



Course Description

Election!

America is a nation that prides itself on religious diversity but has been deeply shaped by Christianity. Americans claim to support a separation of church and state but also call the United States a Christian nation. In light of the 2016 presidential election, understanding these tensions is crucial. This course examines religious and political issues that will shape the 2016 election while grounding contemporary debates in their historical context. Students analyze speeches, debates, court cases, and visual and popular culture sources as well as scholarly articles to explore how religion and politics shape each other.

After completing this course, successful students should have:

- developed a working knowledge of American religious history and the role religions have played in American politics since the formation of the state
- become critical readers of primary and secondary sources
- through Community Engaged Learning projects, acquired first-hand knowledge of the lived political process (including voter registration drives and a public forum for candidates in the 2015 mayoral and Wards 1&3 races in Lewiston and Auburn.

Expectations

This is an introductory course. I don't expect you to know anything about religious studies. But if you're unfamiliar with reading and analyzing scholarly articles or writing in standard humanities styles, you might find some assignments challenging. Read directions closely and seek additional assistance well in advance of deadlines.

Treat every student and every concept you encounter with respect. Challenge your assumptions and position(s) of privilege. Speak from your own experiences and understandings of the issues, and assume that each class member operates from best intentions. Don't evaluate the truth or validity of any tradition; use the evidence we have to position that tradition's beliefs, practices, teachings, and products in the context of religion(s) and U.S. culture.

Class Format

Each class will center on discussion of the assigned sources; some will combine lecture and presentation elements as well. None of these work unless you attend regularly and read the assignments.

Come to class ready to analyze and respond to the primary documents and secondary sources assigned. (The Reading Notes exercise is designed to help you do just that.) Participating in the discussions will be easier if you bring your readings and notes to class with you, so be sure to print them ahead of time.

Your active engagement in discussions and class activities is essential to your success in this class. Remember that "engagement" includes active listening as well as speaking.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Unless you have learning accommodations that require their use, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices are only permissible in the classroom for specific class activities. You are also required to use certain technologies to

complete your assignments. Most importantly, you need to know how to create PDF documents and submit them via Lyceum in a timely manner. You are responsible for learning how to negotiate these technologies.

Submit all assignments via Lyceum. Any submission that is not in PDF format will not receive full credit for the assignment. Assignments submitted as *.doc or *.docx files, or assignments submitted via email will not earn full credit.



I AM COMMITTED TO MAKING OUR CAMPUS AND OUR CLASSROOM AN INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL SEXUAL ORIENTATIONS, GENDER IDENTITIES, AND GENDER EXPRESSIONS.

ARE YOU PARTICIPATING?

how to succeed in class by really really trying

Attendance isn't enough. To succeed in this class, you must fully engage in activities and discussions.

These criteria determine your participation grade. Here's the short version: **speak up!**

EXCELLENT

You're present, prepared, and engaged. You consistently refer to the readings, lectures, and class discussions from other weeks. You encourage others' comments and questions in a productive and respectful manner.

GOOD

You're present and prepared, and you offer thoughtful questions and comments that demonstrate your preparation for discussion and attention to readings and lectures.

ADEQUATE

You're present and prepared, but limit your contributions to several surface-level observations or clarifying questions about lectures or readings.

MINIMAL

You usually make a single comment during discussions in response to another student's observations or insights.

("I agree with hir.")



SEX AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ARE CIVIL RIGHTS OFFENSES. OFFENDERS ARE SUBJECT TO THE SAME KINDS OF PENALTIES APPLIED TO OFFENSES AGAINST OTHER PROTECTED CATEGORIES (SUCH AS RACE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, ETC.). SURVIVORS ARE ENTITLED TO CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT. IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS BEEN HARASSED OR ASSAULTED, BATES WANTS TO HELP. **HERE** ARE OUR RESOURCES.

ATTENDANCE -AND- PARTICIPATION

There is no attendance grade for this class – **you must participate in the conversation to receive credit for attending.** Unless granted an exception due to hospitalization, family emergency, or another extenuating circumstance, students who miss three or more classes will lose two points per missed class from their final grades.

Students must meet with me once before the midterm. Contact me before **5 October** to schedule this meeting.

Please don't arrive late for class: it distracts me and your classmates, and it's very rude. Also, please turn off your cell phones before arriving for class. Anyone using their phones, laptops, tablets, etc., for reasons unrelated to class will be asked to leave the discussion and may not make up any missed work.

Accessibility @ Bates

If you need in-class or testing accommodations because of accessibility issues, if you have emergency medical information, or if you require specific arrangements in the event of a building evacuation, please inform me as soon as possible.

Students who require testing accommodations must pre-register

with **Bates' Office of Accessible Education and Student Support** and inform me of these accommodations during the first week of class. Please note that you are responsible for making timely arrangements with the Accessible Education Office and me regarding your testing accommodations.



WRITE BETTER!

There are a number of helpful handouts and guidelines for writing on our Lyceum site, including a handout on writing for religious studies. For further assistance, please come to office hours, make an appointment with Bates' **Peer Writing and Speaking Center** or visit their **website**.



Plagiarism and Cheating

Presenting someone else's thoughts, words, or ideas as your own is plagiarism. Please don't cheat or plagiarize; you will fail the course. Complete this **plagiarism tutorial**

and submit a passing certificate before **15 September** if you intend to remain in the course. If you're still unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult

the "What is Plagiarism?" handout available on Lyceum or **Bates' Academic Integrity Policy**. "I didn't know" is not a valid excuse. Go know.



Grading

In this course, you will be graded on **how** you think, not **what** you think. In other words, **you will not be graded on your beliefs, opinions, or the positions you advance.** You will be graded on how well you

articulate your thoughts and positions, how closely you read the assigned texts, and how much your ability to think **critically and synthetically** about course themes develops throughout the semester.

PERCENTAGES

- 10% Participation
- 15% Midterm Exam
- 15% CEL Activities
- 15% Reading Notes
- 20% Harkness Discussions
- 25% Political Literacy
- 5% Final Reflection

RUBRIC

- A = 94 – 100
- A- = 90 – 93
- B+ = 87 – 89
- B = 83 – 86
- B- = 80 – 82
- C+ = 77 – 79
- C = 73 – 76
- D+ = 70 – 72
- F = 69 and below

- ASSIGNMENTS -

Here's what we'll be working on this semester. Please consult assignment sheets for more information.

HARKNESS DISCUSSIONS

This is a method designed to spark rigorous, student-led classroom discussions. Three times in the semester, students will use the class period to respond to a prompt I provide. I will record the conversation but participate only as needed. All participants will earn a single grade.

You must be in class to earn grades for these discussions. If you arrive unprepared, you will be asked to leave the discussion and earn a zero for the assignment.

READING NOTES

Learning to read, understand, and think critically about challenging material is a key skill for liberal arts scholarship. This assignment will help you become a more careful reader of these texts and jumpstart your preparation for your Harkness discussions.

You are responsible for providing reading notes for one source assigned on the days marked RN on the following schedule. Reading notes are due on Lyceum by midnight before class.

POLITICAL LITERACY

Groups will follow the public media presence of one local and one national candidate, including Facebook, Twitter, and other media. Each week, student groups will report on news of local and national political import, as well as significant events in the group's candidate's campaign. Each student will also live-tweet one Republican and one Democratic primary debate, and fact-check 10 statements made by their group's candidate. (Includes final reflection paper.)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To further build relationships with the greater Lewiston community, as well as to gain deeper understanding of the role voter rights play in the political process, students will be running voter registration drives on and off campus.

As a class, students will also be responsible for organizing a public forum in late October for the candidates in the Lewiston races for mayor and positions in Wards 1&3.

