

Master of Arts in American History and Government  
Ashland University

**AHG 622 2A**  
**Religion in American History and Politics**

Sunday, June 28 – Friday, July 3, 2015

Instructors:  
Sarah Morgan Smith  
David Tucker

**Course focus:** From the time that the first Europeans arrived in America, religion has been an important part of American life. This course examines the various ways in which religion has played a role in American history, with particular emphasis on the role of religion in American politics.

**Learning Objectives:** By the end of the course, students should understand

- The role of religion in the American founding; antebellum and contemporary politics; and American Foreign policy
- The role of religion in American politics according to Abraham Lincoln
- The effort at secularization in the late nineteenth-century, the response to this effort and the various ways both have affected American self-understanding and politics
- The arguments raised in favor of and against religious toleration and religious freedom at various points in American history from the colonial period to the present.
- The connection between religion and republicanism, and the role of religion in American civic identity.
- The relationship between religion and dissent in American politics, particularly in relation to the labor and civil rights movements

**Course Requirements:**

- Attendance at and participation in all class sessions. Course Grade: 25% participation; 75% examination
- An exam (“take home”) due July 5 before 4PM. We will distribute five questions in advance taken from the focus questions below and others we develop in class and ask you to respond to three of them. We will distribute the questions in advance of the exam so that we will have an opportunity to discuss them prior to the exam. We will set a word limit to your responses.

**IMPORTANT NOTES TO STUDENTS:**

- Plan your reading. Some sessions have significantly more reading than others. You should do as much of it as possible before the class begins. Make sure you read Lambert, *Religion in American Politics* before the class meets.

- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Any willful plagiarism on papers or cheating on exams may result in an “F” for the course. For more information on what constitutes plagiarism, students should consult the Academic Integrity Policy in the Graduate Catalog, available at <http://www.ashland.edu/registrar/>

### **Required Texts:**

- Daniel Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, *The Sacred Rights of Conscience: Selected Readings on Religious Liberty and Church-State Relations in the American Founding* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010). This text is abbreviated as *SRC* in the readings below.
- Jeffrey P. Moran, *The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002). \$14.95 (paperback) ISBN 0312249195
- Frank Lambert, *Religion in American Politics: A Short History* (Princeton University Press, 2010). \$15.03 (paperback) ISBN 978-0691146133
- Course Packet (**CP**) of additional reading materials. These materials are required texts for the course.

Inexpensive copies of these books are available on Amazon.

**Please read all of *Religion in American Politics* before the class meets.**

## Schedule:

### Sunday, June 28

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#### 4:30-6:00 pm: Introduction & Session 1: Smith

**Topic:** Introduction; Religion in Colonial America

**Focus:** What varying understandings of the relationship between religion and politics are expressed in the documents? What justifications are given for a close relationship between church and state? What objections are raised against such a relationship? What were the principle justifications for toleration and how did they relate to any limitations placed on religious minorities? Why were colonial leaders so concerned about Catholics, Quakers, and other dissenters? How did the rhetoric about religion change after the First Great Awakening?

#### Readings:

- John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," 1629, (CP pg. 3-10)
- Documents related to religion in New Netherland, (SRC, 107)
- An Act Made at a General Court, Held at Boston, the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1658, (SRC, 110)
- An Act for The Suppressing of the Quakers, Virginia, 1659, (SRC, 113-114)
- Excerpts from William Penn, *The Frame of Government of Pennsylvania*, and *Laws Agreed Upon in England*, 1682, (SRC, 116-119)
- Excerpts from, Samuel Davies, *State of Religion among the Protestant Dissenters in Virginia*, 1751 (SRC, 195-202)
- Excerpts from Isaac Backus, *An Appeal to the Public for Religious Liberty*, 1773 (SRC, 204-211)

#### 7:30 – 9:00 pm: Session 2: Institute Lecture-Attendance Mandatory

## Monday, June 29

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### 9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 3 Tucker

**Topic:** Religion and the Revolution

**Focus Questions:** What is the role of religion in the American revolution? Did religion affect the Revolution or did the Revolution change religion? How are the Mayflower Compact and the Declaration of Independence alike? How are they different? How would you characterize the similarities and differences between "A Model of Christian Charity" (session 1) and the Mayhew sermon? Is the moral sense as Jefferson describes it in his letter to Carr compatible with Christian teaching, particularly a notion of human depravity? Does it have any bearing on how we understand the argument of the Declaration of Independence? Do the similarities and differences among these documents tell us anything about religion and politics at the time of the American Revolution?

#### Readings:

- Romans, 13: 1-8, (SRC, 14)
- Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, (SRC, 25-27)
- Mayflower Compact, (SRC, 86)
- Declaration of Independence, (SRC, 220-222)
- Mayhew, "A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers" (1750) (excerpt) (CP pgs. 12-18)
- Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), "Query 17," "Query 18," (SRC 290-94)
- Jefferson to Peter Carr, August 10, 1787 (CP pgs. 19-21)
- John Witherspoon, "The Dominion of Providence Over the Passions of Men" (1776) (excerpt) ; Jonathan Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution* (1775) (excerpt) (CP pgs. 22-24)

### 10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 4 Smith

**Topic:** Religion and the Founding

**Focus:** What is the relationship between religion and republicanism? What is the difference between religious toleration and religious freedom? What references to religion are found in the body of the United States Constitution? What did the religion clauses of the first amendment mean for the founders? To what extent does the voting public have a right or a responsibility to consider the religion of a political candidate? What does the "wall of separation" metaphor mean?

#### Readings:

- James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments," 1785, (SRC, 309-313)
- Constitution of the United States of America, 1787 (CP pgs. 26-35)
- Publius, *Federalist 2* (CP pgs. 36-38)

- Benjamin Rush to Elisa Boudinot (?), July 9, 1788, (SRC, 353-354)
- Noah Webster, “On Test Laws, Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration, and Partial Exclusions from Office,” March 1787 (SRC, 368-370)
- James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, October 17, 1788, (SRC, 413-415)
- Documents Related to the Debates in the First Congress on the Religion Clauses, 1789 (SRC, 426-433)
- George Washington, Letters and *Farewell Address*, 1796 (SRC, 461-470)
- Chapter 11: Religion and Politics in the Election of 1800 (SRC, 478-519)
  - [William Linn], *Serious Considerations on the Election Of a President: Addressed to the Citizens of the United States*, 1800
  - Grotius [Dewitt Clinton], *A Vindication of Thomas Jefferson; Against the Charges Contained in a Pamphlet Entitled, “Serious Considerations,” &c.*, 1800
- Thomas Jefferson to Danbury Baptist Association, January 1, 1802 (SRC, 528)
- Excerpt from Thomas Jefferson, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1805 (SRC, 530)

#### **4:00 pm – 5:30 pm: Session 5 Smith**

**Topic:** Second Great Awakening

**Focus:** Edwards’ account of David Brainerd’s life was reprinted multiple times during the early nineteenth century—what reasons might we posit for its popularity? What is Brainerd’s Christianity like, according to Edwards, and how might that have appealed to Americans in the early republic? What, if any, connection can we draw between the “First” and “Second” Great Awakenings? What civic and social purposes were served by the idea of an “Awakening” that made it an attractive concept for nineteenth century Americans to cultivate? Conversely, what civic and social dangers were presented by such a concept? In what ways is the spiritualism of Emerson related to or different from the evangelicalism described by Edwards or Cartwright? Likewise, how is either related to Joseph Smith’s narrative of the founding of the Latter Day Saints or the other “American originals” described by Howe?

#### **Readings:**

- Jonathan Edwards, Preface to *The Life of David Brainerd* (CP pgs. 40-42)
- Ebenezer Porter, Excerpt from *Letters on the Religious Revivals which Prevailed about the Beginning of the Present Century*, 1832 (CP pgs. 43-76)
- Peter Cartwright Describes the Cane Ridge Revival; excerpt from Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher*, edited by W. P. Strickland (New York: Carlton Porter, 1856), (CP pgs. 77-82)
- Joseph Smith, “Church History,” 1 March 1842 (CP pgs. 83-87)
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, Divinity School Address, 1838 (CP pgs. 88-120)

#### **Recommended:**

- David Walker Howe, Chapter 5 of *What Hath God Wrought?* (SCP pgs. 3-25)

**Tuesday, June 30**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 6** Tucker

**Topic:** Revival and Reform

**Focus Questions:** What is revivalism according to Finney? What is the understanding of God and human nature evident in revivalism? Is the reform movement connected to revivalism? Does anything that Finney says about the personal experience of religion help us understand the reform movement? How is the holiness movement connected to revival and reform? How did revivalism affect American politics in the antebellum period?

**Reading:**

- L. Beecher, "Sermons on Intemperance" (1828) (excerpt) (**CP pgs. 122-124**)
- L. Beecher, On Disestablishment and Dueling (excerpts) (1806) (1864) (**CP pgs. 125-130**)
- E. Beecher, "The Nature, Importance and Means of Eminent Holiness Throughout the Church" (1835) (excerpt) (**CP pgs. 131-134**)
- Garrison, Editorials (1831) and a Speech (excerpts) (1854) (**CP pgs. 135-139**)
- Garrison to Thomas Shipley, December 17, 1835 (**CP pgs. 140-142**)
- Finney, "Lectures on Revivals of Religion, Lecture 1" (1835) (**CP pgs. 143-152**)

**10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 7** Tucker

**Topic:** Lincoln and Religion

**Focus Questions:** Does Lincoln see a connection between religion and the perpetuation of our republican government? What are the requirements for perpetuation and how is religion related to them? Does religion pose problems for a government founded on the self-evident truth that all men are created equal? Does Lincoln's view of religion change from the Lyceum Speech to the Second Inaugural? If so, how and why? What is the understanding of God, man and the universe present in Beecher's "Moral Theory of Civil Liberty"? Is this understanding also present in Lincoln's speeches? Does the perpetuation of our political institutions depend on it?

**Readings:**

- "Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions" (Lyceum Address) (1838) (**CP pgs. 154-159**)
- Temperance Address (1842) (**CP pgs. 160-166**)
- Gettysburg Address (1863) (**CP pg. 167**)
- Second Inaugural (1865) (**CP pgs. 168-169**)
- Beecher, "The Moral Theory of Civil Liberty" (1869) (excerpt) (**CP pgs.170-172**)

**4:00 pm – 5:30 pm: Session 8 Smith**

**Topic:** Religion and Westward Movement

**Focus:** What purposes or roles were envisioned for religion in the course of American westward expansion? Why and in what ways were non-Western religions like those of Chinese immigrants and Native American tribes perceived as threats to American cultural and civic identity? What did the Ghost Dance mean? Are there any significant areas of overlap between these religions and the “standard” Protestantism of nineteenth century America? What justifications are given for limiting the application of religious freedom in the polygamy case? Are those justifications compelling?

**Readings:**

- Excerpt from Northwest Ordinance 1787, (*SRC*, 236)
- Lyman Beecher, Excerpts from “A Plea for the West,” (**CP pgs. 174-184**)
- Excerpts from Reynolds vs. United States 98 U.S. 145 (1878) (**CP pgs. 185-189**)
- Raymond J. DeMallie, “The Lakota Ghost Dance: An Ethnohistorical Account.” (**CP pgs. 190-211**)
- Wong Chin Foo, “Why Am I a Heathen?,” 1887, (**CP pgs. 212-223**)

## Wednesday, July 1

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### 9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 9 Tucker

**Topic:** Christian Establishment and Synthesis: Science and religion; electoral politics (1800-1880)

**Focus Questions:** Based on the excerpt below, how would you describe Jefferson's understanding of the relationship between reason and revelation, and science and the Bible? How does his attitude differ from Mathetes's or Palmer's? Jefferson called Francis Bacon one of the three greatest men who ever lived. Based on the excerpt, why do you think he was so important to Jefferson? Why was Bacon so important to Palmer? What are the different ways in which Palmer sees science (Baconianism) as compatible with religion? What might be the connections, if any, between Palmer's views of religion and science and the voting patterns described by Swierenga?

#### Readings:

- Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (1787) Query 6 (excerpt) (CP pgs. 225-226)
- Emerson, "An Oration in Commemoration of the Anniversary of American Independence," 1802 (CP pgs. 227-234)
- Mathetes, "On the Nature of Virtue" (1821) (CP pgs. 235-236)
- Benjamin Morgan Palmer, "Baconianism and the Bible" (1852) (CP pgs. 237-251)

### 10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 10 Tucker

**Topic:** Secularization

**Focus Questions:** What is Stephen's attitude toward religion? Does he think religion has any basis in reason or nature? What is its basis in his view? How does he think Darwinism and modern science will affect traditional religion? Does he think they have any effect on morality? What in Stephen's opinion is the foundation for the belief in the immortality of the soul? Does Stephen think that the immortality of the soul is important? Is Stephen a materialist? Does he see any moral or political problems with materialism? How do Palmer's views of science and religion differ from Stephen's? How does the editorial from the *Scientific American* characterize the relationship between science and theology? Why does it distinguish between theology and religion? Is Holmes' view of natural law more compatible with the of science presented by Palmer or Stephen? How does Holmes' view of natural law differ from the what the Declaration of Independence means by the laws of nature and of nature's God? On the basis of the natural law as Holmes presents it, could you construct an argument to free the slaves?

#### Readings:

- Stephen, "Darwinism and Divinity" (1872) (CP pgs. 253-269)
- An outline of "Darwinism and Divinity," prepared by David Tucker (CP pgs. 270-271)
- Staff, "Science and Theology," (*Scientific American*, 1872) (CP pgs. 272-273)
- Holmes, "Natural Law" (1918) (CP pgs. 274-278)



**4:00 pm – 5:30 pm: Session 11 Smith**

**Topic:** The Social Gospel and Religious Liberalism

**Focus:** In what ways was the “Social Gospel” different from previous incarnations of Christianity in America? How was it possible for Christian leaders to support both labor movements and promote capitalistic wealth as the natural consequence of faith? How does Jane Addams explain the connection between society, reform, and religion? How is hospitality related to social reform and progress for Day? What if any significant differences do you see between the social and political arguments made by the Catholic thinkers (Smith, Gibbons, Day) and the Protestant ones (Balch, Lawrence, Addams, Beecher)? What kinds of “progress” are evident in Christianity from its earlier American incarnations?

**Readings:**

- “Catholic and Patriot: Governor Smith Replies,” (CP pgs. 280-288)
- “Cardinal Gibbons Defends the Knights of Labor,” (CP pgs. 289-296)
- William Monroe Balch, excerpt from *Christianity and the Labor Movement* (CP pgs. 297-310)
- William Lawrence, “The Relation of Wealth to Morals” (CP pgs. 311-319)
- Jane Addams, “Religious Education and Contemporary Social Conditions,” (CP pgs. 320-325)
- Dorothy Day, “Pacifism,” *The Catholic Worker*, May 1936 (CP pgs. 326-327)
- Dorothy Day, “Houses of Hospitality,” *The Catholic Worker*, December 1936 (CP pgs. 328-329)
- Henry Ward Beecher, excerpts from “Progress of Thought in the Church,” (CP pgs. 330-335)

**Thursday, July 2**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 12** Tucker

**Topic:** Response to Secularization: Fundamentalism

**Focus Questions:** What is Warfield's attitude toward evolution? Does he see it as a threat to Christianity? Why? Why is the unity of the human race important to Warfield? Why is the Bible and its accuracy important to Machen? What is his criticism of religious liberalism? Does Dixon's criticism of German thinking seem exaggerated? How much of a threat does this German thought pose to the United States? Is German thinking compatible with the principles of the Declaration of Independence? How similar is it to the view of natural law that Holmes offers?

