

Master of American History and Government
Ashland University

**AHG 622:
Religion in American History and Politics**

Instructors: David Tucker and Paul O. Carrese
Sunday, July 1, to Friday, July 6, 2007

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will understand

- The role of religion in the American founding and antebellum and contemporary politics
- The role of religion in the thought and action of our most exemplary statesman, 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 role of religion in American constitutionalism

Requirements: All reading assignments; participate in discussion
An in-class examination

**Students in the course not taking it for credit must complete the readings
and fully participate in the seminars during the week.**

Readings

- Jeffrey P. Moran. *The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford Series in History and Culture.) Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002. \$14.95 (paper) ISBN 0312249195
- Kenneth D. Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States* (4th edition, 2003) \$32.00 ISBN 0742518418
- Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Paperback) (Mansfield/Winthrop) \$13.60 ISBN 0226805360
- Bret E. Carroll, *The Routledge Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (2000) \$24.95 (**recommended**) ISBN 0415921376
- Coursepak (CP), Ashbrook Center

Schedule

Sunday, July 1

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm: Session 1 Professor Tucker

Topic: Introduction; Religion in the American Founding

Focus: What is the role of religion in the American Founding? Did religion affect the Founding or did the Revolution and Founding 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 Charitie” and either of the sermons by Mayhew or Niles? Is the moral sense as Jefferson describes it 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 and Founding?

Readings: Mayflower Compact (1620) (CP pg. 1)
Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charitie” (1630) (CP pg. 3)
Declaration of Independence (booklet)
Jefferson to Thomas Law, June 13, 1814 (CP pg. 13)
Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)(excerpt) (CP pg. 17)
Mathetes, “On the Nature of Virtue” (1821) (excerpt) (CP pg. 21)
Mayhew, “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers” (1750) (CP pg. 23)
Or
Niles, “Two Sermons” (1774) (CP pg. 35)

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm: Session 2 Sunday Evening Lecture (attendance required)

Monday, July 2

9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 3 Professor Carrese

Topic: Principles in the Constitution and First Amendment

Focus: What portions of the Constitution and Bill of Rights address religion? What principles, and authorities, did the Founders draw upon to formulate those clauses? What views of human nature and divinity, of human nature, and of religious belief are evident? What was the contemporary understanding (or the “original meaning”) of the three main American principles about religion and politics -- toleration, non-establishment, and free exercise? What did they protect, what did they prohibit? Is there unanimity, or a

dominant consensus, or no consensus among the Founders? Finally, why should we care about these issues in 21st century America – is religion a characteristic or unusual presence in American life today, in light of our history?

Reading: Clauses of the Constitution, and First Amendment
Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (1748) – excerpts (CP pg. 51)
Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Assessments” (1785) (CP pg. 57)
Patrick Henry and James Madison, Virginia Ratifying Convention (1788) (CP pg. 61)
George Washington, Thanksgiving Proclamation (1789) (CP pg. 63)
Washington, letters to Newport Hebrew Congregation, Catholics (1790) (CP pg. 65)
Washington, excerpt from Farewell Address (1796) (CP pg. 67)
Thomas Jefferson, letter to Danbury Baptist Association (1802) (CP pg. 69)
Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, pgs. 1–39
(background reading, not required: Wald, pp. 69-83)

10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 4 Professor Tucker

Topic: Revival and Reform

Focus: What is revivalism? What is the understanding of God and human nature evident in revivalism? How did revivalism affect American politics in the antebellum period?

Reading: L. Beecher, “Sermons on Intemperance” (1828) (CP pg. 71)
E. Beecher, “The Nature, Importance and Means of Eminent Holiness Throughout the Church” (1835) (excerpt) (CP pg. 75)
Finney, “Lectures on Revivals of Religion, Lecture 1” (1835) (CP pg. 79)
Garrison, Editorials (1831) and a Speech (excerpts) (1854) (CP pg. 89)
Garrison to Thomas Shipley, December 17, 1835 (CP pg. 95)

2:00 - 3:30 pm: Session 5 Professor Tucker

Topic: Revival and Reform

Focus: What are the dangers to our political life that Lincoln sees? Where do they come from? What can be done about them? Is religion part of the problem or part of the solution?