Schedule of Classes

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
GETTING STARTED		
R 10 September	Introductions	
T 15 September	What's religion? What's politics?	Bivins, "Embattled Majority," Parts I and II Albanese, "Elephant in the Dark" Pew Research Center, "How the Faithful Voted" Pew Research Center, "5 Key Findings" PRRI, "Is America a Christian Nation?"
W 16 September	RNC primary debate	Time and location TBA
R 17 September	Maine religion, Maine politics	Wilensky-Lanford, "Maine" PRC, "Religious Landscape Study: Maine" PRC, "America's Changing Religious Landscape" American Values Atlas: Maine Nicks, "These are the Most Godless States"
FOUNDATIONS		
T 22 September RN	Disestablishment and Free Exercise	US Constitution, Article VI, paragraph 3 Bill of Rights, Amendment 1 Washington, Letter to the Jews of New York Gordon, "Faith & the Contested Constitution"



Schedule of Classes

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
FOUNDATIONS		
R 24 September RN	Tolerance and Toleration	Campbell and Putnam, from <i>American Grace</i> Pellegrini and Jacobsen, from <i>Love the Sin</i> Beneke and Grenda, from <i>The First Prejudice</i> Haefali, "The Problem with the History of Toleration"
T 29 September RN	Abolition debate	Noll, "The Bible and Slavery" Beecher, "Essay on Slavery and Abolition" Grimke, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South"
R 1 October	No class	
T 6 October RN	Voting Rights	Voting Rights Act (1965) Liptak, "Supreme Court Invalidates Key Part" Ginsburg, VRA dissent (2013)
R 8 October RN	Communism and civil religion	Bellah, "Biblical Religion & Civil Religion in America" Kennedy, "Address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association" Day, "Our Brothers, the Communists" Reagan, "National Association of Evangelicals" Remarks
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM		
T 13 October RN	Defining religious freedom	Hurd, "Believing in Religious Freedom" Brown, "Religious Freedom's Oxymoronic Edge" Sullivan, "The Impossibility of Religious Freedom"
T 13 October	DNC Primary debate	Time and location TBA
R 15 October RN	American Indian Movement	Wenger, "We Are Guaranteed Freedom" Sullivan, "The World that Smith Made" Employment Division v. Smith
T 20 October	Religious Freedom Restoration Act(s)	RFRA (1993) Burwell v. Hobby Lobby (2014)
R 22 October	No class – Fall break	

Schedule of Classes

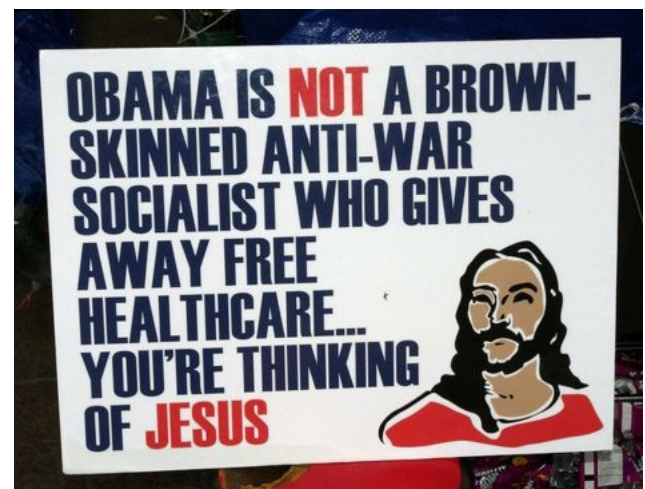
DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, continued		
T 27 October Harkness?	Religious Freedom after Burwell	Imhoff, "The Supreme Court's Faith in Belief" Epps, "What Makes Indiana's RF Law Different?" ToS, "Satanists Leverage Hobby Lobby Ruling" Posner, "Discrimination on the Taxpayers' Dime" NPR on Kim Davis TIME, RFRA map and timeline
W 28 October	RNC Primary debate	Time and location TBA
R 29 October	Midterm exam	
RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE		
T 3 November	Defining intolerance	Corrigan and Neal, from <i>Religious Intolerance in America</i> Killerman, "30+ Examples of Christian Privilege"
R 5 November RN	Ku Klux Klan	SPLC, Ku Klux Klan Smith, "My Name is Legion" Baker, from <i>Gospel According to the Klan</i> Burlein, from <i>Lift High the Cross</i>
T 10 November RN	Sexuality and Moral Citizenship	http://www.godhatesfags.com Cobb, from <i>God Hates Fags</i> Petro, "Emerging Moralities"
R 12 November Harkness?	Creeping shariah	SPLC, "Living While Muslim" PRC, "State Legislation Restricting Use of Foreign or Religious Law" Emon, "Banning Shari'a" Rashid, "What Does Shari'ah Mean?" Posner, "Welcome to the Shari'ah Conspiracy Theory Industry" Raftery, "Bans on Court Use of Sharia"
S 14 November	DNC primary debate	Time and location TBA
RACE AND AMERICAN RELIGION		
T 17 November RN	Defining Race charlie? UPDATED: charlie, coates, Bates news "problem" video	Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" Scalzi, "Straight White Male" Locke, "Why I Don't Want to Talk about Race" McKenzie and Song, "How to Be a 'Reverse-Racist'"