**Readings:**

- A.C. Dixon, "The Bible at the Center of the Modern University" (1920) (CP pgs. 337-348)
- B. B. Warfield, "The Present-Day Conception of Evolution" (1895) (CP pgs. 349-356)
- B. B. Warfield, "On the Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race" (1911) (excerpts) (CP pgs. 357-362)
- Machen, "The Bible," chapter 4 of *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923) (CP pgs. 363-368)

**10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 13** Tucker

**Topic:** The Scopes Trial; Foundations of the Religious Right

**Focus Questions:** What are the issues at stake in the Scopes trial? Who has the better argument? Why?

**Reading:**

- Moran, *The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents* (pgs. 74–168 required; anything else you care to read)

**4:00 pm – 5:30 pm: Session 14** Smith

**Topic:** The Civil Rights Movement

**Focus Question:** How do King and X portray America vis a vis the divine? In what ways do they suggest American religion has failed in regard to Civil Rights? What remedies do they recommend for these failures? How do the religious concepts of “charity” and “judgment” play out and interact in the texts? How did the religious rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement play into its ability to dissent from the established political and cultural order? Why was integration a question of “public morals” for Wright? What does King suggest

Christians can learn from communism and how should they apply those lessons to America's ongoing racial, cultural, social, and economic problems?

**Readings:**

- Martin Luther King, Jr. "Paul's Letter to American Christians," 4 November 1956 (CP pgs. 370-376)
- Wright, Marion A. "Integration and Public Morals." *New South* 12 (November 1957): 7-14 (CP pgs. 377-384)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., "Can A Christian Be A Communist?" Sermon transcript from September 30, 1962 (CP pgs. 385-394)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, April 16, 1963 (CP pgs. 395-402)
- Malcolm X, "God's Judgment on White America," 4 December 1963 (CP pgs. 403-424)

**Recommended "Watching":**

- Interview with Martin Luther King, Jr. from NBC News, on the combination of Christian charity and "Ghandi-ism" in the Civil Rights Movement, original broadcast date October 27, 1957. <http://www.hulu.com/watch/11407>

## Friday, July 3

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### 9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 15 Tucker

**Topic:** American Religion and the World; Religion and Foreign Policy

**Focus Questions:** If a politician used the religious language that Wallace used to talk about world politics, could he become Vice-President today? If not, what does that mean? Is it a good thing? Is there a particularly Christian response to 9-11? Does it differ from other responses? Do President Obama's remarks represent a Christian critique of Islam? If not, what is the source of his critique? Is Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's response to the government's charges an Islamic response? If foreign events have had the effect on American religion and politics that Sutton claims they have, what is likely to be the effect of the Islamic militancy on American politics and religion?

#### Readings:

- Henry Wallace, "The Century of the Common Man," (1942) (CP pgs. 426-430) (a recording of the speech: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBWula5GyAc>)
- Mark Galli, "Now What?" (2001) (CP pgs. 431-436)
- Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on a New Beginning," Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt (2009) (CP pgs. 437-444)
- Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, et al., "The Islamic Response to the Government's Nine Accusations" (2009) (CP pgs. 445-451)
- Matthew Avery Sutton, "Was FDR the Anti-Christ: The Birth of Fundamentalist Antiliberalism in a Global Age," *Journal of American History* 98, 4(March, 2012) (CP pgs. 452-474)

### 10:50 am – 12:20 pm: Session 16 Smith

**Topic:** Religion and Contemporary Politics

**Focus:** How has the Supreme Court's understanding of religious freedom evolved in the last thirty years? In what ways can we see the shadow or legacy of previous generations' attempts to grapple with the role of religion at play in contemporary American religion and politics?

#### Readings:

- Excerpt from *Employment Div. v. Smith*, 485 U.S. 660 (1988) (CP pgs. 476-495 required; pgs. 496-527 optional)
- Religious Freedom Restoration Act (1993) (CP pgs. 528-531)
- Excerpt from *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores, Inc.* 573 U.S. \_\_\_\_ (2014) (CP pgs. 532-586 required; 587-626 optional)

### 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm: Session 17

**Take Home Exam**