Readings: Lincoln, “On the Perpetuation of our Political Institutions”
“Temperance Address” (CP pg. 99)
Beecher, “The Moral Theory of Civil Liberty” (excerpt) (CP pg. 105)

Tuesday, July 3

9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 6 Professor Carrese

Topic: Tocqueville on Religion and American Democracy (I)

Focus: Why does Tocqueville think that religion is a crucial element of American national identity? What is its relationship to democracy, and to liberty – and why does he think these are mutually beneficial relationships? What elements of modern democracy, and its American version, seem to threaten religion?

Reading: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Vol 1, 1835):

- Introduction (Providence and democracy; religion and reason) (pgs. 3-15)
- Part 1, ch. 2, “Point of Departure” (pgs. 27-44)
- Ch. 4, “Sovereignty of the People” (pgs. 53-55)
- Part 2, ch. 6, “The Idea of Rights” (pgs. 227-29)
- Ch. 9, “Mores and Religion”; “Europe” (pgs. 264-65; 274-88; 292-95; 298-302)

10:50 am - 12:20 am: Session 7 Professor Carrese

Topic: Tocqueville on Religion and American Democracy (II)

Focus: What intellectual currents in democracies, and in America, will challenge traditional religious beliefs? What new forms of religion, or of unquestioned belief, might arise? What worries does Tocqueville have about democracy’s challenge to traditional religion – for the sake of religion, and the sake of democracy and liberty? What views of human nature, divinity, and politics form the basis of Tocqueville’s analysis of religion and politics?

Reading: Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Vol 2, 1840):

- Part 1, ch. 1, “The Philosophy of the Americans” (pgs. 403-407; and 399-400 for background)
- Ch. 2, “On Beliefs in Democracy” (pgs. 407-410; also p. 413, middle paragraph, on “Jesus Christ” and rights)
- Ch. 5, “Religion and Democratic Instincts” (pgs. 417-24)
- Ch. 7, “Democratic Peoples and Pantheism” (pgs. 425-26)
- Part 2, ch. 9, “Self-interest Well Understood and Religion” (pgs. 504 -506; see pg. 501, bottom, for background)
- Ch. 10, “Taste for Material Well-Being in America” (pgs. 506-508)
- Ch. 12, “Exalted Spiritualism in America” (pgs. 510-512)
- Ch. 15, “Religious Beliefs and Immaterial Enjoyments” (pgs. 517-521)
- Ch. 17, “Equality, Doubt, and the Object of Human Actions” (pgs. 522-24)

2:00-3:30 pm: Session 8 Professor Carrese

Topic: Lincoln on Democracy, Religion, and Statesmanship

Focus: What was Lincoln's view of the proper relationship between religion, politics, and justice as civil war approached? Regarding emancipation? As the war turned more hopeful for the Union, and as victory was assured? What kinds of appeal to religion are proper for democratic citizens and their elected leaders? Why, for Lincoln, does democracy need a certain kind of religious belief and guidance?

Reading: First Inaugural Address (1861) -- closing passages (CP pg. 109)
Fragment on the Constitution and Union (1861) (booklet)
Response to Religious Denominations on Emancipation (1862) (CP pg. 111)
Proclamation for Thanksgiving Day (1863) (CP pg. 115)
Gettysburg Address (1863) (CP pg. 117)
Second Inaugural Address (1865) (CP pg. 119)

Wednesday, July 4

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

Topic: Secularization

Focus: What does Palmer understand the relationship to be between science and the Bible? How does he differ in his understanding of religion and science from the other authors in this group? 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 does the editorial from the *Scientific American* characterize the relationship between science and theology? Why does it distinguish between theology and religion? What does White think is the effect of religion on learning? Would Holmes or Kallen accept the argument of the Declaration of Independence? Is there a connection between the arguments of Stephen and the attitude of Holmes toward natural law and Kallen toward race? Is Daniel Dennett the reincarnation of Leslie Stephen? Would either of them think that a sensible question?

Reading: Benjamin Morgan Palmer, "Baconianism and the Bible" (1852) (CP pg. 121)
Stephen, "Darwinism and Divinity" (1872) (CP pg. 137)
Staff, "Science and Theology," (*Scientific American*, 1872) (CP pg. 153)
Holmes, "Natural Law" (1918) (CP pg. 155)
White, *The Warfare of Science with Theology* (1896) (excerpts) (CP pg. 161)
Solomon, "The Unbeliever, Questions for Daniel Dennett" (2006) (CP pg. 169)

10:50 am - 12:20 am: Session 10 Professor Tucker

Topic: The Response to Secularization

Focus: What does Bascom say is the source of Atheism in colleges? What does he mean by distinguishing between philosophy and science? How does he argue that believers should

respond to the rise of unbelief? 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? What does Dixon see as the principal problem facing the United States?

