

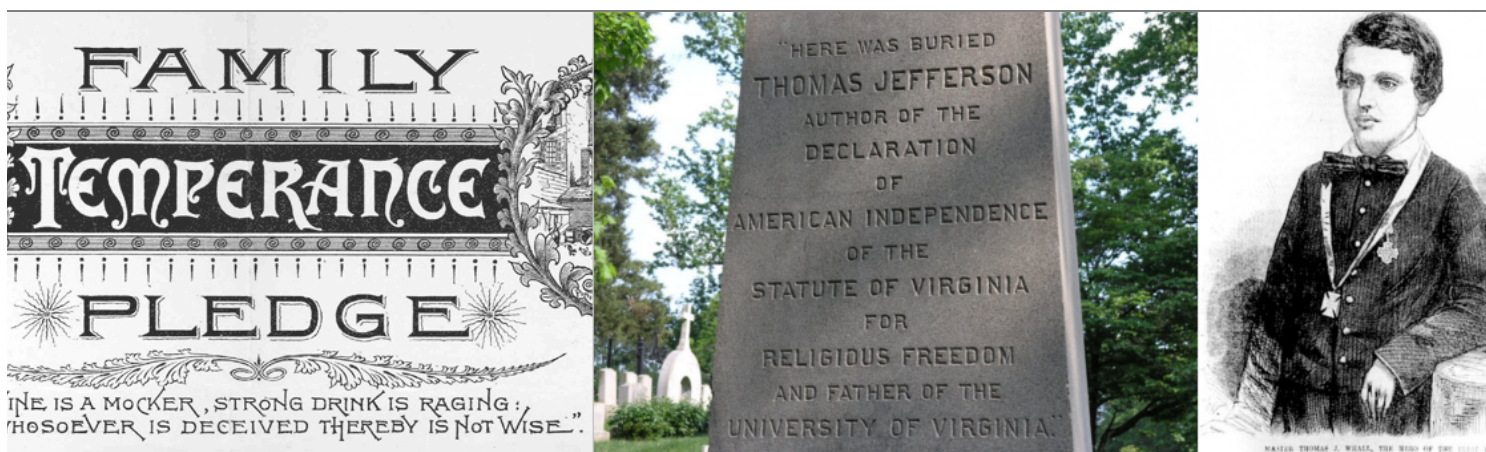
# Church and State in America

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## About

### 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 questions by studying 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 read primary and secondary sources about the American Revolution and disestablishment, moral reform, temperance, and abolition, polygamy the school system, pacifism, civil rights, and political movements, ranging from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth century.



*An anti-alcohol pledge from a moral reform society; Thomas Jefferson's gravestone mentioning the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom; Thomas Whall, a Catholic student who refused to recite a Protestant prayer at the Elliot School in Boston.*

## Learning goals

After taking this course, you will

- understand the recurring conflicts between religions and the state in the United States, and so reflect on what religious identity and practice means;
- be familiar with the main events of American religious history and be able to relate them to American political history;
- be able to read historical documents closely and connect them to the writings of historians.

## How to succeed at this course

This course will make two main demands on you. The first is to think about the big-picture relationship between law and religion in the United States. The first class will introduce you to the main grounds of interaction between religions and the state, then subsequent classes will introduce you to many details. Your job is to think through the connections from one class period to the next. The second job is to learn the skills of a historian: to pay close attention to sources from the past and to bring those sources into the conversation that historians are having about the past. The assignments in this course are designed as a sequence to help you learn these skills, and you will have a chance to do each of them more than once. Your best strategy for succeeding in this course is to do all the readings so that you can make connections between them, and to work on your written assignments as a sequence that will lead you to deeper historical understanding.

## Required texts

I suggest that you purchase the following books, available from the campus bookstore and doubtless elsewhere. Almost all of the remaining readings will be available in the university libraries.

- Gordon, Sarah Barringer. *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010. ISBN: [978-0-674-04654-2](https://doi.org/10.1017/9780674046542).
- Green, Steven K. *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution: The Clash that*

*Shaped Modern Church-State Doctrine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN: [978-0-19-982790-9](#).

- Noll, Mark A. *God and Race in American Politics: A Short History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008. ISBN: [978-0-691-14629-4](#).
- Sehat, David. *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. ISBN: [978-019-538876-3](#).

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## Church and State in America

### Course

[HIST 389-007](#) | Fall 2014  
Meets in Planetary Hall 224  
Meets on Mon. & Wed., 3:00–  
4:15 p.m.  
Credit hours: 3  
Prerequisites:

### Instructor

Instructor: [Lincoln Mullen](#)  
E-mail: [lmullen@gmu.edu](mailto:lmullen@gmu.edu)  
Office: Research Hall 457  
Office hours: Wed. 4:30--5:30  
p.m.; Thu. 2:00--4:00 p.m.; and  
by appointment. ([signup](#))

### Description

A history of the interactions  
between religions and the law  
from the American Revolution to  
the present.

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## Assignments

### Annotated primary sources

You will twice annotate primary sources. Your annotation will consist of a paragraph summing up the source's position, another paragraph giving it context, as well as marginal notes on the meaning of words and ideas. This will take at least two and no more than five pages. You will receive a handout with further instructions. Think of the first assignment as a low stakes chance to learn a skill to apply to all the readings in the course, and the second assignment as a chance to demonstrate mastery of a skill learned over the course of the semester.

### Secondary source comparison

After completing your annotated primary sources, you will write a very brief paper comparing several secondary sources while drawing on primary sources read in class. You must use at least one of the secondary sources assigned in class, and you must find at least two others on related topics. Your essay should compare the arguments of these various works, and reflect on which argument is best supported by the primary sources we have read. This assignment will take at least four and no more than seven pages. You will receive a handout with further instructions.

### Participation

Every class period will require your active participation. Participation will be

evaluated by your preparation for class through completing the readings, and by the amount and quality of your contributions to the class discussions.

## Exams

You will write two exams for this course, one at midterm and one at finals. Both will require essays, but you will have a choice of the essays questions to be answered.

## Evaluation

The assignments for this course will receive these weights.

<b>assignment</b>	<b>weight</b>
annotated primary source 1	5%
annotated primary source 2	15%
secondary source comparison	20%
midterm exam	15%
final exam	25%
participation	20%

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## Policies

### Dates for Dropping and Adding

Please note these dates from the [academic calendar](#) for dropping and adding this course:

- Last Day to Add: September 2, 2014
- Last Day to Drop: September 26, 2014
- Selective Withdrawal Period: September 29 - October 17, 2014  
(undergraduates only)

### Assignments

**N.B.** Please plan on doing all the readings, working through all exercises, completing any assignments, and installing necessary software before the start of each class.

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

### Attendance

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. After the first two absences from class, the relevant portion of your grade for the class will be lowered for each absence.

## Communications

I am always glad to meet with you in person. You can make an appointment for office hours by [signing up here](#) or [e-mailing me](#). If none of my scheduled office hours work for you, we can find another time that does. From time to time I may offer online office hours. For all other communications I prefer e-mail. I will reply to your messages within 24 hours (but never on a Sunday). I will send official course communications to your George Mason e-mail address, which you should check regularly. I will discuss grades only in person.

## Privacy

You may be required to make some of your work publicly available. If you wish, you may do so under an assumed name or user name to keep your identity private from the public, though I and the other students in the course will have access to your work.

## Late work

I am willing to grant extensions for cause, but you must request an extension before the assignment's due date. For every day or part of a day that an assignment is late without an extension, I may reduce your grade by a step, e.g., from A to A-, from A- to B+, and so on. No work (other than final exams) will be accepted later than the last day that the class meets unless I have agreed otherwise.

## Accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703-993-2474 or

<http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

## General policies

See the [George Mason University catalog](#) for general policies, as well as the university [statement on diversity](#). You are expected to know and follow George Mason's policies on [academic integrity](#) and the [honor code](#). Please ask me if you have any questions about how these policies apply to work in this course.

## License

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