

# POLITICS & RELIGION

---

## PSC 4370

TR 9:30-10:45, Draper 329  
Spring 2013

### Andrew P. Hogue, PhD

Office: Draper 340

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-2:30, or gladly by appointment

“No, no, we are not satisfied and will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

“It is one thing to say with the prophet Amos [and Dr. King], ‘Let justice roll down like mighty waters,’ and quite another to work out the irrigation system.”

--William Sloane Coffin

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course on the intersection of religion and politics in the United States. As we’ll quickly discover, this is a rich venue for study, posing a number of important questions for us as citizens, persons of faith (or not), and human beings in a diverse world. This semester we will consider some of the ways faith and politics have interacted throughout American history and ask questions about how they *should* intersect. We will examine a broad, critical overview of the relationship, and some of the tensions, between politics and religion in our history. We’ll ask questions such as:

- Is the US a Christian nation, a secular nation, or something else entirely? Or is this heuristic even useful?
- Should citizens’ religious identities be treated like any other aspect of identity when it comes to political discourse?
- Should political actors be public or private about their religiosity?
- When has religion promoted, or prevented, bigotry, conflict, and violence?
- What exactly do we mean by “separation of church and state”?
- How have Americans dealt with complex religious diversity?
- Why do people of similar faiths so often reach such different political conclusions?

The course will operate in a seminar style, requiring active participation from each student both inside and outside the classroom.

But take note: this is not just a class about history and theory. It is also a class about *action* and *reflection*. As part of the course we’ll be working together—“digging the irrigation system,” to use Coffin’s turn of phrase—with the Texas Hunger Initiative (THI). THI is a project housed here at Baylor that develops and implements strategies to end hunger in Texas through collaboration among various government, non-profit, for-profit, and religious entities. They have invited us to join them in their work as we think about ways that people of a variety of religious and political persuasions might aim collaboratively toward the same common good.

## OBJECTIVES

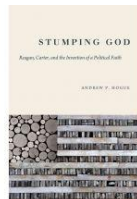
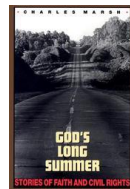
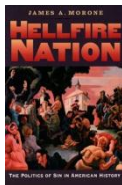
In this course students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn the major themes in the history of American politics and religion, from the Puritans to today.
- Interpret events and ideas throughout American history as they relate to the intersection of politics and religion.
- Explore some of the major theoretical frameworks for understanding religion and American politics.
- Think about how religion affects politics and how politics affects religion.
- Consider how race has confounded the dynamic between politics and religion in America.
- Interrogate their own preexisting assumptions about the relationship between politics and religion and consider how their own religious beliefs might influence civic engagement.
- Hone their critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and argumentation skills.
- Learn to talk constructively about difficult and personal issues in a diverse context.
- Do work that serves others and helps to imagine new ways for politics and religion to interact.

## FAIR WARNING

Just so you're aware from the outset, this is a heavily reading intensive course geared toward upper-division students. It will be a lot of work, and your performance will depend largely on your ability to keep up with and engage the readings. Your grade will suffer if you don't. Also, part of your course assignment will include work done outside class with the Texas Hunger Initiative. Please be realistic about whether you have the time to put into the course and, if you aren't sure, consider taking it another semester when you have time. No hard feelings from me.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS



James A. Morone, *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).

Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Andrew P. Hogue, *Stumping God: Reagan, Carter, and the Invention of a Political Faith* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012).

Robert Booth Fowler, Alan D. Hertzke, Laura R. Olson, and Kevin R. Den Dulk, *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2010).

J. Matthew Wilson, Ed., *From Pews to Polling Places: Faith and Politics in the American Religious Mosaic* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2007).

## RELIGION & POLITICS NEWS SOURCES

On a daily basis we should be keeping up with regular political news, but we will also engage in regular discussion of current issues at the nexus of religion and politics. We should all read widely on the subject, and I have created a Facebook group for sharing articles and opinion pieces with one another. I anticipate that many of these sources are new to you, so it might take a little while for you to find your favorites. Explore and have fun, and by no means are you limited to these sources. These are just some suggestions for sources that I like. You are not limited to posting “new” stories if you find archived things that are pertinent to our course.

