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. Students will take three exams (each worth 20% of the final grade), review and present one book (15%), and write an extremely thoughtful six-page paper about how one's faith should inform one's political activity (15%). A participation grade of 10% will be awarded based on attendance, preparation, and article summaries (see below).

Students should read the New York Times and other media regularly for news about religion and politics/religion and society. Every Tuesday students must bring to class a one-paragraph summary and commentary on an article (with an emphasis on the commentary). Each summary/commentary should be typed and provide citation information. Articles can be on current events or about recent historical discoveries/arguments. These summaries/commentaries will count toward a 10% participation grade. Most of your articles should be about America, but some may be about other nations. You should be prepared to discuss your article in class. A good source of information is the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (http://pewforum.org/news/).

Book 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.

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).

Required Texts:

The Bible, any edition

Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, The Sacred Rights of Conscience.


Reading Assignments

The following assignments must be completed on the indicated day. Reserve material is indicated by a star "*". I reserve the right to change any assignment or due date.

September

1. Introduction.

3. No class, but read: Meacham, 3-63; *Sacred Rights of Conscience* (SRC), xxi-xxxiv.

8. SRC, 83-103, 110-120.


15. Meacham, 64-113, SRC, 239-256.

17. SRC 266, 276-78, 290-297, 307-316, 335-47.

22. SRC, 346-375, 381-82 (Martin).

24. SRC, 405-33, 441-454.

29. SRC, 468-479, 520-537, 588-595.

October

1. TBA.

6. Test #1,

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

15. Handout: Mark David Hall “Beyond Self-Interest”; “Seneca Falls Declaration” (find online); spend 15 minutes reading about the Blaine Amendments at: http://www.blaineamendments.org.


22. Meacham, 153-226, Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” “I have a Dream.”


29. Fowler, chapter 1, TBA.

November

3. Test #2

5. Religion and Politics Today
   Fowler chapters 2-4.

    The election of 2008: John Green, “What Happened to the Values Voter?” First Things (available online); TBA (Pew study?).

12. Fowler 5-6.

17. Fowler 7-8.

19. No class, work on papers.


26. Thanksgiving

December

1. Fowler 11-12.

3. SRC 3-27.

8. SRC, 39-51, 76-79, TBA.
10. Student presentations on proper relationship between religion and politics/church and state.

16. Test #3, 3:00.

Possible Books [set date for presentation with me]

Selective Bibliography


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


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


Hoffman, Ronald and Peter Albert, eds. *Religion in a Revolutionary Age* (1994)

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


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

-----.* The Kingdom of God in America* (1937)

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


-----.* On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding* (2002)

Rauschenbush, Walter. *Christianity and Social Crisis* (1924)


