

HISTORY 2430
HISTORY OF AMERICAN RELIGION
SPRING 2015

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Class Day & Time: MWF, 9-9:50
Classroom No.: TBA
Office Hours: W, 10-noon

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore religion in American history from the colonial era to the present, focusing on Protestantism(s), Catholicism, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam. The first half of the course examines American religion in the context of the Revolution and the Enlightenment, the emergence of religious pluralism, utopianism, and reform throughout the nineteenth century, the lived religious experience of immigrants, and the character of African American religion. We will turn our attention in the second half of the course to “civil religion” in the Cold War era, religion in the American South, the relationship between religion and the civil rights movement, the Second Vatican Council, counter-cultural religious groups of the 1960s-70s, the development of the so-called “Religious Right,” and the current state of religion in America. Certain themes will run throughout this course, such as religious utopianism, the role of civil religion in the U.S., the relationship between religious “insiders” and “outsiders,” and the reciprocal influence of religion and American popular culture.

ASSIGNED READINGS

- R. Marie Griffith, *American Religions: A Documentary History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Nancy Lusignan Schultz, *Fire and Roses: The Burning of the Charlestown Convent, 1834* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000)
- Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (Random House, 1990)
- Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X: As Told to Alex Haley* (New York: Ballentine [1965], 1993).
- Occasional readings posted to Blackboard

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To think critically about the relationship between religion and history, not seeing the two as mutually exclusive entities
- To recognize what is particularly unique to *American* religious history by exploring major themes and developments in the subject

- To identify major movements, trends, and people in American religious history
- To allow you to think like a historian by analyzing, discussing, and writing about primary sources from the past

ASSESSMENT

Midterm Exam: 100 pts
Participation: 50 pts
Reflection Paper: 50 pts
Book Reviews (3): 75 pts
Film Review: 25 pts
Final Exam: 100 pts
Total: 400 pts

GRADING SCALE

A: 100%-94%; A-: 93%-90%; B+: 89%-87%; B: 86%-84%; B-: 83%-80%; C+: 79%-77%; C: 76%-74%; C-: 73%-70%; D+: 69%-67%; D: 66%-64%; D-: 63%-60%; F: 59%-0%

READINGS

For each week (including week one) you will need to have the reading assignments completed by Friday. It is to your advantage to have them read earlier, as I will often incorporate them into the lectures, but we will discuss the readings on Friday. By that time, having listened to lectures and read the material, you should be able to engage in thoughtful and hopefully thought-provoking class discussion. While you will be accountable for the content of the readings on the exams and in writing assignments, our discussions will only be as good as the preparation and thought you put into the readings.

REFLECTION PAPER

You will be asked to prepare a 5-7 page paper on a religious group of your choice in American history. In this paper, you will be required to identify the movement, describe the goals and values of its members, place the movement in context (e.g. was it a response to certain events or social issues of the time?), and analyze its impact on American history. You will need to reference at least five secondary sources and three primary sources. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and 12-point, Times New Roman font. Before the due date of this paper, you must meet with me or Sam Spurgin to discuss your topic and possible sources. I will pass out more detailed instructions in class.

BOOK REVIEW

You will be asked to write a book review for each of the assigned books (excluding the Griffith reader) for this course. A formal book review must include a summary of the book (no longer than a few paragraphs), and a description of the works strengths and weaknesses (we'll talk more about this in class). The book review must be 2-3 pages, Times New Roman font, 12 pt size, and double-spaced. Due dates are posted in the schedule.

FILM REVIEW

You will be asked to write a review for one of two of the three films we will watch. In your review address the role of religion in the film, the way in which a particular religious person/group/belief system are portrayed, whether or not you think the portrayal is accurate and why, and the strengths and weaknesses of the film. Page length and formatting should match that of the book review.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Papers are due at the beginning of the class period on the assigned due date, even if you are unable to make it to class that day. Unless otherwise cleared by me, late papers will receive a one letter grade deduction for each day of the week (including weekends) that they are late. I will not accept papers that are more than two weeks late. You may turn in your papers as a hard copy and/or as an email attachment. If sending your paper as an email attachment, you are responsible for checking with me to be sure that it arrived on time. If it did not come through the e-mail system, it is still considered late.

ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance is expected. While I will not take roll, the quickest way to fall behind in class and lower your grade is to be absent. If you do miss class, you are responsible for contacting me to find out what you missed. If you know you will be absent on a day of an exam (for, say, a Mizzou athletic event) you must contact me ahead of time to make arrangements to take the test. If you are ill on the day of the test, you need to inform me before the test. If you do not contact me ahead of time, you will be able to make up the exam, but only for half credit.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

You should not use cell phones during class unless of an emergency. If you do use a cell phone during class, to text, surf the web, etc., I reserve the right to count you absent for the day, which can have a detrimental effect on your grade. You should stay in class the entire time period and you should not get

up and leave unless you have an emergency, (just let me know after class what was up). Sleeping, excessive talking to neighbors, reading other materials in class, or other detracting activities are also to be avoided.

The key justification for these policies. In our culture today, it can be a challenge for us to stay attentive for a relatively long period of time. We are used to getting distracted and we often turn our attention to something else at the first hint of boredom. Some tasks, however, deserve our full attention, whether they are immediately entertaining or not. For the sake of professional development, respect for others, character development and effective learning, it is important that we cultivate habits of attentiveness in class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

ACCOMODATIONS

If you anticipate barriers related to the format of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible. If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams), please register with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu>), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

01/19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day *No Class*

01/21: Introduction

01/23: Worlds Old and New

Reading: “Worlds Old and New,” in *Religion in American Life*, Jon Butler (on Blackboard); Calvin Martin, “The European Impact on the Culture of a Northeastern Algonquian Tribe: An Ecological Interpretation” (Blackboard)

WEEK 2:

01/26: Errand Into the Wilderness

01/28: Revival, Revolution, and Enlightenment

01/30: *The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson* (dramatic reading and discussion)

Reading: Griffith Reader: Doc. 1: William Bradford; Doc. 2: John Winthrop; Doc. 3: Samuel Sewall; Doc. 4: William Penn; Doc. 6: Jonathan Edwards and Charles Chauncy; Doc. 10: Thomas Jefferson and James Madison

WEEK 3:

02/02: Utopian Visions: Transcendentalists, Shakers, and the Oneida Community

02/04: Establishing Zion: Mormonism and the American Experience

02/06: Presentations (see handout)

Reading: Griffith Reader: Doc. 11: Joseph Smith and Ralph Waldo Emerson

WEEK 4:

02/09: Slave Religion and African American Resistance

02/11: The Democratization of Christianity

02/13: The Benevolent Empire: Evangelical Reform Movements

Reading: Schultz, part 1

WEEK 5:

02/16: The Protestant Crusade

02/18: A Communion of Immigrants

02/20: Solving a Problem Like Maria Monk

Reading: Schultz, part 2

WEEK 6:

02/23: Darwinism, the Social Gospel, and the Gospel of Wealth

02/25: The Souls of Black Folk and New Thought

02/27: Religion in the Southwest; ***Schultz Book Review Due***

Reading: Cather, part 1

WEEK 7:

03/02: *Hester Street*

03/04: *Hester Street*

03/06: Classroom Discussion

Reading: Cather, part 2

WEEK 8:

03/09: The Gospel According to the Klan

03/11: Religion and WWI

03/13: **Midterm Exam**

Reading: "Thank God for the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan!" in *The Gospel According to the Klan*, Kelly J. Baker (on Blackboard)

WEEK 9:

03/16: Sunday in America: Fundamentalism and Big Tent Revivals

03/18: The Long Loneliness: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement

03/20: Protestant, Catholic, Jew: Civil Religion in the Post-War Era; ***Cather Book Review Due***

Reading: Griffith Reader: Doc. 21: Harry Emerson Fosdick; Reinhold Niebuhr;

Doc. 23: Dorothy Day; Doc. 25: Will Herberg

WEEK 10: ***Spring Recess***

WEEK 11:

03/30: That Old Time Religion: Religious Experience in the South

04/01: Snake Handling Disciples: Religion in Appalachia

04/03: Discuss readings

Reading: Flannery O'Connor short stories (Blackboard)

WEEK 12:

04/06: Film: *The Apostle*

04/08: Film: *The Apostle*

04/10: Discussion; ***Film Review Due*** (*Hester Street* or *Apostle*)

Reading: "Salvation on Sand Mountain," in *Salvation on Sand Mountain*, Dennis Covington (on Blackboard)

WEEK 13:

04/13: Religion and the Civil Rights Movement

04/15: Vatican II and the Catholic Revolution

04/17: Listening to Oral Histories of the Civil Rights Movement and Vatican II

Reading: Malcolm X, part 1

WEEK 14:

04/20: Dharma Bums: Religion and Counter-Culture

04/22: The Nation of Islam

04/24: Book Discussion

Reading: Malcolm X, part 2

WEEK 15:

04/27: Film: *Jonestown*

04/29: Film: *Jonestown*

05/01: Discussion; ***Malcolm X Book Review Due***

Reading: TBA

WEEK 16:

05/04: Prosperity Gospel and the Emergence of the Religious Right

05/06: Religion in America Today; ***Reflection Paper Due***

05/08: **Reading Day—No Class**

Reading: Griffith Reader: Doc. 26: Stanley Hauerwas; Doc. 29: Richard Rodriguez; Doc. 30: U.S. Department of Ed. And Jeffrey Stout

Final Exam: TBA