

Inquiry into Faith, Reason, and Fundamentalist Religious Outlaws

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The relevance of religion's place in public life has moved to the forefront of the "culture wars" and other political divisions within the last two decades. Hence, the contradictions between faith-based and reason-based views of the world (specifically our views of public life) have resulted in debates regarding evolution versus creative design in the classroom, homosexual rights, and the extent to which the separation of church and state actually functions in our society. This course poses the question of where we draw the line between faith and reason in modern society and how they might co-exist, if at all. Students in the course will interview authorities of a faith/denomination different than their own (hands-on research), will do historical research on the Scopes monkey trial, and will perform academic research to explore how religion functions in a modern world where laws are based on reason and/or social contract.