



Jan. 8, 2008

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Contemporary Supreme Court and Religion To be Topic of Jan. 14 Talk at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO – What are the boundaries of religious freedom? What did the country's founders intend for the separation of church and state? What role should religion have in shaping American public policy? How will an Obama Presidency shape the Supreme Court?

Those questions and more will be examined by constitutional law scholar Vincent Phillip Muñoz at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 14, in Room 220 in the University Union at Cal Poly.

Muñoz, whose expertise also includes American politics and political philosophy, will present "In God We Don't Trust: The Supreme Court and Religion." He will talk about the current Supreme Court's positions on religion and how it might change under an Obama administration. In addition, he will examine several controversial decisions of the past few years, particularly in relationship to the posting of the Ten Commandments in public spaces.

Muñoz is currently the William E. Simon Visiting Fellow in Religion and Public Life at the James Madison Program at Princeton University. He is on leave Tufts University, where he is assistant professor of political science.

Muñoz's recent research has focused on the theme of religious liberty and the American Constitution. His first book, "God and the Founders: Madison, Washington, and Jefferson on Religious Liberty," will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2009. He is working on a second book that examines the original meaning of the Constitution's Religion Clauses. Articles from that project have appeared in Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy and University of Pennsylvania Journal of Constitutional Law.

Muñoz has also published articles in American Political Science Review, The Review of Politics, The Wall Street Journal, and The Claremont Review of Books. He has given commentary on National Public Radio, Voice of America Radio, and the Fox News Channel. In 2004 he testified before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee on the matter of "Hostility to Religious Expression in the Public Square."

The presentation is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by Cal Poly's Religious Studies Program, part of the Political Science Department. For more information contact Stephen R. Lloyd-Moffett of Cal Poly's Religious Studies Program at 756-2475 or sloydmo@calpoly.edu.

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