

Religious Pluralism and the American State

Meets in Kutz Hall 130 on Mondays, Wednesdays, 9:00–9:50 a.m.

Course website: <http://lincolnmullen.com/courses/uws/>

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Course description

Two of the most pressing questions about American religion and its public role are intertwined: how should religions relate to one another, and how should religions relate to the state? In this class you will take up these two questions through the historical analysis of texts about the interactions of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, and Native American religions with one another and with the federal and state governments. You will investigate how law has regulated the public sphere and the civil square in which religious interactions take place, but also how religious actors have driven those interactions. We will trace the history of American pluralism, from the fact of diversity in eighteenth century to the idea of pluralism in the twenty-first century. Because this is a writing seminar, you will write three essays: one expositing a document about a religious conflict, a second interacting with other historians' interpretations, and a third based on original research into religious conflict.

Learning goals

After taking this course, you will be able to

- write argumentative essays based on your reading in primary and secondary sources,

- explain the history of religious pluralism and religious liberty in the United States, and
- interpret primary sources as a historian and evaluate the interpretations of secondary works.

The intellectual work of the course

The intellectual work of this course is centered on understanding the problem of religious pluralism and religious liberty as it relates to the American state. You will engage that problem in two ways. First, you will *read* documents written by people throughout American history who worked through the questions of religious liberty and religious pluralism, and you will read the works of historians. Second, you will *write* three of your own interpretative essays grounded in your reading of primary and secondary sources:

1. a close-reading essay, a 5–6 page essay interpreting a historical text;
2. a lens essay, a 7–8 page essay applying and engaging with a historian’s argument about primary texts; and
3. a research essay, a 10 page essay based on your own research into primary and secondary texts.

You will also complete a number of other requirements, including a portfolio, three conferences with me, peer-review workshops, and practice writing assignments in-class or online (which will count towards your participation grade).

Evaluation

assignment	weight
close-reading essay	15%
lens essay	20%
research essay	30%
pre-draft assignments	15%
portfolio	5%
participation	15%

Texts

We will use the following books for class:

- Coursepack of primary readings (purchase in class) ‡
- Green, Steven. *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. ISBN: 0195399676. * †
- Hutchison, William R. *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0300105169. * †
- Parfitt, Matthew. *Writing in Response*. 1st ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. ISBN: 0312403933. *
- Sehat, David. *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN: 0195388763. * †
- Strunk, William, and John Austin Matzko. "William Strunk's *Elements of Style* for Students of History." 2008. ‡
- Williams, Joseph M., and Gregory G. Colomb. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 10th ed. Boston: Longman, 2010. ISBN: 0205747469. *

* Available for purchase in the bookstore, and elsewhere. † On reserve in the Goldfarb Library. ‡ On LATTE.

Course Calendar

Religious Pluralism and the American State

Unit 1: Close-reading essay

August 30 (Th) Minority religions and religious liberty

reading (in class): Touro Synagogue (Newport, Rhode Island) to George Washington, August 17, 1790; George Washington to Touro Synagogue, 1790 (CP 1)

September 3 (M) No class for Labor Day

September 5 (W) Introduction to university writing

reading: Hutchison, introduction, ch. 1

reading: Parfitt, introduction, ch. 1; Williams and Colomb, ch. 1

September 10 (M) Religious dissenters and religious liberty

reading: John Leland, *The Rights of Conscience Inalienable* (CP 2)

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 2

September 12 (W) Religious liberty in Virginia

reading: Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (CP 3); James Madison, "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments" (CP 4)

due: Annotating a text (1.1)

September 17 (M) No class for Rosh Hashanah

September 19 (W) Religious diversity in the early republic

reading: Hannah Adams, *A Dictionary of All Religions* (CP 5); John Adams, *Defense of the Constitutions of Government* (CP 6)

reading: Parfitt, ch. 2

due: Drafting a thesis (1.2)

September 20 (Th, Brandeis Monday) Religion in the state constitutions

reading: Religion clauses from state constitutions (CP 7)

reading: Green, ch. 1; Sehat, ch. 1

reading: Parfitt, ch. 4

September 24 (M) Religion in the federal constitution

reading: Religion clauses from federal constitutions (CP 8)

reading: Green, ch. 2; Sehat, ch. 2

due: First draft of close-reading essay, with cover letter (1.3)

September 26 (W) No class for Yom Kippur

October 1 (M) No class for Sukkot

October 3 (W) Ideas of pluralism

reading: Hutchison, ch. 2

reading: Parfitt, ch. 6

due: Peer-review letters (1.4)

October 8 (M) No class for Shemini Atzeret

October 9 (Tu, Brandeis Monday) The moral establishment

reading: Sehat, ch. 3; Hutchison, ch. 3; Green, ch. 3

due: Final draft of close-reading essay, with cover letter (1.5)

Unit 2: Lens essay**October 10 (W)** Corporations, benevolence, evangelism

reading: *The Occident* (CP 9, 10); Isaac Mayer Wise, *A Defense of Judaism* (CP 11)

reading: Green, ch. 4–5

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 3

October 15 (M) Blasphemy

reading: People v. Ruggles (CP 12)

reading: Green, ch. 6

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 4

due: Summarizing an argument (2.1)

October 17 (W) Slavery

reading: Robert L. Dabney, A Defence of Virginia (CP 13); Angelina Grimké, An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South (CP 14)

reading: Sehat, ch. 4

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 5

due: Outlining an argument (2.2)

October 22 (M) Catholics and public schools

reading: The Bible and Our School System (CP 15)

reading: Green, ch. 8–9

reading: Strunk and Matzko, pp. 2–20 (LATTE)

October 24 (W) Mormonism and polygamy

reading: Reynolds v. United States (LATTE)

reading: Sarah Barringer Gordon, The Mormon Question (CP 28).

due: First draft of lens essay, with cover letter (2.3)

October 29 (M) Vice

reading: Comstock Act (CP 16)

reading: Hutchison, ch. 4; Sehat, ch. 8

reading: Parfitt, ch. 7

due: Peer-review letters (2.4)

October 31 (W) Discussion with Yoni Appelbaum

reading: Yoni Appelbaum, "American Scripture: How David Barton Won the Christian Right" (CP 30); Yoni Appelbaum, "The Great Illusion of Gettysburg" (CP 31)

reading: Jonathan Sarna, "Christians and Non-Christians in the Marketplace of American Religion" (CP 27)

due: Final draft of lens essay, with cover letter (2.5)

Unit 3: Research essay

November 5 (M) World's Parliament of Religions

reading: William Wilkinson, "The Attitude of Christianity to Other Religions" (CP 17); Julia Ward Howe, "Possible Results of the Parliament" (CP 18)

reading: Hutchison, ch. 5; Green, ch. 7

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 6

November 7 (W) Creation and evolution

reading: Transcript of Scopes trial (CP 19)

reading: Hutchison, ch. 6–7

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 7

November 12 (M) FLIP Session (Vershbow Room, Goldfarb Library)

reading: Green, ch. 10–11; Sehat, ch. 9

due: Proposing a paper (3.1)

November 14 (W) Pacifism and civil religion

reading: *The Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses* (CP 20)

reading: Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law* (CP 29)

reading: Parfitt, ch. 9

November 19 (M) Public schools and the first amendment

reading: *Everson v. Board of Education* (LATTE)

reading: Sehat, ch. 11

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 8

November 21 (W) No class for Thanksgiving break

November 26 (M) Protestant-Catholic-Jew

reading: Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (CP 21); John F. Kennedy, "Address" (CP 22)

reading: Hutchison, ch. 8

reading: Strunk and Matzko, pp. 21–26 (LATTE)

due: Annotating a bibliography (3.2)

November 28 (W) Civil rights

reading: Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (CP 23)

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 9

due: Creating a source outline (3.3)

December 3 (M) Prayer and Bible-reading in school

reading: *Abington School District v. Schempp* (LATTE); *Engel v. Vitale* (LATTE)

due: First draft of research essay, with cover letter (3.4)

December 5 (W) The Christian right

reading: Billy Graham (CP 24, 25); Jerry Falwell, *Listen America!* (CP 26)

reading: Hutchison, ch. 9; Sehat, ch. 12

due: Peer-review letters (3.5)

December 10 (M) Drugs, zoning, the ministerial exception

reading: *Employment Division v. Smith* (LATTE); *Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church and School v. EEOC* (LATTE)

reading: Williams and Colomb, ch. 10

December 12 (W) Conclusion

reading: Sehat, conclusion

due: Final draft of research essay, with cover letter (3.6); portfolio with cover letter (4.1)

Course Policies

Religious Pluralism and the American State

Assignments

I may change due dates or assignments. I will always give you plenty of notice of changes, which will always be intended for your benefit. I will assign you some low-stakes writing assignments not listed on the syllabus, which will count towards your participation grade.

Students must satisfactorily complete all assignments (including participation assignments) in order to pass this course.

Academic integrity

You are expected to follow Brandeis University's policies on academic integrity <<http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai>>.

Course website and privacy

You will have to make an account on the course website for your online writing assignments. You may use either your real name or a *nom de plume* (which I will keep confidential). Since this is a first-year seminar, I encourage you to remain pseudonymous online. You retain the copyright to everything that you have written. Upon your request, I will remove any of your

public writing from the website one month after grades have been distributed by the registrar.

Handing in work

For each assignment, attach a cover sheet with your name, your e-mail address, the date, and the course name. This cover sheet does not count towards the required pages for each assignment. No identifying information, such as your name, should be on the main pages of the assignment. I ask for a cover sheet so that I can grade impartially: this is to your advantage. Staple all pages together.

You must turn in all assignments both in paper and electronically. You should hand in the paper copy of each assignment at the start of class. You should turn in the electronic copy to the LATTE drop box before the start of class. Please submit only PDFs. You should title your filename something like Lastname-Firstname.lens-essay.pdf.

Late work

I am willing to grant extensions for cause, but you must request an extension well in advance of the assignment's due date. For every day or

part of a day that an assignment is late, I will deduct one letter grade.

If you take advantage of the writing center, I will accept a writing center reward certificate for a one day extension.

Participation and attendance

Your attendance is expected every day without exception. We will be working closely in community, so I hope you will develop a good working relationship with everyone in the class. You should complete readings and assignments before class each day, and you are expected to actively participate by listening, questioning, and speaking.

If you must be absent, I request that you notify me by e-mail in advance of class meeting. Even if you are absent, you must turn in assignments before the time when our class meets.

You may miss up to three classes without penalty. After every subsequent absence, I am required to lower your overall grade for the course by a third of a letter grade. For example, an A would be reduced to an A-. Missing conferences counts as an absence. After you are absent six times, I am required to give you a grade of F for the course.

Communications

I am always glad to meet with you in person. You can make an appointment for office hours using the Google Calendar link on the course website. If none of those times fit your schedule, we can find another time that does. From time to time I may offer online office hours in the evening.

For all other communications I prefer e-mail <lmullen@brandeis.edu>. I will reply to your

messages within 24 hours (but never on a Sunday). I will send official course communications to your Brandeis e-mail address, which you should check regularly.

I will discuss grades only in person.

Electronic devices

On certain days, which I will announce in advance, you may use laptops or tablets in class. For all other days, please bring the course readings in paper copy, and please stow all electronic devices by the start of class. Cell phones are never permitted.

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please speak with me immediately.

Acknowledgments and license

This syllabus borrows ideas, assignments, wording, and texts from Josh Cracraft, Kevin Doyle, Tona Hangen, and John Matzko.

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