Reading: Bascom, "Atheism in Colleges" (1881) (CP pg. 173)
B. B. Warfield, "The Present-Day Conception of Evolution" (1895) (CP pg. 181)
B. B. Warfield, "On the Antiquity and Unity of the Human Race" (1911) (excerpts) (CP pg. 189)
Machen, "The Bible," chapter 4 of *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923) (CP pg. 195)
A. C Dixon, "The Bible at the Center of the Modern University" (1920) (CP pg. 201)

2:00-3:30 pm: Session 11 Professor Tucker and Carrese

Topic: Review of Study Questions

Thursday, July 5

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

Topic: The Scopes Trial

Focus: What are the issues at stake in the Scopes trial? Which is the better argument?

Reading: Moran, *The Scopes Trial: A Brief History with Documents* (everything but the introduction)

10:50 am - 12:20 am: Session 13

Topic: The Supreme Court on Establishment of Religion

Focus: What views of the establishment of religion has the Supreme Court pronounced in the past 60 years? Has the modern Court followed the "original meaning" of the Founders (Story, and Session 2 readings), or modern views of religion and politics, or a bit of both? What are the main controversies?

Readings: Joseph Story, *Commentaries on the Constitution* (1833) – on First Amendment (CP pg. 207)
Everson v. Board of Education (1947) (CP pg. 213)
Zorach v. Clauson (1952) (CP pg. 219)
Engel v. Vitale (1962) (CP pg. 225)
Edwards v. Aguillard (1987) (CP pg. 231)
Lee v. Weisman (1992) (Same Document as *Edwards v. Aguillard*)
Zelman v. Simmons-Harris (2002) (Same Document as *Edwards v. Aguillard*)

(background reading, not required: Wald, pp. 83-114)

2:00 - 3:30 pm: Session 14 Professor Carrese

Topic: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

Focus: What is King's view of the relationship between law, justice, and religion? What authorities does he cite – Christian and otherwise? Does he think his view differs from those of the Founders and Lincoln, or continues them? Could America have achieved full civil rights and equality for racial minorities without a role for religion in public life?

Reading: “Letter From Birmingham Jail” (1963) (CP pg. 249)
“I Have a Dream” Address (1963) (CP pg. 253)

Friday, July 6

9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 15 Professors Carrese and Tucker

Topic: Religion in Contemporary life and Politics

Focus: Do you see any similarities in the conception of God in Stevens' poetry and the arguments of Leslie Stephen (“Darwinism and Divinity”)? What does O'Connor's story tell us about religion in the United States? Does she present it as having any political consequences? Do you see any connections between “Revelation” and Lincoln's “Temperance” or “Lyceum” addresses? In what ways do Cuomo and Souder agree? In what ways do they disagree? Are there ways in which Joel Osteen is part of a tradition of American religion or does he represent something new? What role should religion have in American politics in the 21st century? Has religion become a partisan issue in politics, and thus largely divisive? If so, why?

Reading: Stevens, “Sunday Morning” (1915) (CP pg. 257)
Stevens, “Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour” (1951) (CP pg. 261)
O'Connor, “Revelation” (1964) (CP pg. 263)
Cuomo, “In the American Catholic Tradition of Realism” (2004) (CP pg. 275)
Souder, “A Conservative Christian's View on Public Life” (2004) (CP pg. 279)
Economist, “Jesus, CEO” (2005) (CP pg. 283)
Osteen, “What We Believe” (CP pg. 289)
Joel Osteen's Web site,
http://www.lakewood.cc/site/PageServer?pagename=abt_onlinestreaming
Wald, *Religion and Politics in the United States*, pgs. 115–199; 294–319
Pew Foundation recent polling data on religion and politics (to be distributed)

10:50 am - 12:20 am: Session 16 Professors Tucker and Carrese

Topic: Review Session

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm: Session 17 EXAM Professors Tucker and Carrese

The examination will consist of short essay questions drawn from the study guide questions distributed with the reading material.