

History 3805
Religion in American History

Time: M-W-F, 11:25 AM-12:30 PM
Room: Riley 2316

Professor: Dr. Jonathan Den Hartog

Office: N3219

Office Hours: T-Th, 2:45-4:45 PM; M, W, F, 1:30-3:00 PM

By Appointment

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Introduction

What have Americans believed and how have they acted on that belief? Although it might be easy to assume that American religion has always looked like the traditions we are used to, historical investigation will reveal that great variety has existed throughout American history. This course will seek to come to terms with that variety. We will talk about a wide range of religious groups: Protestants of dizzying array, Roman Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and even smaller religious movements. We will attempt to understand how religion has functioned differently for men and women, whites and non-white groups, the powerful and the disenfranchised.

This course will also seek to understand what is “American” about American religion. Has the fact that these religious groups have developed in America shaped their character? We will wrestle with the question of American exceptionalism. American religious believers have both encouraged and criticized the belief that America as a nation (and America as an experience) is special and unique. We will examine that belief this semester.

Also, this class will investigate the content of religious faith in America. This will thus be partly a theological investigation. We will ask questions such as “What has been believed?” and “How have those beliefs changed?” The course will also seek to understand religious practice. We will be concerned with what forms religion has taken and how those forms have changed over time.

Finally, the course will allow time for personal reflection and discussion of larger concerns. For instance, might understanding of American religion help us better understand what America is, as a nation? On an individual level, understanding the history of American belief should cause us to reconsider our own backgrounds and beliefs.

Purpose of the class

This class has several purposes:

- *To provide students with a narrative of the developments within American religion.
- *To introduce students to important movements, leaders, denominations, theologians, ideas, and practices within American religion.

*To emphasize the variety and diversity within American religious experience, including Protestant, Roman Catholic, and non-Christian religious movements.

*To introduce students to the academic debates and literature relating to American religious history.

*To help students situate their personal histories within developments of American religion.

*To continue students' development as readers, thinkers, and writers.

Texts

Students should purchase these texts for the class:

Larry Eskridge, *God's Forever Family: The Jesus People Movement in America* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Edwin Gaustad and Mark Noll, eds., *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, 3rd edition, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

George Marsden, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment* (NY: Basic Books, 2014).

Mark Massa, *Catholics and American Culture: Fulton Sheen, Dorothy Day, and the Notre Dame Football Team* (NY: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1999).

Chaim Potok, *The Chosen* (NY: Fawcett, 1987).

If you do not already possess a copy, you should also purchase Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 8th Edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

Assignments

Papers: Students will write 2 critical reviews and 1 long research paper.

The two critical reviews will ask students to engage critically with a historical monograph of their choosing (with professor's approval). Each paper should not merely summarize the work but should clearly identify its main points and then assess its claims. These papers will be 3-4 pages in length and will be due October 1 and November 10.

With the research paper (of a final length of 10-12 pages), the students will work with primary sources which they have found, beyond what are used in class. Students will thus be able to research a topic of interest to them. This paper should present a coherent historical argument which draws on both primary sources and applicable secondary sources. Each student is responsible for submitting materials at each of these steps:

1. Consultation with the professor. Students must meet with the professor to discuss possible topics.

2. A paragraph description of ideas for the paper. This should include a bibliography of at least 12 items which the student will consult for the paper. This bibliography should include both primary and secondary sources. (Due October 13)
3. The final draft. (Due December 8)

Note: I will not require a rough draft, although I am happy to read drafts given to me at least a week before the paper is due.

Exams: Students will sit for two midterms and a final exam. Exams will evaluate both the student's grasp of factual material and ability to use the readings to craft an interpretation of the past.

Quizzes: The professor reserves the right to give either announced or unannounced quizzes over the readings for any given class. Quiz grades will factor into the class participation grade.

Discussion Leader: Because every good discussion requires a spark, each student will take their turn sparking discussion three times during the semester. For a given class period, the discussion leader will reflect on the day's readings. The leader will then prepare two good questions over the readings, make an observation about the readings, and point out a significant quote. The leader should type two copies of this preparation: one for himself, the other to hand to the professor before class begins. The leader should then be prepared to share her reflections with the class.

Class Participation: Discussion is encouraged throughout the class. Students should be ready both to ask and to answer questions, as well as engage with their fellow students. Students' responsibility for class participation does not end with their stint as discussion leader.

Grading

The final grade will be derived from the assignments according to this formula:

First critical review	10%
Second critical review	15%
Research paper	25%
Midterm 1	10%
Midterm 2	10%
Final	15%
Class Participation	15%
(6% for leading discussion+9% overall participation)	

Attendance Policy

Attendance for this class is necessary and expected. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in the loss of a half of a letter grade off the final grade, and each additional absence will result in the loss of an additional half of a letter grade.

Late Paper Policy

Papers should be handed in at the class for which they are due. If they are handed in later on the same day they will still be counted as 1 day late. For each day a paper is late, it will be marked down half a letter grade. I will not accept papers more than five days late.

Note: I am willing to consider extensions if you have a good reason, but you will need to contact me BEFORE the class the paper is due. No extensions will be given after the paper is due.

Statement on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. Any paper proven to be plagiarized intentionally will receive, at minimum, an automatic 0 for the grade. University of Northwestern policy recommends failure of the course for most plagiarism cases. For more details, consult the Student Handbook. More guidelines on avoiding plagiarism will be provided before papers are due.

Office Hours

I will be available in my office Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:45-4:45 PM and Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1:30-3:00 PM. I will also be available by appointment and am happy to consult via e-mail.

