

Government Department

Fall 2009 Topics Course Descriptions

GO 351A: Lincoln as Statesman

Professor Flagg Taylor
TU/TH 2:10 – 3:30PM

This course will explore Lincoln's confrontation with the problem of slavery and the American regime. It will consist primarily of a close analysis of Lincoln's speeches and writings. Lincoln's speeches and deeds have been said by some scholars to constitute a completion of the American founding or a second American revolution. We will explore the origins and nature of Lincoln's impact, trying to understand Lincoln's project from the perspective of Lincoln himself. Lincoln reflected deeply on America's founding ideals as expressed in its public documents, as well as particular historical realities confronting the nation in the 1800s. Our course of study will therefore attempt to mimic these reflections.

Recommended preparation GO102 and/or GO236.

GO 365: Religion and Secularism in Contemporary Politics

Sumita Pahwa
M/W 4:30 – 5:50PM

Religion was supposed to fade away from contemporary politics and society as we became more modern, but it has thrived and even taken on new political forms. How did this happen, and what does this mean for secularism, democracy and the modern nation-state? How are fundamentalist movements changing the West and countries in the Middle East and the third world? This course addresses these and other questions with a survey of major theories from sociology and political science about why, when and how religion becomes politically relevant. We will examine case studies of religion in nationalism, social movements and electoral politics, and then consider the role of religion and religious extremism in political conflict and violence.

Prerequisite: GO103 or permission of the instructor.