**INAF 264/JCIV 264/GOVT 216 (Spring 2017) Professor Jacques Berlinerblau**

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**Monday/Wednesday 9:30 – 10:45 PM (WGR 206)**

**Office Hours: MW 8-9 AM and by appointment**

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Course Website: <https://blogs.commons.georgetown.edu/jciv-264-spring2017/>

**Syllabus: American Secularism**

Not a day goes by without a journalist, public servant, professor, or policy analyst invoking the term “secularism” in a discussion about contemporary American politics. But what exactly *is* secularism? What does it stand for? What is its historical genealogy? Who are those who speak on behalf of, or against, secularism? How is it invoked in debates about religion and politics in the United States? And why is there such tremendous confusion as to what this concept signifies?

Everything about the history and development of secularism, as we are going to learn this semester, is *strange*. Worse yet, everything about this concept is shrouded in sound, fury, rancor, and dissensus. It follows from this that the answers to the aforementioned questions are often completely unexpected. They are also quite fascinating and fun to engage.

Our inquiry begins with an examination of secularism’s Medieval, Reformation and Enlightenment roots. Many of the heroes of this narrative (e.g., William of Ockham, Marsilius of Padua) are relatively unknown. Those who are known (i.e., Martin Luther) are never assumed to have anything to do with something as “profane” as secularism. Even a figure, like John Locke whose contributions to secular political theory are widely discussed, is often misunderstood in terms of how he conceived of the proper relation between church and state.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the kernel of the secular idea voyages across the ocean and comes to America. To this end, we will look carefully at the writings of Roger Williams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and various Founding Fathers. It is by reading these statesmen that we will begin to understand some of the core principles of the American secular vision. We will also begin to understand that *secularism cannot be reduced to just* one *political policy*. One form of secularism might be built upon separation of church and state. Another might emphasize disestablishmentarianism. Still another might speak of “non-cognizance.” And there are many more.

Moving forward in time, our study will introduce you to obscure, though highly significant, 19th-century anti-Catholic and anti-Mormon movements. These movements often described themselves as “secular.” With this we will learn one of the cruelest lessons of the semester (especially for self-professed secularists): secularism has a dark side.

By the late 19th and 20th centuries, secularism comes to be associated with new phenomena—most curiously, atheism. Our analysis of groundbreaking Supreme Court cases in the 20th century will help us appreciate the sheer complexity and fluidity of the American secular tradition. Perhaps it will also solidify our understanding of what unites all secularisms—namely, the conviction that religious groups and individuals must always, in some way, be subordinate to the power of the state.

To think about secularism in the contemporary political context is to wrestle with some of the most contentious issues that confront our democracy. These include the question of LGBT rights; women’s reproductive freedoms; freedom of speech (both religious and blasphemous); the role of science as a driver of public policy; how students are to be taught in public schools, and so much more. In short, developing a robust understanding of the American secular tradition casts an illuminating light on these, the most intractable of our national dilemmas.

**Getting This Class**

This course is designed to maximize student learning, independent thinking, analytical writing, and, yes, believe it or not, student fun. If you follow these basic rules, you will have a very profitable semester (as will I).

1. Always come to class having done your reading. Usually the reading assignments are reasonable (e.g. 30-40 pages), and it’s important that you take them seriously because…
2. We begin every class by talking for a good half hour or so about what we read. *You* lead the discussion, and *you* identify the themes that we will interrogate. Students have told me they really like this model. It works pedagogically, as well.
3. Bring your readings to every class, and bring yourself, as well. Try to minimize absences and latenesses. We are all adults, so if you have a problem or concern, just tell me in advance and everything will be fine.
4. When you get a paper assignment don’t wait until the night before to start it. Come see me early and often in office hours.
5. Never stop thinking about the materials we read and the discussions we have in class.

**Course Objectives**

1. To acquaint students with the historical development of a political philosophy known as “secularism.”
2. To identify the various connotations of the term across historical time and space.
3. To familiarize ourselves with the leading architects of American iterations of secularism.
4. To understand how secularism as an idea is invoked in contemporary political and cultural debates in the United States.
5. Oral presentation: to learn how to make insightful arguments and analyses pithily.
6. Analytical skill: to develop techniques of breaking down texts and identifying deeper levels of meaning, as well as advancing original and creative interpretations.
7. Writing: learning how to compose clear, crisp, creative, and thought-provoking essays.

**Books**:

*(Available in the university bookstore)*

Jacques Berlinerblau, *How to Be Secular: A Call to Arms for Religious Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012).

Forrest Church (ed.), *The Separation of Church and State* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

Noah Feldman, *Divided by God* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

Harro Höpfl (ed.), *Luther and Calvin: On Secular Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983).

