***California State University Northridge***

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

***Spring 2017***

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

***Ticket Number:*** 14504

***Course Day/Time:*** Online Only

***Office Hours:*** F: 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

***Online Offices Hours:*** Th: 8:00-9:00 am

***Office:*** Santa Susana Hall 229

***Telephone:*** 818-677-3940 (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 thedevelopment 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:***

* ***Weekly Preparation:*** Students will carefully read/watch the designated selection of texts, videos and recordings for each class;
* ***Weekly Quizzes:*** There will be weekly quizzes that will cover all of the assigned material (texts, videos, etc.) for the week. Specific information about the quizzes will be on Moodle. *40% of your grade;*
* ***Three Essays:*** You will write three essays for this course about various aspects of the material. *30% of your grade*;
* ***Weekly Discussion:*** Students will discuss key concepts in the week’s material with one another. Instructions on Moodle***.*** *10% of your grade****.***
* ***Religion/Politics in the News:*** You will post and explain six articles you have found that involve religion and politics in the news. *10% of your grade.*
* ***One Final Reflective Essay:*** You will write a final essay that reflects your understanding of the key concepts of the course. *10% of your grade.*

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***Academic Dishonesty***

* Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade. I urge you to carefully read CSUN’s policy regarding academic dishonesty: <http://catalog.csun.edu/policies/academic-dishonesty/>

***Technological Information:***

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

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

* + - ***Weekly Quizzes:*** 40%
		- ***Three Essays:*** 30%
		- ***Weekly Discussions:*** 10%
		- ***Religion/Politics in the News:*** *10%*
		- ***Final Reflective Essay:*** *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 23-29*

## *Topic:* Introduction

* ***Read:*** “Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?” (On Moodle)
* ***Read:*** Summary of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life/U.S. Religious Landscape Survey and Table on Religious Affiliations in America (On Moodle)
* ***Watch:*** “America’s New Religious Landscape”
* ***Examine:*** Interactive database tool (On Moodle)
* ***Discussion***

***Week 2: January 30-February 5***

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

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

* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post first essay anytime until Sunday, February 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)

## *Quiz #1*

***Week 3: February 6-12***

* ***Topics:*** Religion and Politics in the Colonial Era
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 23-39
* ***Read:*** “America as a Religious Refuge” (on Moodle)
* ***Watch:*** “A New Adam”
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post first essay anytime until Sunday, February 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz # 2***

***Week 4: February 13-19***

* ***Topics*:** Religion and the Revolution
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al:39-58
* ***Read:*** “Religion and the Revolution” (on Moodle)
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post first essay anytime until Sunday, February 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #3***
	+ ***First Essay Due, Sunday, Feb. 19 at 11 p.m.***

***Week 5: February 20-26***

* ***Topics:*** Religion and the Constitution/Bill of Rights
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 58-63; Religion and the Constitution, etc.
* ***Read:*** “Beyond Tolerance” and “Jefferson’s Statute,” Wills, 175-202
* ***Watch:*** “A New Eden”
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post second essay anytime until Sunday, March 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #4***

***Week 6: February 27-March 5***

* **Topic:** The First Amendment
* **Read:** “Madison’s Remonstrance” and “First Amendment,” Wills, 203-235
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post second essay anytime until Sunday, March 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #5***

***Week 7: March 6-12***

* ***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)
* ***Watch:*** “A Nation Reborn”
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post second essay anytime until Sunday, March 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz* # *6***

***Week 8: March 13-19***

* ***Topic:*** Religion’s role in the Civil Rights Movement.
* ***Read:*** Lambert, Civil Rights as a Religious Movement: Politics in the Street, 160-183 (online)
* ***Watch:* “**Soul of a Nation”
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post second essay anytime until Sunday, March 19 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #7***
	+ ***Second Essay Due, Sunday, March 19 at 11:00 p.m.***

***Week 9: March 20-26***

* ***Spring Break***

***Week 10: March 27-April 2***

* ***Topic:*** Modernism versus Fundamentalism: Political and Legal Implications
* ***Read:*** Lambert, Faith and Science: The Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy, 104-129 (online)
* ***Watch:*** “A New Light”
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post third essay anytime until Sunday, April 23 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #8***

***Week 11: April 3-9***

* ***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)
* ***Watch:*** “Of God and Caesar”
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post third essay anytime until Sunday, April 23 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #9***

***Week 12: April 10-16***

## *Topics:* The Establishment Clause

* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 123-147
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post third essay anytime until Sunday, April 23 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #10***

***Week 13: April 17-23***

* ***Topics:*** The Free Exercise Clause
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 148-177
* ***Read:*** “What are the Limits of Religious Liberty?” by Emily Bazelon and “Can States Protect LGBT Rights Without Compromising Religious Freedom?” by Emma Green (on Moodle)
* ***Discussion***
* ***Essay:*** Post third essay anytime until Sunday, April 23 at 11:00 p.m.
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #11***
	+ ***Third Essay Due, Sunday, April 23 at 11:00 p.m.***

***Week 14: April 24-30***

* ***Topics:*** The California Constitution
* ***Read:*** Selected readings, which may be downloaded from the Moodle site
* ***Discussion***
* ***Post Religion/Politics in the News article*** (Must do six such postings anytime during the course, but only one post a week.)
* ***Quiz #12***

***Week 15: May 1-7***

* ***Prepare final essay.***

***Week 16: May 8-12***

* ***Submit final essay.***

***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.