

# ***BlogBooker***

Low resolution pictures

From Blog to Book.

[religioninpublicschoolsblog.wordpress.com](http://religioninpublicschoolsblog.wordpress.com)

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	September . . . . .	5
	About (2015-09-28 18:07) . . . . .	5
1.2	October . . . . .	5
	Why is it Not Allowed to Teach Religion in Public Schools? (2015-10-12 16:10) . . . . .	5
	One nation under God, why can't we pray in public schools? (2015-10-14 20:23) . . . . .	6
1.3	November . . . . .	7
	Before we play, let's pray. (2015-11-03 01:04) . . . . .	7
	Yoga: Strength, Flexibility and Balance (2015-11-03 18:18) . . . . .	8
	Florida Schools and Satanic Temples (2015-11-10 00:56) . . . . .	8
	If religion can't be taught in public schools, why can it be taught at public universities? (2015-11-12 16:03) . . . . .	9
	Public University religious organizations are permitted. How come? (2015-11-12 16:33) . . . . .	10
	Summary with my views on Religion in Public Schools (2015-11-12 16:45) . . . . .	11

# 1. 2015

## 1.1 September

### **About (2015-09-28 18:07)**

My name is Megan Kroh and I am a senior at Florida State University. This blog is for my REL1300 class. I chose Religion in Public Schools as the topic because it is a highly controversial issue in the world today which interests me. Please Enjoy!

---

## 1.2 October

### **Why is it Not Allowed to Teach Religion in Public Schools? (2015-10-12 16:10)**

The general rule regarding religion in curriculum is, "Public schools may not teach religion, although teaching about religion in a secular context is permitted. The Bible may be taught in a school, but only for its historical, cultural or literary value and never in a devotional, celebratory or doctrinal manner, or in such a way that encourages acceptance of the Bible as a religious document."

Yes this rule stands, but why is it in action? There are many views regarding religion in the curriculum of public schools. When thinking about your position on it, it is important to consider the context in which religion is being taught.

It is constitutional to teach about religion in certain instances. For educational purposes, religion is important when discussing history and literature. School districts may educate students about the history, customs, and symbols of traditional celebrations.

But, teaching religion is unconstitutional. *McCullum v. Board of Education* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court barred religious instruction in our public schools. In the U.S. today, 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 3 young persons identifies as "non-religious." Many people argue that if schools are going to teach religions, they must teach atheism as well. Teachers, and people in general, most likely do not know as much about other religions, or lack of, than their own. There is no way that you could teach as passionate about religions that you do not practice or know and understand as much about. Your views and beliefs would appear when teaching about religions. Children's brains are like sponges. They are influenced and pressured the most in the younger years, prior to college. Therefore, if religion were taught in school, their teacher could be pressuring them or influencing them to practice the religion they personally do. This would be going against what the parents want, as well as what they are practicing at home and in the religious setting. If this were the case, freedom of religion would not be taking place. This would be demonstrating pressing one religion over others in the school setting.

If religion were allowed in public schools, there would be many arguments regarding everyday functions in the school. The comic below is a wonderful example of this. For example, Jewish people eat Kosher, while many other religions enjoy eating turkey, etc. It is impossible to provide separate kitchens, dishwashers, food choices and standardizations for each religion. They would clash too much. It is not possible to suit every religion in place where so many exist. All these arguments and conflicts would create such a distraction to the learning environment and area where you are supposed to feel comfortable to attend.



