***California State University Northridge***

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

***Fall 2016***

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

***Ticket Number:*** 14866

***Course Day/Time:*** Completely Online

***Online Office Hour:*** Thursday: 8:00-9:00 a.m.

***Office Hours:*** F: 7:00-8:00 a.m. and 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.

***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:*** ***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. I will also be available by phone on Thursdays from 8 to 9 am via phone. You will be given a number on the Moodle site to call. 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:***

* All reading assignments must be read as early as possible in the week they are assigned in order to allow for more sophisticated in-depth understanding of the material;
* You will write four (4) 500-word essays on your choice of the eleven weeks of assignments. (The first week will not be included.) However, three (3) of these must be concluded before the mid-term with the remaining one (1) after the mid-term. This assignment will comprise 40% of your grade. Further instructions are on Moodle. If you miss doing any of the first three essays *prior* to the mid-term you will not be allowed to do them after.
* We will have a discussion site in which you will post one (1) 250-word mini-essay each week. This essay should convey what you think are the most important concepts in the week’s assignments. You will post your comments on the discussion site on Moodle. If you have chosen a week in which to do one of your 500-word essays, you may also use that essay for this assignment.
* You will have eleven (11) quizzes on the week’s reading/viewing assignments. The ten highest grades will be included in your final grade, which will comprise 25% of your grade.
* You will have a mid-term and final exam, which will comprise 25% of your grade.
* All papers must be written according to basic scholarly standards appropriate for university level work. Not only does this include proper citation as well as grammar, punctuation, and syntax, but also serious reflection on your topic. There are many sources to help you with your writing assignments. The most important is the Writing Program at CSUN’s Learning Resource Center, which is on the 3rd floor/East Wing of the Oviatt Library. For more information, go to: <http://www.csun.edu/undergraduate-studies/learning-resource-center/writing-center-and-freshman-writing-lab>
* All assignments must be turned in on the date listed. Unless students present a written and documented reason why a paper is late or will be late, which is accepted by the instructor, the grade will be deducted one letter grade per day.
* Any evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade, certainly for the item plagiarized, but also *quite* *likely* for the course. Moreover, you many not turn in a paper, whether whole or in part, that you previously wrote and submitted to another class, whether at CSUN or elsewhere. If you wish to build upon previous work you have done, please contact me prior to incorporating it into your assignment.

***Technological Information:***

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

Instructions may be found at: <http://www.csun.edu/it/student-moodle-help/>

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

* Quizzes: 50%
* Mid-Term and Final Exams: 25% each

***Letter Grades:***

* 95-100 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: August 29-September 4*

* ***Topic:*** Introduction
* ***Read:*** “What Happened to Religion in America? The I’s Have It” by Jim Hinch (on Moodle)
* ***Read:*** “America’s Religious Landscape” (on Moodle)
* ***Watch:*** Documentary on Moodle
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

## *Week 2: September 5-11*

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

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

* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 3: September 12-18***

* ***Topics:*** Religion and Politics in the Colonial Era
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 23-39
* ***Read:*** “America as a Religious Refuge” (on Moodle)
* ***Watch:*** Documentary on Moodle
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 4: September 19-25***

* ***Topics*:** Religion and the Revolution
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al:39-58
* ***Read:*** “Religion and the Revolution” (on Moodle)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 5: September 26-October 2***

* ***Topics:*** Religion, the Constitution and Bill of Rights
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 58-63 and Religion and the Constitution, etc. (online on Moodle)
* ***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)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 6: October 3-9***

* ***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);
* ***Read:*** Lambert, 67-73
* ***Watch:*** Documentary (online on Moodle)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 7: October 10-16***

* ***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:*** Documentary (online on Moodle)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 8: October 17-23***

* ***Topic:*** Modernism versus Fundamentalism: Political and Legal Implications
* ***Read:*** Lambert, Faith and Science: The Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy, 104-129 (online)
* ***Watch:*** Documentary (on Moodle)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 9: October 24-30***

* ***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:*** Documentary (on Moodle)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 10: October 31-November 6***

* Mid-Term

***Week 11: November 7-13***

## *Topics:* The Establishment Clause

* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 123-147
* ***Watch:*** Documentary (on Moodle)
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 12: November 14-20***

* ***Topics:*** The Free Exercise Clause
* ***Read:*** Corbett, et al: 148-177
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 13: November 21-27***

* ***Thanksgiving Break: No Class***

***Week 14: November 28-December 4***

* ***Topics:*** The California Constitution
* ***Read:*** Selected readings, which may be downloaded from the Moodle site
* ***Post:*** One 250-word mini-essay about the week’s material

***Week 15: December 5-9***

* ***Prepare Final Exam***

***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.