? (3) how should they be related?

Everyone is expected to prepare for each class, attend regularly, and be prepared to discuss reading assignments. I will evaluate participation every day using a rubric that I will hand out on the first day (10% of final grade). Students should read the New York Times and other media regularly for news about religion and politics/religion and society. Every Friday please bring to class a copy of an article on this subject and be prepared to discuss it. Articles can be on current events or about recent historical discoveries/arguments. Most of your articles should be about America, but some may be about other nations.

We will have four exams, each of which is worth 15% of the final grade.

Students will also write a review of a book on religion and politics and present the review to the class. Reviews should be 1,000 words long and should summarize and critique the work in question. Books must be approved by me. You may not read a book you have read or are reading for another class. Reviews will be submitted and presentations made throughout the semester at appropriate times. See below for a list of possible books.

As well, students will write a thoughtful, six-page paper about a great American Christian jurist (20%). The paper should be written as if it were a mini-chapter for a book I am co-editing entitled Great Christian Jurists in American History. I’ll provide more information about this project.

All written assignments must be printed and turned in to me (no e-mail submissions). Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized 3 points every 24-hour period they are late (excluding weekends). Please double space, use a twelve point font, and include the word count with your name and date.

Required Texts:

Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, The Sacred Rights of Conscience.
Robert Booth Fowler et al., Religion and Politics in America, 5th ed.
Reading Assignments

The following assignments must be completed on the indicated day. I reserve the right to change any assignment or due date.

January

12. Introduction.


16. No class, I’m out of town, but read. SRC, 89-103, 110-114.

19. No class, MLK day.

21. SRC, 122, 131-132, 155-165 (both Williams and Ward).

23. Christianity and the War for Independence SRC, 173-195


30. Catch up, reviews

February

2. Test #1

4. Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in early America: SRC, SKIM: 225-238, read 239-253

6. SRC 266, 276-78, 290-298, 307-08.


11. SRC, 366-382.

13. First Amendment, SRC 405-33.


18. SRC, 468-479, 520-528.
20. SRC, 588-597.

23. The use and abuse of history: Foxtale: Introduction to The Forgotten Founders on Religion and Public Life; Hall, “Jeffersonian Walls and Madisonian Lines.”

25. Catch-up, reviews.

27. Test #2.

March


4. Foxtale: Mark David Hall “Beyond Self-Interest”; “Seneca Falls Declaration.”


20. Fowler, chapter 5.

23-27. Spring Break

30. Catch up, reviews.

April

1. Test #3,

3. No school, Good Friday


8. Fowler 7-8

10. Fowler 9
13. Mark David Hall, Expert’s report, religious accommodations

15. Fowler 10

17. Fowler 11-12

20. Reports on jurists

22. Reports on jurists

24. Reports on jurists, reviews

Final exam: Exam #4

Possible Books [set date for presentation with me]

Selective Bibliography


Buckley, Thomas E., *Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787* (1977)


Frazer, Greg. The Religious Beliefs of America’s Founders (2012)

Green, Steven K. The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth Century America (2010).


Hamburger, Philip. The Separation of Church and State (2002)


Hatch, Nathan O. The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England (1977)

Hatch, Nathan. The Democratization of American Christianity (1989)


Hunter, James D. Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America (1991)


Layman, Geoffrey. The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in America (2001)


Murphy, Andrew. Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in
Early Modern England and America (2001)


Niebuhr, H. Richard. Christ and Culture (1951)

Niebuhr, Reinhold. Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932)


Rauschenbush, Walter. Christianity and Social Crisis (1924)

Jonathan D. Sassi, A Republic of Righteousness (2001)


West, John G. The Politics of Revelation and Reason (1996)


Yoder, John Howard. The Politics of Jesus (1972)