

**RELIGION IN AMERICAN HISTORY**  
**840:319**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 1:10-2:30**  
**College Avenue Campus EDU 025B**  
**Fall 2015**

**Instructor:** Hilit Surowitz  
**Office Hours:** TBA  
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**Course Description:** This course offers a broad survey of the role of religion in American history and culture. We will explore the contours of religion in North America from the pre-Columbian period to the present. This course pays special attention to American religious diversity and the complexities of American religious life. We will look at the encounter and exchange that occurred among religious communities during the past 400 years, and the manner in which this influenced the development of a unique and dynamic North American religious landscape. Further we will explore the religious dimensions of gender, race, and the development of the interaction of American religion and politics.

During the course I would like you to consider the following questions: What is the role of religion in the development of the United States and American identity? How do (North) Americans embody, practice, and express their religions and religious identities? How does the American religious landscape influence, and how is it influenced by immigration, politics, technology, and broader social trends? And, what is and isn't unique about American religious history and culture?

This course fulfills CORE requirements: Writing and Communication, Revision (WCr), Writing and Communication in a Discipline (WCd), Historical Analysis (HST)

- H: Understand the bases and development of human society endeavors across time and place
- K: Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science
- I: Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors

The **Required Texts** for the course:

Textbooks are available at the Rutgers Bookstore, a Barnes & Noble College Bookstore—One Ferren Mall.

❖ Butler, Jon, Wacker, Grant & Balmer Randall. Religion in American Life: A Short History. Oxford University Press, 2003. (BWB)  
ISBN-10: 0195333292, ISBN-13: 978-0195333299

❖ Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.  
ISBN-10: 0374533407, ISBN-13: 978-0374533403

❖ ALL other articles and primary sources will be available on SAKAI.

❖ Other readings or media may be assigned during the course of the semester.

### **Attendance & Participation**

Students are expected to attend each class on time. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. You are permitted three unexcused absences. Following the third unexcused absence 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Students who encounter any extended problem with absences, for example, for medical or family emergencies, or religious reasons, must inform me in writing about the reason and duration of the absence. Decisions on excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Short quizzes may be given on a regular basis. There will be no make-ups for in-class quizzes or exams.

Student participation is an integral component for the success of this class. Course participants will be expected to arrive to class on time, and prepared to discuss the assigned readings. **Please bring assigned readings to class, as we will frequently consult the text, particularly the primary sources.** Participation not only means asking questions and involving oneself in the classroom discussion, it also means actively listening to others.

\*\*\* Students are required to read the materials in advance of our sessions.

### **Requirements:**

❖ Attendance, participation, in-class assignments, pop quizzes (10%)

❖ Essay #1 (3-4 pages)-Primary source analysis (10%)

\*\*\* due 10/6 [[peer review component]]

❖ Essay #2 (4-5 pages)-*When the Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* essay (15%)

\*\*\* due 11/25 [[peer review component TBA]]

❖ Essay #3- (8-10 pages) American Religious History Field-work paper (20%)

\*\*\* due 12/10 in class

❖ In-class midterm exam on October 20<sup>th</sup> (20%)

❖ Final Exam on December 15 from 12-3pm in our classroom (25%)

note: the final exam is scheduled by Rutgers University and will not be changed

❖ All students must come to office hours at least once during the semester. This should occur

before November 18<sup>th</sup> so that we can discuss your third paper assignment.

\*\*\*ALL of these components must be met to fulfill completion of the course\*\*\*

**Written work** will be graded on the basis of content, clarity of argument, quality of writing, and how well it analyzes the material and answers the questions. Written work, except for that which is a classroom assignment, must be typed (double-spaced, 12 pt. font), and spell-checked. One letter grade per day will be deducted for late papers unless you have a written medical excuse.

### **Classroom Policies:**

❖ Plagiarism and cheating will be penalized according to the full extent of University policy. Please consult Rutgers University's *Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students*:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

❖ Students with disabilities who require accommodations should provide me with their "accommodation letter" from the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Please consult the website of the Office of Disability Services for further information:

[http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=117](http://sas.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=135&Itemid=117)

❖ Note that I do not accept assignments submitted by email. All assignments must be submitted in hard-copy on the day that they are due.

