

EVERGREEN FORUM FALL 2023

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

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Wednesdays starting September 27 through November 18 for eight sessions | 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
HYBRID | LECTURE/DISCUSSION | MAXIMUM 30

Overview

According to multiple studies, the United States is less religious – and specifically less Christian – than it has ever been. However, news reports suggest that Christian Nationalism is rising throughout the country. Most concerning was the imagery at the January 6 assault on the Capital and statements made since then by organizations like the Oath Keepers. A Pew Report issued in late 2022 found that 45% of Americans said the United States should be a Christian nation. However, two-thirds said churches should stay out of politics. These contradictions and divisions seem to mirror conflicts over the diversity of the American people, which some describe as a threat, while others see it as an asset. Diversity means different races and ethnicities and, inevitably, different religions and secularism. Meantime, the United States Supreme Court hands down decisions that many fear are pushing the country toward the establishment of religion that the First Amendment prohibits.

This course will discuss the concept of the United States as a Christian nation, from its inception in drafting the US Constitution through many religious revivals to today. It will focus on the increasing role of religion in our politics and laws, especially some politicians' seeming obsession with trans people and "wokeness." It will review the rise of the Christian Nationalist movement over the past few decades, recent Supreme Court cases and state laws sanctioning religious practices at public events, and attempts at local, state, and national levels to limit or eliminate LGBTQ rights and to ban books and defund or prohibit diversity programs in schools and elsewhere.