



Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
(205) 776-5650

First Freedom and Leadership Syllabus

Semester:

Day & Time:

Professor: Rev. Dr. Kenneth W. Bush

Email: kwbush55@gmail.com

Course: DM4605

Room: On-line

Credits: 2

Phone: (804) 814-2411

Course Note: Chaplains work in an environment that requires a solid understanding of the historical, Constitutional and legal roots of the free exercise of religion and the definition of pluralism. They must also have a clear grasp of cultural trends that shape the religious landscape.

Course Description: This course examines the historical, Constitutional and legal roots of the free exercise of religion. The course considers key concepts that shape the Chaplain's role of educating and training commanders/supervisors, subordinate chaplains, and others in their sphere of their influence. Participants will consider the importance of principled pluralism in encouraging civil dialogue for the common good as well as the biblical perspectives on ministry in a pluralistic environment.

Course Objectives:

- Cognitive (Content)
 - Articulate the historical and religious roots of the free exercise of religion.
 - Summarize the important distinctions between the Free Exercise and Non-establishment clauses of the First Amendment to the US Constitution.
 - Define the key points of a biblical understanding of principled pluralism.
- Affective/Motivational (Character)
 - Gain a deeper appreciation for the unique challenges of ministry in a pluralistic environment.
 - To be motivated to humbly defend the free exercise of religion as a Christian value.
 - Value the unique contribution of principled pluralism to the free exercise of religion.
- Volitional/Application (Competencies)
 - Gain competency to instruct others about the nature of principled pluralism.
 - Create a presentation describing the historical, Constitutional and legal roots of the free exercise of religion applied to their ministry context.
 - Understand the current crisis of liberty in American culture.

Required Texts:

Carson, D.A. "The Challenges of Contemporary Pluralism" *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* · SBJT 1/2 (Summer 1997) (available at https://cf.sbts.edu/equip/uploads/2010/02/sbjt_012_sum97_carson.pdf) (34 pages)

Freedom of Religion Web Page (available at <https://www.freedomforum.org/freedom-of-religion/>)

Goodrich, Luke. *Free to Believe: The Battle Over Religious Liberty in America*. Colorado Springs, CO.: Multnomah Press, 2019. (236 pages)

Guinness, Os. *Last Call for Liberty: How America's Genius for Freedom Has Become Its Greatest Threat*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2018. (284 pages)

Lillback, Peter. *Freedom and Religious Liberty*. Westminster Media. (available at <https://wm.wts.edu/read/liberty-and-religious-freedom>) (2 pages)

Stetson, Brad and Joseph G. Conti. *The Truth About Tolerance: Pluralism, Diversity and the Culture Wars*. Downers Grove IL: IVP, 2005. (207 pages)

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act 20 Years of Protecting Our First Freedom (available at https://www.christianlegalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RFRA-Book-FINAL_CLS_Center_for_Law_and_Religious_Freedom.pdf) (8 pages)

Walker, Andrew T. *Liberty for All: Defending Everyone's Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Age*. Grand Rapids, MI.: 2021. (226 pages)

The Williamsburg Charter (available on-line at <https://osguinness.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/THE-WILLIAMSBURG-CHARTER.pdf>) (23 pages)

Recommended Texts:

Dreisbach, Daniel L. and Mark David Hall. *The Sacred Rights of Conscience*. Liberty Fund, Inc., 2009.

Guinness, Os. *The Case for Civility: And Why Our Future Depends on It*. New York, NY: Harper One, 2008

Hutchison, William R. *Religious Pluralism in America: The Contentious History of a Founding Ideal*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003.

Inazu, John. *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Kidd, Thomas S. *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010.

Miller, Nicholas P. *The Religious Roots of the First Amendment: Dissenting Protestants and the Separation of Church and State*. New York, NY; Oxford University Press, 2012.

Principled Pluralism: Report of the Inclusive America Project. Aspen Institute (available online at <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/files/content/docs/jsp/Principled-Pluralism.pdf>)

Wilken, Robert Lewis. *Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019.

Course Requirements and Assessments: (Read the detailed assignment instructions for each requirement)

Reading: (10%) The student will submit a written certification of the number of pages read at the end of the course. (Due at the end of week 8)

Discussion Forums (4 forums@10% each): The student will participate in four asynchronous discussion forums and be required to post an initial 350-word minimum response to each discussion prompt and two 250-word minimum responses to two posts by fellow students. (Initial posts due Thursday of weeks 1, 3, 5 and 7. Two responses due on Saturday of weeks 1, 3, 5 and 7)

Paper: (30%) The student will provide a 20-page written critique of the concept of principled pluralism as proposed in the *Williamsburg Charter* and readings. (Due at the end of week 6)

Presentation (Briefing) (20%): The student will create a 5-7 page briefing outline describing the historical, legal and Constitutional roots of the free exercise of religion applied to their context. (Due at the end of week 8)

Grading:

Reading	10%
Discussions	40% (4 discussions@10% each):
Principled Pluralism Paper	30%
Free Exercise Briefing	20%

BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Course Schedule:

Week	Reading and Study	Assignments	Points
1	<p>The Historical Roots of Religious Freedom</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i></p> <p><i>*Lillback Article</i> <i>Goodrich, Chapters 1-3</i> <i>Guinness, Chapters 1-2</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 1-2</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 1</i></p>	Discussion Forum 1	10
2	<p>The First Amendment Clauses</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i> <i>Video Presentation – Constitution 101</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54XZ2d8Jo2w</p> <p><i>*Freedom of Religion Web Page –</i> https://www.freedomforum.org/freedom-of-religion/ <i>Goodrich, Chapter 4</i> <i>Guinness, Chapters 3-4</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 3-4</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 2</i></p>		
3	<p>Why Free Exercise is Important</p> <p><i>Video Presentation - Bush</i> <i>Goodrich, Chapter 5</i> <i>Guinness, Chapters 5-6</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 1-2</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 3</i></p>	Discussion Forum 2	10
4	<p>The Legal Support for Free Exercise</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i></p>		

	<p><i>* The Religious Freedom Restoration Act Article – https://www.christianlegalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RFRA-Book-FINAL_CLS_Center_for_Law_and_Religious_Freedom.pdf</i></p> <p><i>Goodrich, Chapters 6</i> <i>Guinness, Chapters 7-8</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 3-4</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 4</i></p>		
5	<p>The Nature of Pluralism</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i> <i>Video Presentation (Optional) – The Intolerance of Tolerance</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SXdsuQQuhY</p> <p><i>*Carson Article</i> <i>Goodrich, Chapters 7-8</i> <i>Guinness, Chapters</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 5-6</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 5</i></p>	Discussion Forum 3	10
6	<p>Principled Pluralism</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i></p> <p><i>*Williamsburg Charter</i> <i>Goodrich, Chapters 9-10</i> <i>Guinness, Chapter 9</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 7-8</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 6</i></p>	Principled Pluralism Paper Due	20
7	<p>Pluralism and Civil Discourse</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i></p> <p><i>Goodrich, Chapters 11-12</i> <i>Guinness, Chapter 10</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapter 9</i> <i>Walker, Chapter 7</i></p>	Discussion Forum 4	10
8	<p>Applied Pluralism: Making Your Case</p> <p><i>Video Presentation – Bush</i></p> <p><i>Goodrich, Chapters 11-12</i> <i>Guinness, Conclusion</i> <i>Stetson and Conti, Chapters 10-12, Epilogue</i> <i>Walker, Conclusion, Epilogue</i></p>	<p>Presentation Outline Due</p> <p>Certification of Completed Reading</p>	<p>30</p> <p>10</p>

The readings that are marked with an asterisk (*) are needed for that week. All other readings are distributed across the course to be completed before the final assignment.

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

Class Policies and Procedures:

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3 point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

Video Conference Policies and Procedures:

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

Extended Bibliography:

Bailyn, Bernard. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967.

Brant, Irving. “Madison: On the Separation of Church and State.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 8 (3rd series, 1951).

Buckley, Thomas E. *Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1977.

Curry, Thomas J. *The First Freedoms: Church and State in America to the Passage of the First Amendment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Dreisbach, Daniel L. “George Mason’s Pursuit of Religious Liberty in Revolutionary Virginia.” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 108:1 (2000): 5-44.

———. *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State*. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

Kelly, Douglas F. *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1992.

Kik, J. Marcellus. *Church and State. The Story of the Two Kingdoms*. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963.

Malbin, Michael J. "Religion and Politics: The Intentions of the Authors of the First Amendment." Washington, DC: *American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research*, 1978.

McGraw, Barbara A. *Rediscovering America's Sacred Ground: Public Religion and Pursuit of the Good in a Pluralistic America*

Miller, William Lee. *The First Liberty: Religion and the American Republic*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986

Nussbaum, Martha. *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America's Tradition of Religious Equality*.

O'Donovan, Oliver. *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Schaff, Philip. *Church and State in the United States or the American Idea of Religious Liberty and Its Practical Effect*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1888.

Smile, James H. "Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom: The Hanover Presbytery Memorials, 1776-1786." *American Presbyterians* 63:4 (Winter 1985): 355-73.

Smith, A. Elwyn. *Religious Liberty in the United States: The Development of Church-State Thought Since the Revolutionary Era*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972.

Van Til, L. John. *Liberty of Conscience: The History of the Puritan Idea*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1972.

Wogaman, Philip J. *Protestant Faith and Religious Liberty*. Philadelphia, PA: Abingdon Press, 1967.

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>

GRADING CRITERIA AND FORUM ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>
Fully addresses the question, shows extensive knowledge of the topic and the initial thread contains 3 or more sources.	Sufficiently addresses the question, shows knowledge of the topic, and the initial thread contains less than 3 sources.	Addresses some aspects of the question, shows some knowledge of the topic, and the initial thread contains less than 2 sources.	Does not address the question, shows little knowledge of the topic, and the initial thread contains one or no sources.

BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

1: this outcome is not covered in this class

2: this outcome is only touched on in this class

3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material

4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)

5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rational (one sentence)
Scripture	5	The student must integrate Scripture in their analysis.
Reformed Theology	3	The student will be able to develop A Reformed approach to working in a pluralistic environment.
Local Church	1	
Wisdom	5	The student will be able to wisely engage objections to religious free exercise.
Discipleship	1	
Communication	4	The student will be able to communicate a clear view of principled pluralism.
Worldview	5	The student will be able to sow the ability to apply God's Word to the challenges of

		ministering in a pluralistic context.
Leadership	5	The student will be able to provide sound and biblically shaped leadership in a pluralistic conext.