---

jlcrow (2015-10-12 16:42:47)

This is a good first post. It gets to the heart of the legal requirements and then looks at implications of religious instruction in schools. Well done. Yet, it also introduces a few questions. First, what if the person instructing the class was trained in religious studies? You are currently taking a course in religion at a public university. Your instructors have been trained in the discipline and are very cognizant of the rules set forth by the Supreme Court. I would guess you feel comfortable in the class that you are learning about religion in a neutral way. Couldn't this also be done in the high school level? Would you think differently if the instructor were trained to be neutral? You also mention teaching atheism. This brings up a very sticky question. Is atheism a religion or belief system? Or is it the lack of belief? The former makes it on par with other religions, the latter argues it is not a religion. The implications are significant. I say this because in South Florida over the last year, there has been debates about what religious literature can be handed out to students. The school was interested in giving out Christian literature but had to open the offer to all religious groups. One group that was interested in distributing literature was The Freedom From Religion Foundation, an atheist group. Their proposed pamphlet was seen as offensive by some. You can see details here: <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/brittany-m-hughes/illustration-be-handed-out-public-schools-human-bible-sexually> The point is, however, that in making the move to distribute literature, they basically had to define atheism as an alternative religious tradition. What are the implications of this? I hope future posts dig into the issues because this is a fascinating topic!

mlkroh (2015-10-12 19:30:16)

Thank you for your comment. If an instructor is trained in religious studies, they are very aware of what they are teaching. For a lot of people, it may be hard to teach neutrally. This course has done a great job of teaching neutrally, but in high school and below, school districts do not have as much funding to train teachers in order to teach how it is taught in the college level. If the instructor were trained to be neutral I would feel that negative effects would not take place such as controversy, but it would be hard to do. Now that you bring it up, atheism is considered a belief in my book. The implications of defining atheism as an alternative religious belief when distributing literature would cause school districts to require many more resources than they currently have. This would cost more money, which they don't have, to produce literature for every religion. I will get more into the topic of literature distribution in a later post.

### **One nation under God, why can't we pray in public schools? (2015-10-14 20:23)**

Everyday in school, students recite the Pledge of Allegiance. If I am not mistaken, the Pledge of Allegiance comes close to the end with, "One nation, under God." If students in public school systems are allowed to say the Pledge of Allegiance everyday then why can't they pray? Almost all religions worship God. Today, students are only allowed to pray individually and silently. The courts have declared government-fostered prayers unconstitutional - those led, required, sanctioned, scheduled or suggested by officials. Some say that public schools exist to educate, not to evangelize. Making prayer an official part of the school day is coercive and invasive. I personally disagree. I think prayer

should be allowed in the classroom. Teachers run their classroom in their own way. I also believe that if a student wishes to not partake in the prayer, then that is allowed. Therefore; the rights of the student is protected as well as the freedom of religion. This then brings up the issue of students being “minors,” and legally not able to make their own decisions. In my last post, I touched on how parents control the religion of their child. I feel that his argument cannot be brought up once again with why we cannot pray in public schools. The teachers are not teaching religion, they are only practicing their religion by saying a prayer and offering students to join in. What would happen if you were Islamic and had to pray to 5 times daily. That would involve you taking time out of your day at noon to pray. Could you not be allowed to teach in a public school? This question leads to many branches of different questions and instances. To sum it up, I think we would be able to pray in public schools. The only reason we can't, is “because the government said so.”

Below is an addition link of why some people, like me, feel we should be allowed to pray in public schools.

<http://www.restore-christian-america.org/reasons.html>

---

## 1.3 November

### **Before we play, let's pray. (2015-11-03 01:04)**

As you read in my last post, prayer in public school systems is prohibited. When I was in high school, I clearly remember praying before my sports games. This was not just with my teams. I saw sports teams from multiple public schools pray before the game clock started ticking. This is confusing because the ban of prayer is enforced in schools but not school related activities. Reports have explained how some coaches, mainly football, have been suspended for leading team prayers, or even praying on the field. One report explains that A high school coach was threatened by the school district that he would receive disciplinary action if he ever prayed on school property within sight of his prayers. I have included the link to the full article below. The final verdict ended up that the coach got a lot of support, but the superintendent decided to suspend the coach.

