Religious intolerance seems to be endemic in human societies. It takes different forms, ranging from subtle discrimination to mass violence. There are times when it is less intense than at others. At least as a social phenomenon, there is little chance that it will ever be eliminated.

But history shows that political and legal structures can ensure a high degree of religious freedom. These structures have been built gradually and with great effort. They have very particular roots. That is, at a certain moment in history, and in a certain geographical context, principles of religious toleration - principles that could be translated into permanent political and legal protections - were worked out. This was a momentous innovation, one that took place in Europe from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. In this course we will try to understand in historical perspective how this happened. It is a story about events in the powerful states that emerged in the Christian West in this period.

To understand the extraordinary struggles of this period, we’ll first have to understand the basic position and practices of the western Church toward heretics and non-believers as they were formulated in the first few centuries of the Common Era and as they were elaborated in the Middle Ages. We will then turn to the events and changed perspectives of the Reformation period. Finally, we will look at the range of theoretical ideas about religious toleration proposed by European thinkers, and consider their practical implications. We’ll conclude with some reflections on the persistent problems that have arisen and still arise in the the effort to achieve religious toleration, including recent issues particular to the multiculturalism experiment.

The course, then, has a three-part structure:

Part 1: A survey of the medieval European background;
Part 2: A look at how new conditions in the Reformation period encouraged the emergence of ideas of religious toleration;
Part 3: A study of the variety of theoretical positions – then and (briefly) now.

You will take an exam after each segment of the course (together, 60% of the grade), and write a 3-5 page exercise for each of them (together, 30% of the grade). Attendance and participation will account for 10% of the grade. Plus/minus grades will be assigned, as mandated by the new policy.
1. August 26 – What do we mean by religious freedom – or do we know what we mean?

**PART 1**

2. August 28 – In the beginning there was theology (1): Christian doctrine concerning heresy.

   From the article in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* on “heresy.”

   From Thomas Aquinas, on the question of whether heresy should be tolerated, from his *Summa Theologica*, in Edward Peters, ed., *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe*, 182-3.

3. August 31 – The medieval Inquisition and the suppression of heresy.

   From Bernard Gui on heresy, in Wakefield and Evans, eds., *Heresies of the High Middle Ages, 1000-1530*, 373-378, 386-404.

4. September 2 - In the beginning there was theology (2): Christian doctrine concerning Judaism.


**SEPTEMBER 7 – NO CLASS: LABOR DAY**

6. September 9 – The papacy, the state, and late medieval persecution.


7. September 11 – REVIEW.

8. September 13 – EXAM.

**PART 2**

The “Story of the Three Rings” from the Decameron: Decameron, Day 1, Novel 3: online at
=nov0103&expand=day01&lang=eng


R. Po-Chia Hsia, from “Introduction” to Hsia, ed., A Companion to the
Reformation World, xii-xv.

11. September 21 - The Reformation: the attack on the authority of the western
Church.

Bagchi and Steinmetz, eds., Reformation Theology, 42-49.

12. September 23 - The idea of multiple paths to religious truth. From the Catholic
irenicism of Erasmus to the idea of natural religion.

Erasmus, from The Complaint of Peace (1521).

pragmatic solutions: Peace of Augsburg, Union of Utrecht, Edict of Nantes.

Mout, “Limits and Debates: A Comparative View of Dutch Toleration in the 16th
and 17th Centuries,” in The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic, 37-47.

14. September 28 – TBA.

15. September 30 - The impact of print in the Reformation period...

Bob Scribner, “Heterodoxy, literacy and print in the early German Reformation,”
in Biller and Hudson, eds., Heresy and Literacy, 1000-1530, 255-278.

16. October 2 – …and of censorship.

Carlo Ginzburg, “The High and the Low: The Theme of Forbidden Knowledge in
the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” Clues, Myths, and the Historical
Method, 60-76.

17. October 5 - – “Disenchantment.”

Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, 51-77.

*The Travels of Fernando Mendes Pinto*, 87-89.


http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Overview:_Mercantilism

Menasheh ben Israel’s letter to Oliver Cromwell.

20. October 12 – The emergence of a non-clerical intelligentsia.


22. October 16 – REVIEW

23. October 19 – EXAM

PART 3

24. October 21 – Images of Cruelty, from John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*

http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/apparatus/53_garnesey.html

http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/johnfoxe/apparatus/39_ridleylatimer.html

25. October 23 – Shifting attitudes about Jews in Reformation Europe.


Castellio, excerpts from *Counsel to France in her distress* (1562).

27. October 28 – Michel de Montaigne.

   From *Apology for Raymond Sebond* (1580), tr. Ariew and Grene, passages on pp.127-8, 131-136, 139-141, 146-147, 152.

28. October 30 – Jean Bodin

   *Colloquium of the Seven about Secrets of the Sublime* (1588), 150-159.

29. November 2 – Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert

   *Synod on the Freedom of Conscience* (1582), 151-162.

30. November 2 – Benedict Spinoza

   *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), Chapter 20.

31. November 4 – Benedict Spinoza

   *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (continued).

32. November 6 – John Locke

   From *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689).

33. November 9 – John Locke

   *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (continued).

34. November 11 – The Calas Affair

   From Voltaire, “On Toleration in Connection with the Death of Jean Calas” (1763).

35. November 13 – Dohm on the Status of Jews


   From the debate on the Status of the Jews in the French National Assembly.

   Napoleon and the Assembly of Notables.
37. November 18 – The American Experiment
   Jefferson’s draft of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom

38. November 20 – Religious Toleration in Historical and Cultural Context


*November 27 – No class – Thanksgiving holiday*


42. December 2 – **REVIEW**

43. December 4 – **FINAL EXAM**