

**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.

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**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.

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**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.
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.

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.
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 jump-start 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

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GETTING STARTED</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>R 10 September</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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| 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 | 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” |

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<td><strong>FOUNDATIONS</strong></td>
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| R 24 September | Tolerance and Toleration | Campbell and Putnam, from *American Grace*  
Pellegrini and Jacobsen, from *Love the Sin*  
Beneke and Grenda, from *The First Prejudice*  
Haefali, “The Problem with the History of Toleration” |
| T 29 September | 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  | Voting Rights             | Voting Rights Act (1965)  
Liptak, “Supreme Court Invalidates Key Part”  
Ginsburg, VRA dissent (2013) |
| R 8 October  | 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 | 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 | 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) |
<p>| R 22 October | No class — Fall break     |                                                                           |</p>
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| T 27 October | 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                     |                                                                             |
| T 3 November | Defining intolerance             | Corrigan and Neal, from *Religious Intolerance in America*  
Killerman, “30+ Examples of Christian Privilege” |
| R 5 November | Ku Klux Klan                     | SPLC, **Ku Klux Klan**  
Smith, “My Name is Legion”  
Baker, from *Gospel According to the Klan*  
Burlein, from *Lift High the Cross* |
| T 10 November | Sexuality and Moral Citizenship  | http://www.godhatesfags.com  
Cobb, from *God Hates Fags*  
Petro, “Emerging Moralities” |
| R 12 November | 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                                                      |
| T 17 November | Defining Race                    | 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’”  
**charlie?**  
**UPDATED:** charlie, coats, Bates news “problem” video |

**REMARKS:**
- Harkness?
- RN
# Schedule of Classes

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R 19 November</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>T 24 November</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>R 26 November</td>
<td>No class</td>
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| T 1 December | 20<sup>th</sup> 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 | 20<sup>th</sup> century: Christianity | Cone, “God is Black” and “The White Church and Black Power”  
King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” |
| T 8 December | 21<sup>st</sup> century civil rights | 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 | Conclusions:  
What’s political about American religions?  
What’s religious about American politics? | Posner, “<strong>Bree Newsome and the True Meaning of Civil Disobedience</strong>”  
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 September</td>
<td>Plagiarism and syllabus quizzes due</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 September</td>
<td>RNC primary debate</td>
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<tr>
<td>17 September</td>
<td>Peggy Rotundo and Ed Barrett visit class</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 October</td>
<td>Schedule pre-midterm meeting by now</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 October</td>
<td>DNC primary debate</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 October</td>
<td>RNC primary debate</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 October</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 November</td>
<td>Meet the Author: Anthony Petro</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 November</td>
<td>DNC primary debate</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 December</td>
<td>RNC primary debate</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 December</td>
<td>Final reflection due</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
Slack: politicalreligions.slack.com