



Scholar Exchange: First Amendment Freedom of Religion

Introductory Level Class Outline and Worksheet

OVERVIEW

Part I. First Amendment Text: A Brief Introduction

Part II. Founding Story of the Religion Clauses

Part III. The Establishment Clause

Part IV. The Free Exercise Clause

INTERACTIVE CONSTITUTION RESOURCES

- Resources for the First Amendment Freedom of Religion [Establishment Clause](#) and [Free Exercise Clause](#).

INTRODUCTION

Big Questions

- Why did the Founding generation write protections for religious liberty into the First Amendment?
- What is the Establishment Clause? What was the Founders' vision for this provision of the First Amendment? And how has the Supreme Court interpreted it over time?
- What is the Free Exercise Clause? What was the Founders' vision for this provision of the First Amendment? And how has the Supreme Court interpreted it over time?
- What are some of the most important areas of constitutional debate over religious liberty today?

Big Idea

The First Amendment protects religious liberty in two ways. First, it guards against government establishment of religion. And second, it protects the free exercise of religion. Together, these constitutional promises are at the core of our freedom of conscience—the right to freely believe as we wish.

Part I: First Amendment Text: A Brief Introduction

Write <u>three</u> words that summarize the two religion clauses.	
The Establishment Clause	The Free Exercise Clause

Part II: The Founding Story of the Religion Clauses

What are some religious groups that came to the colonies searching for religious freedom?	
Give <u>one</u> example of what a government-established church looked like in colonial America.	

Part III: The Establishment Clause

What is an example of a relatively easy case involving the Establishment Clause?	
What are the three most common types of Establishment cases?	1.
	2.
	3.

Part IV: The Free Exercise Clause

The Free Exercise Clause is used in a variety of legal challenges, like...	
when the government bans behavior that a person’s religion requires. What is an example?	
when the government requires conduct that a person’s religion bans. What is an example?	
when individuals claim that laws burden religious observance. What is an example?	

In addition to <i>Reynolds v. United States</i> , what are <u>two</u> Free Exercise cases discussed?		
Case	Brief Background	Supreme Court’s Ruling
<i>Reynolds v. United States (1878)</i>		

Notes and Questions: