

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN AMERICA

REL 504.002 | SPRING 2019

Dr. Michael J. Altman

maltman2@ua.edu

205-348-7223

Office: 205 Manly Hall

Office Hours: Monday 10-11am, Thurs. 1-2 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar explores the construction of “religion” and “politics” in American history from the colonial period to the 21st century.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will analyze major recent works in the field of American religious history
2. Students will investigate the relationship between religion and politics
3. Students will evaluate the work of their peers
4. Students will conduct research into the relationship between religion and politics.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Bonomi, Patricia. *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America*. Updated edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Johnson, Paul E. *A Shopkeeper's Millennium Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York 1815-1837*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.

Haselby, Sam. *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism*. Religion in America. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Sehat, David. *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Graber, Jennifer. *The Gods of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Curtis, Finbarr. *The Production of American Religious Freedom*. New York: NYU Press, 2016.

Wenger, Tisa. *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Johnson, Sylvester A. *African American Religions, 1500-2000: Colonialism, Democracy, and Freedom*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Griffith, R. Marie. *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics*. New York: Basic Books, 2017.

McGreevy, John T. *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2003.

Miller, Steven P. *The Age of Evangelicalism: America's Born-Again Years*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Gordon, Sarah Barringer. *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010.

Sullivan, Winnifred Fallers. *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

ASSIGNMENTS

Seminar Attendance and Participation

Come to class having completed the reading and prepared to engage class discussion.

Book Reviews

Each week students will turn in a roughly two page double-spaced typed review of the book for that week. These reviews consist of three parts:

1. **An abstract that summarizes the book without critical commentary.** What is the main argument(s) of the book. What is its thesis? What methods, sources, theoretical approaches does it use? Where does it fit within the fields of American religious history, American history, or religious studies? How is it structured?
2. **An evaluation of the book which assess its arguments, method, theory, and use of sources.** Is the argument convincing? Why or why not? What is the book's greatest strength(s)? What is the book's greatest weakness(es)?
3. **An application of the book to your work.** Even if the topic/period/subjects of the book are far afield from your own interests, how might this book help you do your own work? What can you take away from it? What questions did it raise for your work?

Article/Chapter Reports

Each student will choose 3 of the 9 “Report” readings from the schedule and present a summary of the article/chapter to the class. These oral presentations should contain the same basic information as the book review assignment as well as connecting the article/chapter to the book discussed that day, with the understanding that other students may not have read the article.

Term Paper

A rough draft of your term paper for the course is due on April 17. Each student will read the others’ papers and we will have a discussion/revision session on the papers the last day of class. More details on how we will review papers will come as we get closer to the end of the semester.

GRADE SCALE

- A** Satisfactory completion of all assignments
- B** Satisfactory completion of at least 80% of assignments
- C** Satisfactory completion of at least 60% of assignments
- D** Satisfactory completion of at least 50% of assignments
- F** Satisfactory completion of less than 50% of assignments

GROUND RULES**Attendance**

You are expected to attend class. This is graduate school. Unexcused absences and tardiness will affect your participation grade.

Late Work

I do not accept late work. I do give extensions in the case of extraordinary circumstances, but I expect that you will ask for the extension promptly.

Accommodations

Students with a documented physical and/or learning disability should contact the professor outside of class time as soon as possible to review documentation and discuss accommodations. Also, students should familiarize themselves with the Office of Disability Services at <http://www.ods.ua.edu>.

In Case of Emergency/Weather

UA's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its web site at www.ua.edu. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for further directions. In the event of an emergency, I will use Blackboard to provide additional course information.

Honor Code

Academic misconduct is a serious offense and is taken very seriously at UA and in the class. Suspected cases of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic misconduct

will be referred to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. You are bound by UA's [Honor Code](#) in this class.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**Jan 9**

Bivins, Jason C. "‘Only One Repertory’: American Religious Studies." *Religion* 42, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 395–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2012.681873>.

Tweed, Thomas A. "Expanding the Study of U.S. Religion: Reflections on the State of a Subfield." *Religion* 40, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 250–58.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.religion.2010.03.001>.

Schultz, Kevin M., and Paul Harvey. "Everywhere and Nowhere: Recent Trends in American Religious History and Historiography." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 1 (2010): 129–62.

Jan 16

Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America*

Report: Butler, Jon. "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretative Fiction." *The Journal of American History* 69, no. 2 (1982): 305–25.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1893821>.

Jan 23

Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York 1815-1837*.

Report: "Evangelicalism as a Democratic Movement," Nathan O. Hatch. in *Evangelicalism and Modern America*

Jan 30

Haselby, *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism*

Report: Modern, John Lardas. "Evangelical Secularism and the Measure of Leviathan." *Church History* 77, no. 4 (December 2008): 801–76.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640708001613>.

Feb 6

Sehat, *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Report: Tracy Fessenden. "The Nineteenth-Century Bible Wars and the Separation of Church and State." *Church History*, no. 4 (2005): 784.

Feb 13

Graber, *The Gods of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West*

Report: Lum, Kathryn Gin. "The Historyless Heathen and the Stagnating Pagan: History as Non-Native Category?" *Religion and American Culture* 28, no. 1 (2018): 52–91. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2018.28.1.52>.

Feb 20

Curtis, *The Production of American Religious Freedom*.

Report: McCrary, Charles. "Fortune Telling and American Religious Freedom." *Religion and American Culture* 28, no. 2: 269–306. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2018.28.2.269>.

Feb 27

Wenger, *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal*

Report: Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman. "Believing in Religious Freedom" in *Politics of Religious Freedom*

Mar 6

Johnson, *African American Religions, 1500-2000: Colonialism, Democracy, and Freedom*

Report: Martin, Lerone. "Bureau Clergyman: How the FBI Colluded with an African American Televangelist to Destroy Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." *Religion and American Culture* 28, no. 1 (2018): 1–51. <https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2018.28.1.1>.

SPRING BREAK**Mar 20**

Griffith, *Moral Combat: How Sex Divided American Christians and Fractured American Politics*

Report: Smith, Leslie E. "What's In A Name? Scholarship and the Pathology of Conservative Protestantism." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 20, no. 3 (September 2008): 191–211. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006808X317446>.

Mar 27

McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*

Apr 3

Miller, *The Age of Evangelicalism: America's Born-Again Years*

Apr 10

Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America*

Apr 17

Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*

Paper rough draft due

Apr 24 Paper Presentations

Final term papers due May 1