

FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND THE SUPREME COURT: FROM POLYGAMY TO AFFORDABLE CARE

Coordinator: Barry Cooper and Mark Scher

Why can the Ten Commandments be displayed at a state capitol but not at a state courthouse? Is it permissible to prohibit the ritual sacrifice of animals? Why are prayers at the beginning of a legislative session permissible but not at the beginning of a school day? By reviewing excerpts from Supreme Court decisions we examine the scope of freedom of religion under the First Amendment. We consider cases involving school prayer, aid to religious schools, Sunday blue laws, pledge of allegiance, religious displays, tax deductions and payment for contraceptives, among other issues. We come to appreciate why these cases have been difficult for the Court.

Readings and other Required Materials: Coursepack, estimated \$30.

Barry Cooper is a retired intellectual property attorney. He previously coordinated *The War in Vietnam* and *Landmark Supreme Court Decisions*. **Mark Scher** is a retired attorney who specialized in immigration law. He previously coordinated *History of Poland* and *History of Eastern Europe*.

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WEEK 1 — *Background: Orientation, Historical Perspectives, the Free Exercise and Establishment Clauses*

WEEK 2 — *Solicitation by Religious Groups: Distribution and Sale of Religious Materials*

WEEK 3 — *Religion in the Schools: School Prayer; Government Aid to Religious Schools*

WEEK 4 — *Religion in the Schools (continued): Religious Activities by Public Schools or Public Employees; Compulsory Education; Teaching of Creationism*

WEEK 5 — *Religion in the Workplace: Public Service and Benefits; Blue Laws*

WEEK 6 — *Speech and Religion: Flag and Pledge of Allegiance; Ten*

Commandments and Religious Displays; Legislative Prayer

WEEK 7 — *Religion and Privacy: Marriage and Reproduction; Abortion; Homosexuality*

WEEK 8 — *Religion in the Military: Conscientious Objection; Military Apparel*

WEEK 9 — *Religious Organizations: Tax Exemption; Standing to Sue; Discrimination in Employment*

WEEK 10 — *Religious Freedom Restoration Act*

WEEKS 11 and 12 — *Religion in International Law: Honor Killings; Islamophobia; Sharia Law; Proselytism; Right to Change Religion; International Framework of Religious Liberty*