

Course Description: Lectures and discussion of some theoretical and practical issues concerning the relationship between religion and society, with particular emphasis upon religious pluralism in American culture.

Course Outline:

- I. Setting the Problem, and Assessing Alternative Solutions: The Plague, Albert Camus.
- II. Some Definitions of Religion: The Sacred and the Profane, Mircea Eliade.
- III. The Particular Western Form of the Problem: The City of God, St. Augustine; "The Past and Future of Eschatological Thinking," in Religion & Contemporary Society, Arthur A. Cohen.
- IV. The Particular American Form of the Problem:
 - a) Religious Pluralism -- A denominational assessment: Walter J. Ong and Wilhelm Pauck, in Religion and Contemporary Society.
 - b) Religious Pluralism -- Constitutional considerations: Harry W. Jones, in Religion and Contemporary Society.
 - c) Religious Pluralism -- Individual and collective forms of American religion: Reinhold Niebuhr.
 - d) Religious Pluralism -- Philosophical criteria: A Common Faith, John Dewey.
- V. The Original Problem Revisited and Redefined.

Class Assignments:

- 1) Attendance at lectures and class meetings.
- 2) Readings as assigned.
- 3) Mid-term and final examinations.
- 4) A short essay (3-5 pages maximum and due at beginning of class February 23) in response to the following question: "Why is the relation between religion and society a problem for Camus? List and briefly develop some of the reactions to the problem as outlined in The Plague. Which response, if any, seems most satisfactory to you? Why?"

Grading scale - Point basis :
65 - for short paper -
85 - for mid term -
100 - for final

250 - total maximum -