Martha Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

*All other readings are on the course website:* <https://blogs.commons.georgetown.edu/jciv-264-spring2017/>

**Schedule of Classes:**

**1. Wednesday, January 11th: Introduction; Opening Discussion: Secularism and the Contraception Mandate**

*In class:* Jenna Johnson, “Sandra Fluke, Georgetown students continue fight for contraception coverage,” *The Washington Post*, April 20, 2012 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/campus-overload/post/sandra-fluke-georgetown-students-continue-fight-for-contraception-coverage/2012/04/20/gIQAiP0BWT_blog.html?utm_term=.e2baa5a80159>

**Monday, January 16th: Holiday (MLK Day)**

***Due Tuesday Jan 17, 8PM:* Getting To Know You Blog**

**2. Wednesday, January 18th: Opening Discussions: Burqa Ban**

Pascal Bruckner. “Unveiled: A Case for France’s Burqa Ban.” *World Affairs*, vol. 173, no. 4, 2010, pp. 61–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41290263>.

Eun-Jung Katherine Kim. “On the ‘Burka’ Ban.” *Public Affairs Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2012, pp. 293–312. [www.jstor.org/stable/41697909](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41697909).

**3. Monday, January 23rd: Secularism: The Genealogy**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Jacques Berlinerblau, “Introduction” in *How to Be Secular: A Call to Arms for Religious Freedom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012) **pp. xv-xxix**.

Jacques Berlinerblau. “Political Secularism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism,* Eds. John Shook and Phil Zuckerman(New York: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2016), **pp. 85-96.**

**4. Wednesday, January 25th: The Pre-Modern Masters**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

*Kids: please do both these readings for today, they may seem dense but provide crucial core ideas*

Marsilius of Padua (1980). *Defensor Pacis* (Defender of Peace), trans. Alan Gewirth, Toronto: University of Toronto Press. **pp. 3-26**.

William of Ockham (1998). *On the Power of Emperors and Popes*. Trans. Annabel Brett. Bristol: Thoemmes Press. **pp. 73-83.**

**5. Monday, January 30th: Loose Ends: Pre-Modern Masters Cont’d and Martin Luther: The Pivot**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

*We’d like you to read pages 1-34 really hard. The third section, which starts on page 34, is interesting but a bit daft if you ask me. Please read it as well but invest your energies wisely.*

Martin Luther. “On Secular Authority”in *Luther and Calvin: On Secular Authority,* Harro Höpfl (ed.), **pp. 3-43.**

**6. Wednesday, February 1st: Martin Luther Continued**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

*You may want to read ahead to John Locke’s A Letter Concerning Toleration*

**7. Monday, February 6th: John Locke: Architect of Modern Secularism**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

*Kids: read carefully. This is a masterwork, and one that will stick with you throughout your college career.*

John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983).

**8. Wednesday, February 8th: John Locke and the Question of Order**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

*Most of today’s class will be spent finishing up our reading of Locke.*

Jacques Berlinerblau. “What is Secularism (The Basic Package)?” in *How to Be Secular*, **pp. 3-19.**

**PAPER 1 DUE**

**9. Monday, February 13th: Roger Williams and the Baptist Factor**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

*The readings in Martha Nussbaum’s Liberty of Conscience are dense and long. Her interpretations of John Locke, in my opinion, are occasionally questionable. Still, the chapter merits careful scrutiny as Nussbaum cracks open a large set of problematics of great relevance to American secularism. So read carefully!*

Martha Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), **pp. 34-71.**

Roger Williams. *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience.* (London: Castle Society.) **pp. 1-2, 13-15.**

**10. Wednesday, February 15th: The Late 18th Century and the Birth of American Secularism**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

*Dear students, the reading below is as crucial as it is fun to think about. Please read the book in its entirety and take good notes. We will spend two classes discussing the many excellent documents collected in this book.*

Forrest Church (ed.), *The Separation of Church and State* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

*Also, please memorize the sixteen fateful words of the first amendment’s religion clauses, which begin “Congress shall make no law. . . .”. I will call you on it. Be ready.*

**Monday, February 20th: Holiday (President’s Day)**

**11. Wednesday, February 22nd: The Birth of American Secularism II**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

*Note: We will continue working today on the readings from the Church volume.*

*Feel free to read the Witte’s whole article (through 445). It’s quite good.*

John Witte, Jr., “The Essential Rights and Liberties of Religion in the American Constitutional Experiment,” *Notre Dame Law Review* 71 (1996), **pp. 371-405.**

**12. Monday, February 27th: The Separation Perplex: Danbury and its Discontents**

**Madison v. Jefferson**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Philip Hamburger, “Jefferson and the Baptists” in *Separation of Church and State,* **pp. 144-189.**

Vincent Muñoz, “James Madison’s Principle of Religious Liberty,” *American Political Science Review* 97 (2003) **pp. 17-32.**

**13. Wednesday, March 1st: Madisonian Alternatives**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

Jacques Berlinerblau, “Were the Founders Secular?” in *How to Be Secular,* **pp. 20-52.**

Federalist 10 and Federalist 51.

“Letter from James Madison to Rev. Jasper Adams.”

***PAPER 2 DUE***

**Monday, March 6th: Spring Break**

**Wednesday, March 8th: Spring Break**

**14. Monday, March 13th: The 19th Century I**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

*Holyoake is a wild text and you'll have fun with it. You can start on page 11 if you are rushed. You can skip the sections on secular guilds (18-20). But read the rest carefully. This is a very ambitious work and totally different from all that we have read previously. The question to answer: What is Secularism?*

George Jacob Holyoake, *The Principles of Secularism* (*You can find it in Google Books*).

**15. Wednesday, March 15th: The 19th Century II**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

Noah Feldman, *Divided by God,* **pp. 57-110.**

Tracy Fessenden. 2005. “The Nineteenth-Century Bible Wars and the Separation of Church and State.” *Church Hist*ory, Vol. 74, No. 4, **pp. 784-811.**

**16. Monday, March 20th: The 19th Century III**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Noah Feldman, *Divided by God*, **pp. 111-149.**

Philip Hamburger, “A Theologically Liberal, Anti-Catholic, and American Principle” in *Separation of Church and State,* **pp. 193-251.** *(Read 193-219 carefully. The rest you can skim.)*

**17. Wednesday, March 22nd: The 19th Century IV**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

“Robert Ingersoll” (**pp. 1-18**), “God in the Constitution” (**pp. 25-43**) “Why I Am an Agnostic” (**pp. 77-86**), and “On Separation of Church and State” (**pp. 114-120**) in Robert Ingersoll, *What’s God Got to Do with It?*

“The Demands of Liberalism,” *The Index*, 1872.

Noah Feldman, *Divided by God*, **pp. 150-185**.

**18. Monday, March 27th: SCOTUS and American Secularism’s Golden Age**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

*Please send your SCOTUS case and year to Pietro (**pb741@georgetown.edu**). He will hand me the list before class and as I get to the period in question you'll briefly tell us about your case.*

Jacques Berlinerblau, *How to Be Secular***, pp. 103-136.**

Jacques Berlinerblau, *Thumpin’ It*, **pp. 133-142.**

**19. Wednesday, March 29th: SCOTUS and The Fall of American Secularism**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

Noah Feldman, *Divided by God,* **pp. 186-219.**

Jacques Berlinerblau, *How to Be Secular,* **pp. 53-82.**

**20. Monday, April 3rd: American Secularism as American Atheism I, and TA Lecture**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Wilfred McClay, “Two Concepts of Secularism,” in *Religion Returns to the Public Square,* Eds. Hugh Heclo and Wilfred McClay (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003) **pp. 31-61**.

Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great* (New York: Warner Twelve, 2007) **pp. 1-36**.

***PAPER 3 DUE***

**21. Wednesday, April 5th: American Secularism as American Atheism II**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt, 2006) **pp. 77-109.**

Sam Harris, *The End of Faith* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2004) **pp. 11-49.**

**22. Monday, April 10th: Post-Modernist Secularism I**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), **pp. 1-17.**

Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), **pp. 1-22.**

**Wednesday, April 12th: Easter Break**

**Monday, April 17th: Easter Break**

**23. Wednesday, April 19th: Post-Modernist Secularism II**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, “The Politics of Secularism,” in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan, and Mica Duffy Toft, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), **pp. 36-54.**

Jacques Berlinerblau, “The Crisis in Secular Studies” *The Chronicle of Higher Learning* <http://www.chronicle.com/article/The-Crisis-in-Secular-Studies/148599>.

**24. Monday, April 24th: Case I: Abortion/Organized Religion**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Adrienne Fulco. 2009. “Secularization and its Discontents: Courts and Abortion Policy in the United States and Spain”, in *Secularism, Women, & The State: The Mediterranean World in the 21st Century* (Eds. Barry Kosmin and Ariela Keysar) **pp. 195-212**.

Gene Burns. 2013. “Secular Liberalism, Roman Catholicism, and Social Hierarchies: Understanding Multiple Paths” in *Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference* (Eds. Linell Cady and Tracy Fessenden). **pp. 79-102.**

Caroline Corbin. 2013. “The Contraception Mandate.” *Northwestern University Law Review*, Vol. 107, **pp. 1469-1484**.

**25. Wednesday, April 26th: Case Study II: Transgender Bathroom Rights and Services for LGBT Citizens**

**L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments**

Thomas Keck. “Beyond Backlash: Assessing the Impact of Judicial Decisions on LGBT Rights.” The Law and Society Reader II, Edited by Erik Larson and Patrick Schmidt, NYU Press, 2014, pp. 62–70.

**26. Monday, May 1st: Secular Solutions?**

**A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments**

Berlinerblau, *How to be Secular*, **pp.190-209.**

Noah Feldman, *Divided by God*, **pp. 235-251.**

Martha Nussbaum, *Liberty of Conscience*, **pp. 354-363.**

Charles Taylor. 2013. “Why We Need A Radical Redefinition of Secularism,” in *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere* (Eds. Eduardo Menieta and Jonathan VanAntwerpen), **pp. 34-59.**

**Grading policy**

Classroom attendance is mandatory because so much of what we learn will be through discussion and public reflection. All absences must be accompanied by an explanation. My sense of a student’s performance is greatly influenced by my sense that she or he is coming prepared to each and every class.

**Blogs**

In an effort to promote dialogue and a sense of intellectual community, we are asking all students to blog about the readings. Anyone in the course will be able to see your post with your name attached (though this is a private website so no one who is not in our course will be able to view your comments). This assignment involves identifying one central component of an author’s argument and linking that to your own critical and original interpretation. These posts are meant to be short but tight (No fewer than 150 words, no longer than 250). Our website is set up so that you can view others’ blog posts and respond.

You will be required to blog and weekly, submitting a post for one day of class and commenting for the other.

Blogs are to be submitted by Sunday night at 8 p.m. on the readings for Monday’s class. And Tuesday by 8 p.m. for Wednesday’s class.

Comments should be posted by Monday mornings at 9:30 a.m. and on Wednesday mornings at 9:30 AM.

Last names A-K will post for Sunday night and comment for Wednesday morning.

Last names L-Z will post for Tuesday night and comment for Monday morning.

Everyone writes the “Getting to Know You” Blog Post (Due Tuesday, January 17 at 8 p.m.) Relax. This should be fun!

These blogs constitute 15% of your grade. Posts will be evaluated for quality, originality and felicity of style. Please note that late blogs will not be accepted.

Course Website: <https://blogs.commons.georgetown.edu/jciv-264-spring2017/>

**Grade Breakdown**

Paper 1 (1,000 words, 15%) due **February 8th**

Paper 2 (1,000 words, 15%) due **March 1st**

Paper 3 (1,250 words, 20%) due **April 3rd**

Final paper (2,500 words, 35%) due **May 9th**

Blogs & Participation **15%**

*Late papers: Students will be granted* ***one one-day*** *extension to be discussed in advance with the professor. This extension applies to only one of the papers (but not the final paper). Please note, all other late papers will not be accepted.*

**Assignment Schedule**

Tuesday, January 17th 8:00 p.m.: Getting to Know You Blog

January 18th: Opening Discussions

January 23rd: Secularism: The Genealogy A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

January 25th: The Pre-Modern Masters L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

January 30th: Loose Ends: Pre-Modern Cont’d and Martin Luther: The PivotA-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

February 1st: Martin Luther Continued L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

February 6th: John Locke: Architect of Modern Secularism A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

February 8th: John Locke and the Question of Order L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

**PAPER 1 DUE**

February 13th: Roger Williams and the Baptist Factor A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

February 15th: The Late 18th Century and the Birth of American Secularism L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

**February 20th: Holiday (President’s Day)**

February 22nd: The Birth of American Secularism II L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

12. Monday, February 27th: The Separation Perplex: Danbury and its Discontents

Madison v. Jefferson A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

13. Wednesday, March 1st: Madisonian Alternatives L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

***PAPER 2 DUE***

**March 6th: Spring Break**

**March 8th: Spring Break**

March 13th: The 19th Century I A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

March 15th: The 19th Century II L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

March 20th: The 19th Century III A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

March 22nd: The 19th Century IV L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

March 27th: SCOTUS and American Secularism’s Golden Age A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

March 29th: SCOTUS and The Fall of American Secularism L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

April 3rd: The Fall of American Secularism II, and TA Lecture A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

***PAPER 3 DUE***

April 5th: American Secularism as American Atheism L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

April 10th: Post-Modernist Secularism I A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

**April 12th: Easter Break**

**April 17th: Easter Break**

April 19th: Post-Modernist Secularism II L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

April 24th: Case I: Abortion/Organized Religion A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

April 26th: Case Studies II: Science and American Schools and Public Policy L-Z Blog Posts A-K Comments

May 1st: Secular Solutions? A-K Blog Posts L-Z Comments

**May 9th—FINAL PAPER DUE**