Schedule of Classes

DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT
RACE AND AMERICAN RELIGION, continued		
R 19 November	No class	
T 24 November	No class	
R 26 November	No class	
T 1 December RN	20 th century: Innovation	X, "God's Judgment of White America" Lorde, "Open Letter to Mary Daly" deLoria, "God is Red" Smith, "For all those"
R 3 December RN	20 th century: Christianity	Cone, "God is Black" and "The White Church and Black Power" Chavez, Mexican American and the Church King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
T 8 December	21 st century civil rights show black woman on wall street photos	Bree Newsome v. the Confederate flag President Obama's Eulogy for Rev. Pinckney Coates, "What This Cruel War Was Over" Gay, "Why I Can't Forgive Dylann Roof" Cressler, "Why White Terrorists Attack Black Churches"
R 10 December Harkness?	Conclusions: What's political about American religions? What's religious about American politics?	Posner, " Bree Newsome and the True Meaning of Civil Disobedience " Cajka, "Kim Davis and the Lived Theology of Conscience" charlie White debt
T 15 December	RNC primary debate	Time and location TBA
W 16 December	Exam period	Final reflection due by 1:15pm

IMPORTANT DATES

15 September	Plagiarism and syllabus quizzes due
16 September	RNC primary debate
17 September	Peggy Rotundo and Ed Barrett visit class
5 October	Schedule pre-midterm meeting by now
13 October	DNC primary debate
28 October	RNC primary debate
29 October	Midterm exam
10 November	Meet the Author: Anthony Petro
14 November	DNC primary debate
15 December	RNC primary debate
16 December	Final reflection due



This syllabus is a blueprint, not a contract. As we progress through the semester, I may shift assignments and requirements. But I will not add more readings or assignments than are currently listed here.

POLITICAL RELIGIONS ONLINE

Much of the public conversation about religion and American politics happens online. Here are a few sources you should keep an eye on:

- [Sun Journal](#)
- [Twin City Times](#)
- [Religion and Politics](#)
- [The Immanent Frame](#)
- [Religion Dispatches](#)
- [Religion in American History](#)
- [Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life](#)



EXTRA CREDIT



For up to three points on your final grade, you may write a 750-1000 word analysis of a pop culture portrayal of the relationship between religion and American politics.

(Amazon's new series, "Hand of God," might be of interest.) Summarize the plot and discuss the ways in which the source portrays this relationship. How does it compare to

our class discussions and assigned sources? This is the only opportunity for extra credit; you may only submit an analysis if you complete all other class assignments.



CLASS INFORMATION

Instructor: Prof. Megan Goodwin
 Office: Hedge 213
 Office Hours: TR 12:30 - 2pm
 Email: mgoodwin@bates.edu
 Twitter: [#BatesRelPol](https://twitter.com/BatesRelPol)
 Slack: politicalreligions.slack.com