Although articles such as the one discussed above can be found all over the internet, this issue does not seem to be one that shines above others. Prayer in public schools is regulated much more than prayer on the field. Both student athletes, as well as coaches, lead prayers before practices and games. I students do not wish to pray, they do not have to practice the prayer. I feel that should be the view in public school districts. These on the field prayers are in no way enforcing student athletes to practice Christianity or another religion. Every person is entitled to their beliefs. Many are similar, but those that do not believe, there is no harm in having someone pray for your safety and tenacious efforts on the field.



<http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/10/29/high-school-football-coach-suspended-for-praying-after-game/>

---


### **Yoga: Strength, Flexibility and Balance (2015-11-03 18:18)**

Yoga is known to be an aspect of the Hindu religion. An issue came up in April concerning if teaching yoga in schools violated religious freedom. The issue arose in a San Diego County school system when parents felt that teaching yoga as an alternative to traditional gym classes was violating the religious rights of the students or their parents. The trial court determined that yoga classes in the district are devoid of any religious, mystical, or spiritual trappings. Instead, the practice is taught in a secular way to promote strength, flexibility and balance. There are no rituals occurring in the classroom and no one is worshipping the sun or leading Hindu rites.

I agree with the trial court's decision. Throughout the nation, the practice of yoga is very popular to people of all religions. The concept of yoga in the United States is in fact to promote strength, flexibility, and balance. These benefits of performing yoga are the reasons why many people chose to take yoga classes at a studio, not to practice the Hindu religion.

I understand how yoga can be a controversial topic in public schools. Demographics are an important factor in whether this practice violates religious freedom. As I stated above, yoga is very popular in the United States as a fitness regimen. Therefore, yoga being taught instead of traditional gym classes is for physical activity, not for religious purposes. If we were in a geographic location where Hinduism is the dominant religion, then people would view the teaching of yoga in public schools as a promotion factor Hinduism.

I have included the article discussed at the beginning of my post below.

 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/06/school-yoga-religious-freedom\\_n\\_7011708.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/06/school-yoga-religious-freedom_n_7011708.html)

---

### **Florida Schools and Satanic Temples (2015-11-10 00:56)**

A Florida School District abandoned its plans to allow Christian groups to hand out Bibles after atheist groups threatened to distribute their controversial materials. In observance of Religious Freedom Day, outside religious groups were going to hand out Bibles to those students who wished to accept them. In response, the Satanic Temple and Freedom From Religion Foundation decided to protest. They said that they would hand out pamphlets and coloring books that promote non-belief. This coloring book was titled, "Satanic Children's Big Book of Activities." The pamphlets they desired to disperse describes the Bible as an, "X-rated book."

As a result of this, the school board came to a conclusion to review its policy about materials made available for students.

In the past, atheist materials have been permitted, but now the coloring book and pamphlet are not. This caused much uproar and the FFRF protest worked exactly as they wanted it to.

This is a hard topic for me to opionate for. I have a cousin who is atheist, but he sits through the family prayers and attends church with us. Therefore, I am not faced with atheist people who are against Christianity and the Bible. When it comes to distribution of materials, I feel that any materials at all should be either permitted, or not permitted. Distinguishing which can and can't be disbursed is sort of like segregation and discrimination, which last I heard was unlawful and illegal.

In regards to observance of Religious Freedom Day, I feel that it should not formally be recognized in the public school system at all. Recognizing it passes the line of religion in public schools. Personally, I think it should be recognized as a religious holiday where students cannot be punished for not attending school on that day. Otherwise, I do not think is should be recognized in the public school system



Read the article [HERE!](#)

---

### **If religion can't be taught in public schools, why can it be taught at public universities? (2015-11-12 16:03)**

I am sure that from my past posts you have figured out that religion cannot be taught in public schools. If you are like me, you have first hand experience that religion can in fact be taught at public universities. From my point of view, I would say that religion can be taught in public universities because the courses are being taught about a religion, not as a worship for that religion. Any student can enroll to take a religion course and a certified, well-educated teacher can teach the class.

The issue that may arise from teaching religion in public universities is that the state funds some of the tuition being used to take this class. Examples of this are Bright Futures scholarships and Florida Pre-Paid. These scholarships are from the state. There is big talk about the separation of church and state. I am not quite sure how I could argue the point of using that money to pay tuition for religion classes. All I can think of is that the student is choosing to

take this class. Therefore, it is choice of education and the class is for educational purposes only, not to worship or persuade any student to convert.

I feel that public schools should be allowed to implement religion as a voluntary elective. If they hire a qualified, well-educated teacher to teach this class, then there will be no issue with students feeling as if they are being persuaded to practice a certain religion. The religion class would be a voluntary elective and it would include multiple religions, in the curriculum. Therefore, it would not just concentrate on one. This course would broaden the knowledge and understanding of concepts in life and history for the core curriculum in public schools today.

X

---

### **Public University religious organizations are permitted. How come? (2015-11-12 16:33)**

This is my fourth year on a public university campus. Everyday I pass by multiple flyers, banners, and sidewalk chalkings. Two organizations that I see abundantly on these advertisements are CRU and RUF. These two organizations are college religious organizations. So, why are they allowed on campus? They would not be allowed of a public school campus.

I feel that these organizations are allowed because they are voluntary and extracurricular. They act as a worship service for students who wish to practice their faith through their troublesome college career. These organizations are in no way funded by the university. I have participated in these organizations and retreats. From experience, these organizations do a lot of fundraising as well as you, as a participant, are required to fund your retreat expenses.

I am not sure why people would not approve of religious organizations on public university campuses. They are self-funded, extracurricular, and voluntary.

Even if these organizations were to receive a small amount of funding, which they don't, denying them on this right would be against freedom of religion. These organizations are for practicing, not teaching about. They act as worship services where you do learn, but you worship and practice your beliefs. They involve a minister and all. With that being said, they have nothing to do with the actual university, only that it is for students who attend it. Visitors are allowed to come as well. It may be for students, but all are welcomed. Organizations like these are some student's lifelines and escapes that get them through the tough college years and homesickness or hard family times. They are a huge asset to college campuses and need to remain.

I have included the link to FSU-CRU for anyone who is interested. CRU is the religious organization that I belong to here on campus and it plays a large part in my college life and experience.

<http://fsucru.com>



## Summary with my views on Religion in Public Schools (2015-11-12 16:45)

Over this semester I have voiced my opinion on many different topics regarding religion in public schools and universities. In summary, I feel that religion should be allowed be taught in public institutions. That is a risky statement to say, but it comes with its limitations. I feel that it should be taught under the right circumstances. There should be a proper, well-educated, and certified teacher. The course should be voluntary, and organizations should be extra-curricular.

In today's day and age, people look too deeply into religion in public institutions. Every person always thinks the worst about any action and that everyone is out to change the world to how they personally want it. Well to their surprise, this is not the case. For public institutions to incorporate religion, this is sometimes considered as student's escape, lifeline, and guidance through troublesome times. Some students need this additional information about certain religions to tie into other subjects to grasp the full understanding of a concept. Religion being taught in public schools is in no way trying to convert students or pursued them. Students choose to take the course or join the organization. In public schools for minors, parents have a say in what optional electives their students take. If they do not want them to take religion, then they are not required to. Once you hit 18, you are most likely in college and legally are allowed to make decisions for yourself. In these past two sentences, I point out that taking religion is a choice. You have the option to learn about religions and practice religions. Religion in public institutions is just providing optional and additional education for those who wish. It is not forcing a certain religion or practice on you. I wish the world would understand this, and forget their demeaning thoughts on it.

✍

---

*gads*

BlogBook v0.8,  
L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X 2<sub>ε</sub> & GNU/Linux.  
<http://www.blogbooker.com>

Edited: November 30, 2015