Religious Liberty: Current Legal Landscape (1 credit)

January 18-20, 9 AM to 2:30 PM (T/W/TH)

This course will survey the legal principles that safeguard religious freedom, including their theological, philosophical, and historical underpinnings, as well as new developments affecting churches and ministries. It is designed to equip ministry leaders committed to maintaining a biblical confession with a greater understanding of the policy and legal environment so they can navigate shifting circumstances with wisdom and sound judgment.

**Classes**

Class 1: Introduction: Theology and history of religious liberty, and the cultural moment;

Legal issues when hiring people to carry out ministry goals

Class 2: Private associations or public accommodations?

Speaking freely about religion

Class 3: Government funding and freedom of religion

Regulation of places of worship

**Reading**

Assigned readings include articles, book excerpts, government publications, and legal case decisions, including (sample list):

* John S. Redd, “The Earth is the Lord’s: A Biblical Theology of Religious Liberty,” *Set Free*, edited by Art Lindsey and Anne R. Bradley (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2019)
* *Westminster Confession*, Chapters 20 and 23
* John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689); James Madison, *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments* (1785); Washington’s *Letter to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport, RI* (1790)
* Russell Moore, “Evangelicals Won’t Cave,” *First Things* (October 2015)
* Luke Goodrich, *Free to Believe: The Battle Over Religious Liberty* *in America* (Multnomah 2019) (excerpts)
* Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, *Compliance Manual on Religious Discrimination* (January 15, 2021) (excerpts)
* *Our Lady of Guadalupe* (U.S. Supreme Court 2020) (excerpts)
* Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Harvard University Press, 2003)(excerpts)

**Writing**

A final paper (6-10 pages) will be assigned, on a topic of the student’s choice or responding to a prompt.

Contact

Eric Treene, etreene@gmail.com