❖ Evaluations will cover all course material, even if it is not specifically covered in class.

❖ Syllabus is subject to change.

## **•Schedule•**

### **•Pre-colonial and Colonial Religion•**

#### **Thursday 9/1**

Introduction

- Native American Creation Stories (in class)

#### **Thursday 9/3**

##### **Native American & African Religion**

- *Religion in American Life* (Butler, et al (BWB)) 1-20 (SAKAI)
- *The Bull Sublimis Deus* (1537)
- Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Argument of the Present Epitome, Presentation, Introduction to the Relation, On the Kingdoms that were once to be found on the Island of Hispaniola & On the Province of Terra Firma in the Part Called Florida* from An Account, Much Abbreviated, of the Destruction of the Indies. pgs. 1-7, 12-17, 69-70.

**Tuesday 9/8-NO CLASS (MONDAY CLASSES)**

**Thursday 9/10**

**Native American & African Religion**

- BWB 92-110
- Albert J. Raboteau, "African Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel," pgs. 73-87 (SAKAI)
- Phillis Wheatley, *On Being Brought From Africa to America* (1773), *Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield* (1770), *Thoughts on the Works of Providence* (1773) (SAKAI)

**Tuesday 9/15-No CLASS (take-home assignment to be submitted on 9/16)**

**Religion and Mission in New Spain and New France**

- BWB 21-46
- Rachel Wheeler, "Women and Christian Practice in a Mohican Village," pgs. 89-117 (SAKAI)

**Thursday 9/17**

**Religion in the British Colonies**

- BWB 47-71
- *Letter to the Indians*, William Penn (1681) (SAKAI)
- please print out and bring to class the in-class source packet

**Tuesday 9/22**

**Religious Diversity in the Colonies**

- BWB 72-91
- DISCUSS FINAL PAPER AND FIELDWORK

**Thursday 9/24 (Guided reading questions to be submitted in-class)**

**Colonial Christianity**

- BWB 111-152
  - John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity* (1753) (SAKAI)
- \*\*\*weather permitting, we will have a walking tour of New Brunswick; we will meet in front of the CAC Au Bon Pain in the Student Center. PLEASE NOTE: We will leave promptly at 1:00pm (10 minutes before class begins)

**Tuesday 9/29 (your introductory paragraph(s) of essay #1 must be submitted to me in hard-copy)**

**Religion and the American Revolution**

- BWB 133-152
- Thomas Jefferson, *Query XVII – The Different Religions Received into that State?* (1784) (SAKAI)
- Thomas Jefferson, *A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom* (1779) (SAKAI)
- James Madison, *Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments* (1785) (SAKAI)

**Thursday 10/1**

**Essay #1 in-class peer review \*\*\*you must bring TWO copies of your essay to class**

## •Religion in 19<sup>th</sup> Century United States•

### **Tuesday 10/6**

#### **Essay #1 due in class**

#### **Post-Revolutionary American Religion**

- BWB 155-170
- Bellah, Robert N. “Civil Religion in America.” *Daedalus*, 96:1 (1967): 1-21. (SAKAI)

### **Thursday 10/8**

#### **Awakenings, and the Role of Women in American Christianity**

- BWB 171-200
- Ann Braude, “Women’s History *Is* American Religious History,” pgs. 159-178 (SAKAI)

### **Tuesday 10/13**

#### **Mormonism in America**

- BWB 201-212
- Shipps, Jan. “The Genesis of Mormonism.” Religion and American Culture: A Reader. Ed. David G. Hackett. New York: Routledge, 1995. (SAKAI)
- Joseph Smith, *The Articles of Faith* (1842) (SAKAI)

### **Thursday 10/15**

**TBA**

### **Tuesday 10/20**

MIDTERM EXAMINATION (IN CLASS)

### **Thursday 10/22**

#### **Sojourners at Home**

- BWB 213-231
- Charles Joyner, “Believer I Know — The Emergence of African American Christianity,” pgs. 179-201 (SAKAI)
- Jarena Lee, *The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee* (1836) (SAKAI)
- Peter Randolph, *Plantation Churches: Visible and Invisible* (SAKAI)
- Sister Kelly, “Proud of the ‘Ole Time’ Religion” (SAKAI)

### **Tuesday 10/27**

#### **Religion of the ‘Lost Cause’ and the Postbellum Christianity**

- BWB 232-246
- Charles Wilson, “The Religion of the Lost Cause – Ritual and Organization of the Southern Civil Religion, 1865–1945,” pgs. 205-221 (SAKAI)
- William B. Gravely, “The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness in a Black American Freedom Celebrations, 1808-1863,” pgs. 121-138 (SAKAI)

### **Thursday 10/29**

#### **Immigration and its Challenges**

- BWB 247-273
- Josiah Strong, from *Our Country* (1886) (SAKAI)
- Alexis Toth, *Meeting with Archbishop John Ireland* (1889) (SAKAI)
- Abraham Cahan, *The Russian Jew in America* (July 1898) (SAKAI)
- The Pittsburgh Platform (1885) (SAKAI)

### **Tuesday 11/3**

#### **The 'Black Church'**

- BWB 292-307
- Evelyn Higgenbotham, "The Feminist Theology of the Black Baptist Church," pgs. 267-287 (SAKAI)
- DuBois, WEB. "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" & "Of the Faith of the Fathers." from *The Souls of Black Folk*, pgs. 43-53, 210-225. (SAKAI)

### **Thursday 11/5**

#### **Prophets and Visions**

- BWB 274-291
- Raymond J. DeMallie, "The Lakota Ghost Dance – An Ethnohistorical Account" by Raymond J. DeMallie, pgs. 315-330 (SAKAI)
- Video "*The Way West*" (in-class)

### **Tuesday 11/10**

#### **Fundamentalism**

- BWB 311-342
- Primary Source documents of the Scopes Trial particularly: Anti-evolution statute, Trail Excerpts-Day 2, 4, 7, 8, Bryan's Summation, Mencken's Trial Account: <http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/scopes/scopes.htm>

## **•Religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century United States•**

### **Thursday 11/12**

#### **Rise and Decline of Mainline Protestantism**

- BWB 343-382

### **Tuesday 11/17**

**\*\*\*\*Discuss *When the Spirit Catches You And You Fall Down***  
**(Essay #2 due on Wednesday 11/25 via SAKAI)**

### **Thursday 11/19**

#### **Civil Rights, Activism, and New Hope**

- James H. Cone, "Martin and Malcolm – Integration and Nationalism in African American Religious History," pgs. 397-411 (SAKAI)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (1963) (SAKAI)

- Malcolm X, *Letters from Abroad* (1964), & *The Harlem 'Hate Gang' Scare* (1964) (SAKAI)

## **Tuesday 11/24**

### **Neoevangelicalism**

- An Evangelical Manifesto  
[http://www.anevangelicalmanifesto.com/docs/Evangelical\\_Manifesto.pdf](http://www.anevangelicalmanifesto.com/docs/Evangelical_Manifesto.pdf)
- BWB 383-399
- film: *Friends of God* (in class)

## **\*\*\*WEDNESDAY 11/25\*\*\***

### **ESSAY #2 DUE VIA SAKAI**

## **Thursday 11/26-NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING RECESS**

- watch *God's Army* at home and answer assigned questions (questions due 12/1)

## **Tuesday 12/1**

### **Preachers, Politicians, and the 'Gospel of Health and Wealth'**

- BWB 400-413
- Grant Wacker, "Searching for Eden with a Satellite Dish – Primitivism, Pragmatism and the Pentecostal Character," pgs. 413-434 (SAKAI)

## **Thursday 12/3**

### **Pluralism and the Changing Religious Landscape**

- BWB 414-431
- film: *Scenes from a Parish* (in class)

## **Tuesday 12/8**

### **Looking Forward**

- BWB 432-442
- Pew Forum website (spend 15-20 minutes looking through it)  
<http://religions.pewforum.org/>

## **Thursday 12/10**

### **Final Thoughts**

- BWB 443-445
- Final Essay (#3) due in class