

396 Topics in US History: Religion and Morality in Early American Society

Satisfies: SBS+

M/W 9:30 – 10:50 am

Prof. Ben Loyns

This course examines the way in which Christianity and the Enlightenment influenced early American conceptions of religion and morality. The course is divided into three sections. The first traces the migration of various groups of Christians to North America during the seventeenth century, including Puritans, Anglican, Quakers, and Catholics, and describes their influence on early colonial societies. The second examines the arrival of Enlightenment philosophy in North America during the late seventeenth century, and considers the challenge that it posed to religious conceptions of intellectual and moral authority. The third and final section examines the way in which spiritual and intellectual leaders throughout the colonies responded to the Enlightenment, and in the process fashioned the moral and religious landscape in which the United States came into being. A significant portion of the course readings will be drawn from primary sources, including the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, and the writings of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and other founding fathers.