

Religion and Politics

Research Essay

In a 12-14+ page essay, written in 12 point Times New Roman font, following either Turabian or APA citations styles as well as the conventional expectations of grammar, logic and rhetoric, write a research essay on a topic of your choice related to religion and politics. Follow the general outline, and submit the essay in phases, due on Moodle. The outline is only a suggestion, so feel free to diverge from it, though each essay should include a discussion of both current scholarly sources and original historical or social science research. For suggested topics, look through the Table of Contents or index or our book.

Option 1

Religion Affecting Politics

Topic Selected – Friday, January 31

- Write a brief summary of the topic you're interested in and submit it through Moodle.

Phase I – Due Friday, February 21

- **Introduction.** Give a general overview of the topic. What was the development, trend, or event? What was the major religious group involved? Why is it important to American religion and politics? (1-2 paragraphs). Then include:
 - A review of the current scholarship. What have recent scholars in academic books and journals said? What are their theses? (1 paragraph each)
 - Your proposed thesis (or possible theses, if you're unsure) in one short paragraph.

Phase II – Due Friday, March 27

- **Religious Cause.** What was the religious development, trend or event? What were its philosophic, theological or spiritual reasons for it? Who were the major people and groups involved? How was it interpreted by public opinion or the media? (2-3 paragraphs based on 2-3 primary sources)

Final Draft – Due Friday, April 17

- **Effect on Politics.** What was the outcome for American politics? What aspect of politics were involved (institutions, law, public policy, interest groups, etc.)? How was the effect understood by the public? (2-3 paragraphs based on 2-3 primary sources)
- **Conclusion.** Sum everything up and restate your thesis. In your opinion, was this a good or bad thing? Why? What does it mean for the future? (1-2 paragraphs)

Option 2

Politics Affecting Religion

Topic Selected – Friday, January 31

- Write a brief summary of the topic you're interested in and submit it through Moodle.

Phase I – Due Friday, February 21

- **Introduction.** Give a general overview of the topic. What was the development, trend, or event? What was the major religious group involved? Why is it important to American religion and politics? (1-2 paragraphs). Then include:
 - A review of the current scholarship. What have recent scholars in academic books and journals said? What are their theses? (1 paragraph each)
 - Your proposed thesis (or possible theses, if you're unsure) in one short paragraph.

Phase II – Due Friday, March 27

- **Political Cause.** What was the political development, trend or event? What were ideological, partisan or philosophic reasons for it? Who were the major people and groups involved? How was it interpreted by public opinion or the media? (2-3 paragraphs based on 2-3 primary sources)

Final Draft – Due Friday, April 17

- **Effect on Religion.** What was the outcome for American religion? What aspect of religion was affected (faith traditions, political organizations, etc.)? How was the effect understood by the public or the media? How was it interpreted by religious people? (2-3 paragraphs based on 2-3 primary sources)
- **Conclusion.** Sum everything up and restate your thesis. In your opinion, was this a good or bad thing? Why? What does it mean for the future? (1-2 paragraphs)

Sources. Be sure to support your arguments with original sources – official documents, reports, court cases, speeches, letters, memoirs, or clippings from newspapers and magazines, etc., or empirical data on public opinion and political behavior. Here are some online databases where you can find these things:

Free Online

- Google Books Advanced Search (books.google.com)
- Library of Congress Collections (loc.gov/collections)
- TeachingAmericanHistory.org
- Pew Research Center on Religion and Public Life (pewforum.org or pewresearch.org/topics/religion-and-politics/)
- Liberty Fund's Online Library (oll.libertyfund.org/)

Through the Library

- JSTOR (jstor.org)
- Adam Matthew Digital (amdigital.co.uk)
- ProQuest (search.proquest.com)

Essay Rubric

Content (60%). Engagement with the research.

- **Thesis.** The main argument is clearly stated, ideally in a single-sentence paragraph. (E.g., "In this essay, I argue...")
- **Academic Sources.** There is an adequate discussion of at least two academic sources in the introduction.
- **Primary Sources.** All claims are supported with well-integrated quotes from the primary source research.

Writing (30%). The essay is well-written.

- **Grammar.** It shows correct use of grammar, punctuation, and word-choice.
- **Logic.** The thesis is clearly supported with persuasive logical arguments based on quotes from the sources.
- **Rhetoric.** The essay is written in a clear and persuasive style that conveys the author's meaning.

Form (10%). The essay is organized, and follows all citation methods.

- **Structure.** The essay is well-structured and orderly.
- **Citations.** All quotes are cited using MLA format. There is no need to cite basic facts.
- **Bibliography.** All academic sources are listed in bibliographic form. (No need to list primary sources, e.g., newspaper clippings, speeches, letters, etc.)