

2004-2005 Executive Precepts Program

(Philadelphia, Princeton, and New York City)

Sponsored by the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions
Princeton University

Religion and Politics

The topic of this year's seminar will be **Religion and Politics**. In classical paganism, religion was in the service of the state, because the goal of religion was to petition the gods for the good of the state. The development of Socratic philosophy, on the one hand, and Christianity, on the other, challenged this view. They proposed that the purpose of human existence was to flourish, not so much in this life as in the next; therefore, they concluded, the state's purpose should be to prepare the souls of its citizens for the next life. In the first four classes, we will look at this debate. In the last four classes, we will consider how in the modern period the desire for religious freedom, and for intellectual freedom more broadly, has led people to try to turn politics away from questions of the soul and limit it to affairs strictly of this world.

Schedule and Reading List

- *October 2004: Plato, Apology*
- *November 2004: Augustine, City of God, IV.1-9, 14-25; V.12-21, 24-26*
- *December 2004: Machiavelli, The Prince (selections)*
- *January 2005: Shakespeare, Richard II*
- *February 2005: Milton, Paradise Lost, II.1-505, III.1-415, IV.1-114, IX.455-1185*
- *March 2005: Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, III.19, "Of Christian Liberty"*
- *April 2005: Mill, On Liberty, ch.1 and 3.*
- *May 2005: Solzhenitsyn, Gulag Archipelago, Volume II, Part IV.*
- *June 2005: Precept conducted by Professor Robert P. George*
 - Madison's Memorial and Remonstrance
 - Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists
 - George Washington's National Day of Thanksgiving Proclamation of October 13, 1789

- Lincoln's proclamation of a National Day of Prayer and Fasting on September 26, 1861 (issued after the defeat of the Union army at Bull Run)
- Lincoln's proclamation of a National Fast day on March 30, 1863
- Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address