***California State University Northridge***

***RS 255: American Political Institutions and Religion***

***Spring 2016***

***Instructor:*** Mary Jane O'Donnell, Ph.D.

***Ticket Number:*** 13805

***Course Day/Time:*** Fridays from 8:00 to 10:45 a.m.

***Classroom:*** SH 384

***Office Hours:*** M-W: 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon

***Office:*** Santa Susana Hall 419

***Telephone:*** 818-677-6875 (Office hours only)

## *Email:* mjod@csun.edu

***Course Description:*** This course will examine the development of the political ideals, institutions, and processes of the United States and California. It will focus on the religious elements within political ideals, religious freedom, the relation between religion and state, and the role of religion in the public forum, including both politics and public education.

*This course satisfies the Title V United States Constitution requirement and the California State and Local Government requirement. Students will understand and reflect upon United States history, institutions, and ideals; the Constitution of the United States; and the principles of state and local government as established in California.*

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| ***Student Learning Objectives*** | |
| ***Title V*** | ***Religious Studies 255*** |
| Describe and analyze the histories of the United States and California over significant time periods; | Understand the development of United States and California political ideals, institutions, and processes. |
| Explain the principles and major provisions of the Constitutions of the United States and California; | Understand citizens’ rights and obligations established by the United States and California constitutions. |
| Compare United States and California political institutions and practices | Understand the structures and processes of federal, California, and local governments. |
| Describe and examine the histories and the  development of political institutions as related to diverse peoples in the United States and California. | Understand federal and state constitutional guarantees of religious freedom and the history of legislative and judicial efforts to apply the principle of religious freedom. |
|  | Understand the role of religion in public life in the United States, California, and local municipalities, including its role in both political debate and public and private education. |

***Required Texts:***

* Michael Corbett, Julia Corbett-Hemeyer and J. Matthew Wilson, *Politics and Religion in the United States*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2014).
* Selected readings online.

***Instructor’s Office Hours:*** My office hours and my office address are posted above. I look forward to working with each of you in class and on an individual basis. Therefore, I urge you to take advantage of my office hours. I am happy to discuss any aspect of this course with you, and help you with the assignments. I especially urge you to contact me if you are confused about the course or an assignment. Really successful students ask questions!

***Course Assignments:***

* Students will carefully read the designated selection of texts for each class;
* Students will attend and fully participate in class, which will comprise 10% of your grade;
* There will be 13 short quizzes, which when all quiz grades are averaged, will comprise 40% of your grade;
* Students will participate in group work and presentations, which will comprise 10% of your grade;
* There will be a midterm and final exam, which will comprise 40% (20% each) of your grade.

***Course Requirements:***

* ***Attendance:*** Students are required to attend each class. If a student has more than one unexcused absence, the final grade will be lowered by 10%. If a student has more than four excused absences, I will help the student determine whether or not it is possible to withdraw from the class, otherwise the student will fail the class.
* ***Reading:*** Students will read assigned material for each class. All assignments must be read ***BEFORE*** class. The reading selections are listed in the Course Schedule;
* ***Quizzes:*** There will be thirteen (13) quizzes, SO YOU MUST BRING A SMALL SCANTRON FOR EACH. (If you do not have a Scantron, you will not be allowed to take the quiz);
* ***Missed Quiz:*** If you miss a quiz, you may write a five-page paper analyzing the key concepts in the week’s material and give specific examples that reflect your knowledge of the ideas being discussed. However, you may make up only one (1) quiz in this manner. If you miss more quizzes you will receive a 0 for the missed quiz.
* ***Class Preparation:*** You must be fully prepared for each class. All assignments must be read prior to the class they are assigned, and all readings must be brought to class.
* ***Participation:*** You must fully participate in the class by asking/answering questions, fully participate in discussions, and fully engage in any other activity of the class.
* ***Personal Needs:*** Please make sure you attend to your personal needs before or after the class. You may not leave during class.
* ***Technology:*** No cell phones, texting, or Internet use during class. You may use a laptop or tablet only if you are using it for classwork.
* ***Academic Dishonesty:*** Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade.

***Technological Information:***

* This course will employ Moodle. You are responsible for learning how to use this format.

***Grading: Plus-Minus System will be used***

* Class Attendance: 10%
* Quizzes: 40%
* Mid-Term and Final Exams: 40%
* Group Work/Presentations 10%

***Letter Grades:***

* 94-100 A
* 90-94 A-
* 87-89 B+
* 83-86 B
* 80-82 B-
* 77-79 C+
* 73-76 C
* 70-72 C-
* 60-69 D

***Course Schedule:***

## *Week 1: January 29*

* ***Topic:*** Introduction
* ***Read:*** “What are the Limits of Religious Liberty?” by Emily Bazelon (on Moodle)
* ***Quiz #1***

## *Week 2: February 5*

## *Topics:* Politics and Religion, an Overview.

## *Read:* Corbett, et al: 1-20

* ***Quiz #2***

***Week 3: February 12***

***Topics:*** Religion and Politics in the Colonial Era

***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 23-39

***Quiz # 3***

***Week 4: February 19***

* ***Topics*:** Religion and the Revolution
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al:39-58
* ***Quiz #4***

***Week 5: February 26***

* ***Topics:*** Religion andthe Constitution and Bill of Rights
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 58-63
* ***Quiz #5***

***Week 6: March 4***

* ***Topic:*** Religion and the American Civil War
* ***Read:*** “Religion in the Civil War: The Northern Perspective by James Howell Moorhead and “Religion in the Civil War: The Southern Perspective” by Harry S. Stout (online)
* ***Quiz* # *6***

***Week 7: March 11***

* ***Topic:*** Religion’s role in the Civil Rights Movement.
* ***Read:*** Lambert, Civil Rights as a Religious Movement: Politics in the Street, 160-183 (online)

***Quiz #7***

***Week 8: March 18***

* *Mid-Term Exam*

***Week 9: March 25***

* ***Spring Break: No Class***

***Week 10: April 1***

* ***Topic:*** Modernism versus Fundamentalism: Political and Legal Implications
* ***Read:*** Lambert, Faith and Science: The Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy, 104-129 (online)
* ***Quiz #8***

***Week 11: April 8***

* ***Topics:*** The Emergence of the Religious Right: Envisioning the United States as a “Christian Nation”
* ***Read:*** Lambert, The Rise of the Religious Right, 184-217 (online)
* ***Quiz #9***

***Week 12: April 15***

## *Topics:* The Establishment Clause

* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 123-147
* ***Quiz #10***

***Week 13: April 22***

* ***Topics:*** The Free Exercise Clause
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 148-177
* ***Quiz #11***

***Week 14: April 29***

* ***Topics:*** The California Constitution
* ***Read:*** Selected readings, which may be downloaded from the Moodle site
* ***Quiz #12***

***Week 15: May 6***

* ***Topics:*** Religion and Public Life
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 304-336

## *Quiz #13*

***Week 16: May 13***

* ***Final Exam: May 20, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m., Sierra Hall 384***

***Important to note:*** This syllabus is subject to change. I will make every effort to notify you in advance about any changes.

***DRES:*** If you have a disability and need accommodations, please register with the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, room 110 and can be reached at 818-677-2684. NCOD is located on Bertrand Street in Jeanne Chisholm Hall and can be reached at 818-677-2611. If you would like to discuss your need for accommodations with me, please contact me to set up an appointment.