- *Religion Dispatches*: A daily online magazine (available for daily email subscription) that deals extensively in politics ([www.religiondispatches.org](http://www.religiondispatches.org))
- Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life: A project of the Pew Research Center designed to give information and thoughtful analysis on religion in America (<http://www.pewforum.org/>)
- Religionandpolitics.org: A news & commentary project of the John Danforth Center on Religion & Politics at Washington University in St. Louis ([www.religionandpolitics.org](http://www.religionandpolitics.org))
- Religion & Ethics Newsweekly: PBS show and website devoted to religion and world events (<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/>)
- Patheos (News & Politics section): A website devoted to commentary on matters of faith (<http://www.patheos.com/News-and-Politics.html>)
- *The Washington Post's* On Faith: News and commentary on religion and public life from *The Washington Post* (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith>)
- CNN Belief Blog: News and commentary on religion and public life from CNN (<http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/>)
- The Immanent Frame: A scholarly blog and exchange on religion, secularism, and the public sphere (<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/>)
- Religion and American History Blog: A group blog on American religious history and culture (<http://usreligion.blogspot.com/>)
- Rhetoric, Race, & Religion Blog: A group blog that deals primarily in race, religion, and public affairs (<http://rhetoricraceandreligion.blogspot.com/>)

Certainly there are many other good sources, but these are just a few fairly “mainstream” ones that I often read. Please don’t feel like you have to agree with an article or blog to post it—in fact, if you don’t agree, all the better: tell us why.

## COURSE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. **Attendance:** Pursuant to the policies of the College of Arts & Sciences, a student must attend at least 75% of all scheduled class meetings to earn course credit. Any student who does not meet this minimum standard will automatically receive a grade of “F” in the course. Any University-related activity necessitating an absence from class shall count as an absence when determining whether a student has attended the required 75% of class meetings. Please hear me say above all that you simply shouldn’t miss class. Your grade is tied to your active engagement and participation with the material and your fellow students, so if you want to do well in the course, come to class every day. You are also advised to let me know in advance if you plan to miss.
2. **Adherence to the Baylor University Honor Code.** A copy of the Baylor University Honor Code is available online, and students are expected to adhere to it and to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity. Talk with me if you are confused about citation practices or other research standards. Make sure you understand not only what counts as plagiarism and cheating, but also how to avoid engaging in these practices. If you violate the Honor Code, be aware that your violation will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and become part of your student record. Understand

that penalties resulting from dishonest conduct can range from failure of the assignment to immediate expulsion from the university. I reserve the right to give you an “F” in the course for *any act* in violation of the University Honor Code.

3. **Learning Accommodations:** Any student with a documented disability needing classroom accommodations should contact the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. The student is responsible for obtaining appropriate documentation and information regarding needed accommodations from the Baylor University Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA) and providing it to the professor early in the semester. The OALA phone number is (254) 710.3605, and the office is in the Paul L. Foster Success Center, Sid Richardson Room 190.
4. **Technology in the Classroom:** Technology can be an amazing tool and a terrible curse. I’m a big believer of harnessing its many advantages in service of our learning and collective engagement—hence the use of a Facebook group to keep us in communication outside the classroom. Likewise, there will be many instances during the semester where we will develop collective curiosity about something tangential to our classroom discussion. We’ll certainly use smartphones, iPads, or laptops to look up that information. But as you’re all aware, technology can be excessive and distracting. So, as a general rule, when we convene in the classroom we’ll do so with that stuff put away (but handy for access). We are a collaborative and humanely engaged learning community, which requires us to look at and listen to each other.
5. **Decorum:** I expect you to come to class well prepared to engage in the multi-directional learning/teaching process. Please question and, at times, disagree with your peers, the reading, or me regarding thoughts and feelings on particular issues. But when you disagree with material presented, do so respectfully and with an aim to facilitating, rather than impeding, the learning of others. We will raise many provocative and/or emotional issues. Please respect that we all come from different perspectives and have different experiences, and for many of us, issues at the nexus of religion and politics involve deeply held beliefs. We must *listen* well. We must be polite. If you are disrespectful or dismissive of anyone, I reserve the right to remove you from class. Take note also that if you tend to dominate class discussions and have a lot to say, you should hold back sometimes so that others have a chance to jump in. Likewise, if you tend to be quiet, push yourself to engage more actively than is comfortable. This is all good for intellectual and personal growth.