E-mail

E-mail is a valuable tool for class communication. For this reason, you should regularly check your e-mail (i.e., several times a week). You are welcome to communicate with me via e-mail, but please remember that this is a professional communication in which standards for grammar and formality should be observed.

Please note: E-mail received after 9 P.M. will be answered the following day.

Other Considerations

In respect of the professor and other students, please do not wear hats to class. Also, silence or turn off your cell phone before entering the classroom. Should your cell phone ring in class, you will be expected to bring treats for the class at the next session. Also, please do not send or read text messages during class. Using your cell phone in class will result in your receiving negative class participation credit for the day. Any laptop usage during class time must only be for this class.

CAPSS/DOSS Statement

UNW students requiring accommodations for academic support in association with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are directed to notify the Disabilities Office for Support Services (DOSS) immediately for approval.

In addition, CAPSS houses the following programs for further academic support:

- ALPHA (writing and subject tutoring, N4012 • 651-628-3316)
- CLT (cultural or international transition)
- PSP (academic skills and coaching)

Contact the CAPSS Office Coordinator for more information:

651-628-3241 • N4232 • academicsupportservices@unwsp.edu

Schedule

August

- 27 Introductions
- 29 European backgrounds
-Mark Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World*, 1-26 [moodle]

September

- 3 Native American religion
-G&N, 1:9-23
- 5 New England Puritanism
-G&N, 1:63-67, 69-72
-John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity" [moodle]
- 8 New England Puritanism
-G&N, 1:96-105
- 10 Quakers, Moravians, Anglicans, and Others in Colonial America
-G&N, 1:72-83
- 12 The 1st Great Awakening
-G&N, 1:160-176
- 15 The 1st Great Awakening and Jonathan Edwards
-G&N, 1:176-190
- 17 Religion and the American Revolutionary Era
-G&N, 1:200-228
- 19 Religion and the American Revolutionary Era
-G&N, 1:229-241, 246-251, 299-303
- 22 Religion and the American Revolutionary Era
-G&N, 1:255-262, 266-271
-Timothy Dwight, "The Duty of Americans at the Present Crisis" [moodle]
-Den Hartog Chapter, "Federalist Politics and Religious Struggle in the New Nation" [moodle]
- 24 **Exam 1**
- 26 No Class: Professor at Conference

- 29 The 2nd Great Awakening
-Charles Finney, "Lectures on Revival" [moodle]
-G&N, 1:325-327, 352-357, 375-379

October

- 1 Revival and Reform
Critical Book Review #1 Due
-G&N, 1:304-319
- 3 Women and Religion in the 19th century
-Excerpt from Koester, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Spiritual Life* [moodle]
-G&N, 1:526-529
- 6 African-American Religion in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries
-G&N, 1:471-489
- 8 Religion and the Civil War
-G&N, 1:489-500, 520-526, 529-543
- 10 Religion and the Civil War
-G&N, 1:544-578
- 13 Catholicism in the 19th century
Paper Topic Paragraph and Bibliography Due
-G&N, 1:379-384, 437-451, 459-466
- 15 The Rise of Mormonism
-G&N, 1:338-351
- 17 Mormonism
- 22 Tensions in the late 19th century
-G&N, 2:322-343
- 24 Fundamentalism and Modernism: Backgrounds
-G&N, 2:278-280, 288-291, 364-369
- 27 Fundamentalism and Modernism
-G&N, 2:343-352, 401-406
- 29 Early Pentecostals
-G&N, 2:286-288, 291-298
-Begin Potok, 1-90
- 31 **Exam 2**

November

- 3 Judaism in America
-Potok, 93-182
- 5 Judaism in America
-Potok, 183-271
- 7 Catholicism in the 20th Century
-Massa 1-56
- 10 Catholicism in the 20th Century
Critical Book Review #2 Due
-Massa 82-101, 128-147
- 12 Catholicism in the 20th Century
-Massa 148-171, 195-221
-Marsden, ix-xxxix
- 14 Religious Liberalism in the Mid-20th Century
-Marsden, 43-125
- 17 Billy Graham and the Neo-Evangelical movement
-G&N, 2:432-435, 559-563
-Eskridge, 1-53
- 19 Reading Day
-Eskridge, 54-178
- 21 The Jesus People
-Eskridge, 209-241, 266-284
-Optional: Eskridge, 242-265
- 24 The African-American Experience in the 20th Century
-G&N, 1:587-589; 2:78-80, 155-158

December

- 1 Civil Rights as a Religious Struggle
-G&N, 2:490-498, 610-612
-King, Letter from a Birmingham City Jail [moodle]
- 3 Women and Religion in the 20th Century
-G&N, 2:69-71, 623-637

- 5 Religious Diversity in Modern America
-G&N, 2:552-558, 584-595, 613-620
- 8 The Religious Right
Research Paper Due
-G&N, 2:655-672, 679-690
-Marsden, 127-150
- 10 Contemporary Evangelicalism
-G&N, 2:709-716
-*Time* Photo Essay of 25 Most Influential Evangelicals [moodle]
-*Christianity Today* article on the Twin Cities [moodle]
-Michael Hamilton, "The Triumph of the Praise Songs," *Christianity Today*, July 12, 1999 [moodle]
-D.H. Williams, "Contemporary Music: The Cultural Medium and the Christian Message," *Christianity Today*, June 2011 [moodle]
-Optional: Molly Worthen articles [moodle]
- 12 Conclusions
-Marsden, 151-178

Final Exam:

Tuesday, December 16, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM