

Religion in American History
840:319
Spring 2016
M W | 2:50-4:10
FH-A2

Dr. Joseph Williams
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Office Hours: Wed. 11:30-1:30 and by appointment
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Course Description: This course surveys the religious history of the United States and will focus on the complex relationship between religion and American culture. The following questions guide the organization of the course: How have the religious ideas and rituals of religious Americans changed over time, especially in relation to trends in politics, science, technology, gender relations, the economy, and immigration (to name a few)? What themes connect the religious beliefs and practices of various groups throughout U.S. history? How have various religious traditions interacted in an American context? How does the contemporary practice of religion in the U.S. compare to past expressions of religion in America? In answering these questions students will be introduced to the diversity of American religion and its relationship to other aspects of American culture.

Course Objectives:

This course seeks to encourage critical thinking about the nature of religion in the United States. After taking this course, students should:

- gain a broad outline of the major figures and events in the history of religion in the United States.
- be able to identify distinctive patterns and themes in the history of American religion.
- become familiar with the diversity of American religious life.
- understand key ways in which the religious past continues to shape the present religious climate in the U.S.
- be introduced to some basic theoretical approaches to religion

SAS Core Curriculum Goals

This course meets the following specific SAS core curriculum goals associated with Historical Analysis (HST), Writing and Communication in a Discipline (WCd), and Writing and Communication, Revision (WCr). I will look for evidence of your mastery of these goals in the writing assignments, presentations, and exams.

- Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors.
- (WCr) Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.
- (WCd) Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry.

Course Texts (other readings are available on the internet or through Sakai):

Title: The Madonna of 115th Street, by Robert Orsi *(2nd or 3rd edition ok)
ISBN-10: 0300157525 ISBN-13: 978-0300157529
Publisher: Yale University Press

Title: The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America, by Edward J. Blum and Paul Harvey
ISBN-10: 1469618842 ISBN-13: 978-1469618845
Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press

Title: Religion and American Culture: A Reader (2nd edition), edited by David Hackett
ISBN-10: 041594273X ISBN-13: 978-0415942737
Publisher: Routledge

Suggested Text:

Title: Religion in America (8th edition), by John Corrigan, Winthrop S. Hudson
ISBN-10: 013615817X ISBN-13: 978-0136158172
Publisher: Pearson

Course Requirements:

In Class Exams: There will be two in class exams (a mid-term and final exam). Make-up exams will only be permitted if arrangements are made with the instructor *prior to* the day of the test. The format of the exams will include multiple choice, short-answer, and mini-essay responses.

Essay: You will be required to write one main essay (9-10 pages/at least 2250 words). There will be a research component (you will need to utilize both primary and secondary sources). I will provide more specific guidelines in class, but you should be aware of the following:

General Requirements for the Essay: Papers turned in after class has started on the final due date will be considered late and lose 5%. Papers turned in after class is over will lose 15%. **No papers will be accepted if they are turned in more than one class period after the due date** unless arrangements have been made with the instructor. **In addition to the hard copy of your paper turned in during class, you should also submit your paper to Turnitin.com via Sakai on the due date of the paper. **Please note, your paper is not officially turned in until I have a hard copy of the paper. You will also lose 10% off your paper if you do not submit it electronically via Sakai on the due date.** Email submissions *will not* be accepted.

Peer-review process: You will need to provide a draft of the paper **prior to the due date** and work with other students in draft reading groups. **You will lose 5% off your paper if you do not submit a working draft of the paper for peer-review by the date indicated on the syllabus.** (I will provide further details about this process in class.)

****Plagiarism and cheating will be handled in accordance with university policy.** See <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml#plagiarism>

**Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. Full disability policies and procedures are at <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Quizzes: There will be unannounced quizzes throughout the semester based on the course readings. **Readings should be read by the date they are listed on the syllabus.** Anyone who has read the assigned pages should have no problem answering the questions. One quiz score may be dropped and

will not count towards the final grade (this includes a missed quiz). Make-up quizzes will only be allowed for excused absences approved by me beforehand (for funerals, heart bypass surgeries, et cetera). **It is your responsibility to make sure you have read the material by the due date. Problems downloading the online readings will not excuse you from taking a quiz.

Visitation Response: Early on in the semester you will need to attend a religious service (please select a group with whom you are not very familiar). You will then write a brief response (at least 500 words) that explores connections between what you observed and specific themes in American religion that we have discussed in class. The assignment will be factored into your quiz grade, and you should be prepared to talk about your experience during class discussions. I will provide more specific guidelines in class.

Attendance: Attendance is expected at all classes. Students are expected to attend all classes. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Please note: A record of attendance will be kept throughout the semester. More than 4 missed classes will negatively impact your participation grade (you will lose 10% off your participation grade for each absence above the first four).

Grading System:

Main Essay: 30%
Mid-term Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 25%
Reading Quizzes: 15%

Participation: 10%

100-90 A, 89-87 B+, 86-80 B, 79-77 C+, 76-70 C, 69-60 D, 59-below F.

Course Schedule (Fine Print: I may make changes to the course readings, schedule, and policies as the course progresses. It is your responsibility, even if you miss classes, to keep yourself up-to-date on the course requirements.)

1/20 Introduction

1/25 Conflicting Narratives of American Religion. Please read Russell McCutcheon, "The Academic Study of Religion," available on Sakai.

1/27 Gold, Honor, and Souls: Native Americans and Spanish/French Missions. Please read excerpt from Axtell, *Invasion Within*, available on Sakai.

2/1 Puritanism in the Colonies. Please read Hackett, Ch. 2; and *Color of Christ*, Intro.

2/3 Diversity and Revivalism in the Colonies. Please read *Color of Christ*, Ch. 1; and "The Future Punishment of the Wicked Unavoidable and Intolerable," by Jonathan Edwards, available on Sakai.

2/8 Enlightenment, Revolution, and Religion. Please read *Color of Christ*, Ch. 2; and readings on "Civil Religion," available on Sakai.

2/10 New Visions in a New Republic. Please read Prothero, "Elder Brother," available on Sakai.

2/15 The Female Majority / Early 19th Century Trends. Please read Hackett, Ch. 8; and an excerpt from Butler, Wacker & Balmer, "Religion in American Life," available on Sakai.

2/17 No class—in lieu of class, please visit a house of religious worship for your visitation assignment.

2/22 Visitation Assignment Due.

2/24 The Native American Religious "Underground." Please read Hackett, Ch. 7; and *Color of Christ*, Ch. 3.

2/29 Slavery, the Civil War and Religion. Please read *Color of Christ*, Ch. 4 & 5.

3/2 Catch-up day. No reading due.

3/7 Exam #1

3/9 Religion & Science in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century. No reading due.

Spring Break, No class 3/14, 3/16

3/21 The Rise of Christian Fundamentalism. Please read Hackett, Ch. 20; and begin reading Orsi, Chs. 1-5.

3/23 Catholicism in America. Please finish reading Orsi, Chs. 1-5.

3/28 Catholicism in America. Please read Orsi, Chs. 6-8.

3/30 Judaism in America. Please read Hackett, Ch. 12. **Paper drafts due for peer-review.**

4/4 Judaism in America. Please read "Reform Judaism Readings" (available on Sakai).

4/6 Peer-review responses due.

4/11 Black Religions in the 20th Century. Please read *Color of Christ*, Ch. 8; and Hackett, Ch. 19.

4/13 Religion in Contemporary Politics. Please read Hackett Ch. 21; and selection on "Religion & Politics in the U.S.," available on Sakai.

4/18 Islam in the U.S. Please read Bagby, "Isolate, Insulate, Assimilate," available on Sakai.

4/20 Essay due.

4/25 West meets East: Asian traditions in the U.S. Please read Hackett Ch. 25; and Barnes, "Multiple Meanings of Chinese Healing in the U.S." available on Sakai.

4/27 Where are we at today? Please read *Color of Christ* Ch. 9 and epilogue.

5/2 Summary and Conclusion of the Course

Final Exam Time: Wednesday, May 11th, 12:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.