## ASSIGNMENTS

### **READING JOURNAL (50 POINTS):**

Each class day during the semester you are to arrive in class with a one-page critical summary of the day’s reading. The write-up can be single- or double-spaced, but it must be a full page without exceeding a **single piece of paper** (Print front-and-back but don’t go over one piece of paper for each summary. You should use a standard 11- or 12-point font and standard one-inch margins, and don’t put extraneous information on the page; just put a single line at the top of the page that tells the author and title of the article/chapter, along with your name.) These write-ups should focus on presenting and clearly explaining the **main idea(s)** or the **main argument(s)** of the reading(s). They should also make clear how the author goes about advancing his or her argument(s). Don’t pad these summaries with minutiae or trivial information; get straight to the point with a clear, full, and accurate summary of the reading. At the end of your write-up you should include **three comments or questions** related to the reading for the class to discuss. These questions should be thoughtful; I’ll call on various ones of you to provide us with these prompts during class. The write-ups will help you prepare for class discussion and will also keep you writing on a regular basis. Each write-up will be worth 2 points, graded on the following scale: 0=Little or no effort evident; 1=Evidence that there were misunderstandings, a lack of effort, or incomplete work; 2=Fully completed, accurate, and thoughtful work. There are 28 days of reading for the semester. I’ll give you a “pass” three times. This

means you will turn in 25 entries, worth up to two points apiece (if you would like to take only two passes and turn in 26 write-ups, I'll give you those two points as extra credit).

### **THI WORK (50 POINTS):**

During the semester you will work with the Texas Hunger Initiative on a pretty important job, literally preventing Texas kids from going hungry this summer. THI, housed in the Baylor School of Social Work is a capacity-building and collaborative project that develops and implements strategies to end hunger through policy, education, community organizing, and community development. More than 1.8 million children in Texas are food insecure, which means that at some point, they don't know where their next meal will come from. During the school year, many of these children receive lunch at a free and/or reduced price each day. However, in the summertime, many of these same children do not participate in the Summer Meals program, which provides free meals to any child under the age of 18 during the summer when school is not in session. As a result, many of these students go hungry during the summer months. Over the course of the semester we will work as research and outreach partners with THI staff to enhance their Summer Meals participation. We will gather information and feedback from local organizations around the state to aid THI staff in assuring that more children have access to healthy meals this summer. Later in the semester we will also go to Austin to talk with legislators about their support for legislation that will protect kids who are food insecure. In the first few weeks of class we will meet regularly with THI staff to learn about their work and the work they need us to do with them.

### **THI PAPER (20 POINTS):**

There are several reasons for having you do work with THI as part of this course. In part, I want to give you real experience making change. In part, I want to give you job experience in public affairs. In part, I want you to think about and learn how to use your education and your opportunities for the good of others. But in part, too, I want you to think critically and imagine new ways, in our fractured society, for people of different religious and political persuasions to work toward a common good. These, and any other important things you learn and experience, are to be the subject of a 5-7-page reflection paper due **April 30**. In the paper, you should spend about one page describing your duties. The remainder of the paper should be a reflection about what you learned working for THI and how that learning has affected you. Use the above statements as prompts (the ones that start "in part..."), but don't feel limited by those. Make sure you connect, to the extent possible, your THI work with what we did in the classroom and reading this semester.

### **TWO-PART REFLECTION PAPER (20 POINTS):**

On **January 22** you will turn in a paper about your own views on religion and politics. In 3-4 pages you should do a few things: describe your beliefs and experiences related to religion; describe your beliefs and experiences related to politics; how are these similar to or different from your parents'; reflect on how your religious views have influenced your political views; reflect on how your politics (or American political culture more generally) have influenced your religious beliefs or practices. This shouldn't read like a statement of doctrine. Instead, it should be personal. Even if you give a lot of "I don't really know" kinds of answers, that's okay; I mainly want you to be honest and thoughtful. The paper you turn in on **January 22** is worth five points.

Then, at the time of your choosing **between April 23-May 13**, you will turn in a second version of this paper, this time 5-7 pages in length and worth 15 points. I want you to answer the same basic questions, and it's okay if some of your answers are the same. But in addition to these basic questions, I want you to incorporate class material, class discussions, and class assignments as you reflect on the ways in which your thinking has evolved over the course of the semester. Since this paper is longer, worth more, and you're given longer to complete it, your work should reflect that. I don't want you to just sit down and hammer something out; this should be the result of some deep and sustained reflection. Your grade will depend on the extent to which that appears to be the case.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION (25 POINTS):**

This is a seminar class, which means we are all collectively responsible for one another's learning. Classes at the 4000-level rely less on a one-way transfer of information and more on an exchange of ideas and collective deliberation about a subject. Your informed participation is absolutely vital to the success of this course. It's also essential for your own learning and your peers' learning. If you don't participate, you have short-changed your classmates, and your grade will suffer. So, for this to work, you can't just join us physically. I expect you to come to class and to engage with both the subject matter and your peers every day. Keep in mind as well that your participation is essential outside the classroom, too. Factored into this participation grade is your participation in the Facebook group. This means posting articles for your classmates and entering into discussions with them, too. I will use the following rubric as a guide for assessing your participation:

<b>A+</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Actively supports, engages, and listens to peers (ongoing)</b>	<b>Actively supports, engages and listens to peers (ongoing)</b>	<b>Makes a sincere effort to interact with peers (ongoing)</b>	<b>Limited interaction with peers</b>	<b>Virtually no interaction with peers</b>	<b>No interaction with peers</b>
<b>Arrives fully prepared at every session</b>	<b>Arrives fully prepared at almost every session</b>	<b>Arrives mostly, if not fully, prepared (ongoing)</b>	<b>Preparation, and therefore level of participation, are both inconsistent</b>	<b>Rarely prepared</b>	<b>Never prepared</b>
<b>Plays an active role in discussions (ongoing)</b>	<b>Plays an active role in discussions (ongoing)</b>	<b>Participates constructively in discussions (ongoing)</b>	<b>When prepared, participates constructively in discussions and makes relevant comments based on the assigned material</b>	<b>Rarely participates</b>	<b>Never participates</b>
<b>Comments consistently advance the level and depth of the dialogue</b>	<b>Comments occasionally advance the level and depth of the dialogue</b>	<b>Makes relevant comments based on the assigned material (ongoing)</b>	<b>Group dynamic and level of discussion are not affected by the student's presence</b>	<b>Comments are generally vague or drawn from outside of the assigned material</b>	<b>Demonstrates noticeable lack of interest in the material</b>
<b>Group dynamic and level of discussion are consistently better because of the student's presence</b>	<b>Group dynamic and level of discussion are often better because of the student's presence</b>	<b>Group dynamic and level of discussion are occasionally better (never worse) because of the student's presence</b>		<b>Group dynamic and level of discussion are perhaps harmed by the student's presence</b>	<b>Group dynamic and level of discussion are harmed by the student's presence</b>

### **FINAL EXAM ESSAYS (35 POINTS):**

On the last day of class I will provide you with an essay prompt that will ask two questions: (1) a meta-question requiring you to incorporate information from the whole semester; and (2) an action proposal for THI's summer meals program. You will have full access to all course materials when you write the essays. They will be due to me **May 13 at 2:00 pm**, the time at which we're supposed to begin our final exam period. During our exam time you will present your proposals to THI staff.

## **GRADING SUMMARY**

Reading Journal: 50 points (25%)  
THI Work: 50 points (25%)  
THI Paper: 20 points (10%)  
Two-Part Reflection Paper: 20 Points (10%)  
Class Participation: 25 points (12.5%)  
Final Essay: 35 points (17.5%)

---

200 points

## **GRADING SCALE**

179-200 points = A  
173-178 points = B+  
159-172 points = B  
153-158 points = C+  
139-152 points = C  
119-138 points = D  
118 or below = F

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **January 15: Course Introduction**

- No Reading

### **January 17: Religion & Political Discourse: A Debate**

- Richard Rorty, "Religion as a Conversation-Stopper" (I'll provide a copy)
- Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Religion in the Public Square" (I'll provide a copy)

### **January 22: A Nation with the Soul of a Church**

- *Hellfire Nation* Preface & Introduction

### **January 24: Puritan Foundations of Morality Politics Part I**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 1

### **January 29: Puritan Foundations of Morality Politics Part II**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 2-3



**January 31: Founding Questions/Slavery & Abolition (and us) Part I**

- Steven Waldman, “The First Amendment Compromise: Building a Wall that Looks Good from All Sides” (Blackboard)
- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 4

**February 5: Slavery & Abolition (and us) Part II**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 5-6

**February 7: Slavery & Abolition (and us) Part III**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 7

**February 12: Victorian Virtue in America**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 8-9

**February 14: Temperance & Prohibition**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 10-11

**February 19: The Social Gospel**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 12-13

**February 21: The Sixties**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 14

**February 26: Religion & Civil Rights Part I**

- *God’s Long Summer* Introduction, Ch. 1-2

**February 28: Religion & Civil Rights Part II**

- *God’s Long Summer* Ch. 3

**March 5: Religion & Civil Rights Part III**

- *God’s Long Summer* Ch. 4-5

**March 7: Religion & Civil Rights Part IV**

- *God’s Long Summer* Conclusion
- Melanye T. Price & Gloria J. Hampton, “Linked Fates, Disconnected Realities: The Post-Civil Rights African American Politics” (Blackboard)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail (Blackboard)

**March 12 & 14: Spring Break**

- No official reading

**March 19: Changing Political & Religious Landscapes**

- *Stumping God* Introduction, Ch. 1 & 2 (feel free to skim pp. 18-59)

**March 21: Political Campaigns & Religion Part I**

- *Stumping God* Ch. 3-4

**March 26: Political Campaigns & Religion Part II**

- *Stumping God* Ch. 5
- Barack Obama, “Call to Renewal Speech” (Blackboard)



**March 28: The Return of Puritan Politics?**

- *Hellfire Nation* Ch. 15

**April 2: Contemporary Religious Expressions in America**

- *Religion & Politics* Ch. 2-3
- John Green & Steven Waldman, “The Twelve Tribes of American Politics” (Blackboard)

**April 4: Voting & Religion in American Politics**

- *Religion & Politics* Ch. 4

**April 9: Religious Elites & Interest Groups in American Politics**

- *Religion & Politics* Ch. 5-6

**April 11: Religion & Civil Society/Gender, Religion, & Politics**

- *Religion & Politics* Ch. 7 & 11

**April 16: Understanding Religious Mobilization and the Rise of the “Nones”**

- *From Pews to Polling Places* Ch. 1 & 10

**April 18: Diadeloso**

- No official reading

**April 23: Political Behavior of Christianity’s Major (Predominantly White) Branches**

- *From Pews to Polling Places* Ch. 2, 3, & 4

**April 25: African American & Latino/a Religiopolitical Engagement**

- *From Pews to Polling Places* Ch. 6-7

**April 30: Major Theories and Questions in Religion & Politics**

- *Religion & Politics* Ch. 12
- Hugh Heclo, “Is America a Christian Nation?” (Blackboard)

**May 2: Concluding Meditations on Religion & Politics in America**

- *Hellfire Nation* Epilogue
- *Stumping God* Ch. 6