

Rel 311 RELIGION IN AMERICA Spring 2008

sec. 1 - 9:35-10:50 Mon/Wed 233 CCC

sec. 2 - 12:00-1:15 Mon/Wed 233 CCC

Prof. Alice Keefe Office: 412 CCC

office phone: 346-3807 email: akeefe@uwsp.edu

Office hours:

Mon and Tues: 2:00 - 3:30

Wed and Thurs: 2:00 - 2:50 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This content of this course focuses on American religious history, with particular emphasis upon (white) Protestant Christian traditions, African American religious traditions, and alternative (or new) religious movements. In the process, we will be looking at a variety of issues and questions regarding the intersections of American history, culture and religion such as:

Religion, racism and resistance to racism

Religion, social change and gender codes

Religion and politics

First Amendment (on religion) and its interpretation

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Content:

Conscientious students will leave this course with

*an overview of American religious history,

*an understanding of how religion has shaped and continues to shape American society and politics,

* an understanding of the various ways religion can function to legitimate inequality or to inspire social change.

Skills:

As students learn to practice comparative analysis of religions, they will deepen their capacity for empathetic understanding and effective communication across cultural or religious barriers. These skills can make you are better communicator, mediator and problem solver.

Students will also improve their skills in reading, writing, research, and critical analysis. Liberal arts courses such as this one aim generally to improve your critical thinking skills, hone your ability to read and interpret texts, foster better study skills, familiarize you with modern research tools (e.g., databases) and in so doing, help prepare you for upper level courses, graduate work, and/or employment.

Books on Text Rental:

Amanda Porterfield (ed.), American Religious History

Books to Purchase:

Mark Noll, The Work We Have to Do: A History of Protestants in America

Albert J. Raboteau, Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans

Stephen J. Stein, Communities of Dissent: A History of Alternative Religions in America

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION:

8 short homework essays - 25%
1 Research paper (4-5 pp.) - 20%
2 tests - 15% each
Final - 20%
Attendance and participation - 5%

EXPLANATION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Two tests (15% each) and Final Exam (20%)

Tests and final exam will be based on material covered in the readings and lectures. Tests will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions, short answer and essay questions.

Attendance and Participation (5%)

Regular attendance is required, and excessive absences will lower your grade in this category.

Excellent attendance: three or fewer absences.

Good attendance: four to five absences.

Poor attendance: six or more absences.

Regular participation is also required. We are fortunate to have a small enough class to allow for active participation and discussion. You can also get credit for participation by posting your contributions on the discussion forum of D2L.

Short informal homework essays (25%)

You will write 8 short homework essays over the course of the semester. Most of these assignments will require you to a specific question concerning the assigned readings. Other assignments will focus on "religion the news" and will require research in news databases.

Expected length of these homework essays is approximately 1 or 2 double spaced, typed pages (approx. 300-500 words).

Information and guidelines for homework essays involving "religion in the news":

Throughout the semester, you will be expected to stay current with issues involving religion in America, and you will be required to turn in at least 3 "religion in the news" essays. Each essay will discuss three or more articles from major news publications, all of which focus on the same topic involving RELIGION in American society, culture, or politics. Your essay should summarize and evaluate the issues or events discussed in these three articles in one unified essay. You must include your CITATIONS for these articles at the end of your essay. Please do NOT attach the articles themselves.

Grading scale for homework essays

Homework essays will be graded on a 10 point scale, with "9" being the standard score for good work that fulfills the assignment. My criteria for scoring these essays is as follows:

10 pts = on time and demonstrates reflection and insight on assigned materials that is far above average and truly superlative;

9 pts = on time and demonstrates good, solid reflection and insight into assigned materials;

8 pts = on time and demonstrates that you did the reading and thought about the question, but your answer is somewhat confused, off-target or too brief.

7 pts = on time and demonstrates that you completed the assigned materials but is too brief and/or does not adequately address question posed.

REDO - essay is inadequate. Pass in improved version within one week for up to 8 points.

1 point off per class period late

1 point off for three or more grammar errors

How many homework essays do I need to do?

Most students will pass in 8 homework essays, while some will choose to do 9. Those losing points on essays (due to grammar errors, lateness, etc.), or those who want a perfect score in this category may choose to pass in 1 additional homework essay to make up for lost points. The MAXIMUM number of points you can accumulate in this category is **80 points** (which would be a perfect score).

Research Paper (25%)

Expected length: 4-5 pp., double-spaced and typed. Your research paper must be focused on a narrow topic or question that compels you to do some serious research.

The paper must draw upon at least 5 relevant sources,

To qualify as "relevant", your sources must clearly contribute to the argument of your paper, as indicated by your footnotes.

These sources must come from **a variety of research media**

such as:

library books (using UWSP collection, UB and ILL)
reference room materials
academic articles (see ATLA Religion database)
magazine and news articles referenced on Lexis Nexis.

Research papers that include only internet sources will not be accepted, unless this plan of research was approved in advance by Prof. Keefe.

Your research paper must include a bibliography, and both bibliography and notes should follow a recognized notation style (Turabian/Chicago or MLA preferred). This research paper is due two weeks prior to the end of classes.

You are required to pass in a hard copy of your research paper to Prof. Keefe and an electronic copy to **Turnitin.com**. More information on submitting papers to Turnitin.com will follow later.

Plagiarism Policy

I adhere to a strict policy on academic integrity. Any questions that you may have regarding academic integrity should be resolved before you turn your assignments in. The minimum penalty for a violation of academic integrity is a failure (zero) for the assignment. In addition, all infractions will be reported to the university. For more information regarding the university policy on academic misconduct (plagiarism) and disciplinary procedures, please see chapter 14 of the University Handbook, located at this web page link:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/admin/stuaffairs/rights/rightsChap14.pdf>

RESOURCES ON THE UNIVERSITY NETWORK

Lexis-Nexis academic universe: For all news sources, local, national and international, including magazines. Find Lexis-Nexis under "A" for Academic Universe in Databases A-Z (library home page)

ATLA Religion Database (on Ebscohost): Indexes all articles published in academic journals in Religious Studies and essays published in multi-author books. To access this resource: On Library resources home page, go to alphabetical listing of databases. Find the religion database under "A" for "ATLA Religion" in Databases A-Z (library home page)

SELECTED RESERVE ROOM RESOURCES

Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Mircea Eliade et. al. (12 vol.)

Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience, (3 vol.),

ed. Lippy and Williams
Encyclopedia of American Religious History (2 vol.),
ed., Ed. Queen et al.
Encyclopedia of American Religions, ed. J. Gordon Melton
Dictionary of American Religious Biography
Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion (2 vol.),
ed. Robert Wuthnow
Encyclopedia of Fundamentalism
Religious Sites in America: A Reference Guide, ed. M.
Snodgrass
Contemporary American Religion (2 vol.), Ed. Wade Clark
Roof
Cults in America, ed. James R. Lewis
Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America, ed. J. Gordon
Melton
Twentieth-Century Shapers of American Popular Religion,
ed. Ch. Lippy
Biographical Dictionary of American Cult and Sect Leaders,
ed. J. Gordon Melton)
Encyclopedia of African and African-American Religions

**Schedule of assigned readings and homework essays up through
Spring break (subject to adjustment)**

Part I: Religion in Colonial America

1/28 Noll, The Work We Have To Do, pp. 3-14; 15-29
Jonathan Edwards, ASinners in the Hands of an Angry God@
(e-res)

1/30 The Work We Have To Do, pp. 30-49
Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" in Porterfield,
selection # 10
The New England Primer and Records of the Suffolk County
Court (selections), (e-reserve)

2/4 Keller, ANew England Women: Ideology and Experience@ &
Keller, ANew England Women: Documents@ (Documents 1 & 2)
(electronic reserve)

Homework essay #1 due: "Religion in the news." *Pick a topic involving religion in American culture, society or politics, and find three recent news articles dealing with this topic. Your essay should summarize and evaluate the issues or events discussed in these three articles in one unified essay. Please DO include the citation for each article; please DO NOT hand in copies of the articles themselves.*

2/6 Stein, Communities of Dissent, pp. 15-30 (OK to skim paragraphs dealing with Samuel Gorton, Pieter Plockhoy, Conrad Beissel and the Ephrata Community, and the Dutartre family (pp. 20-23)

Keller, ANew England Women: Documents@ (Documents 7 & 12)
(electronic reserve) (on Anne Hutchinson)
Roger Williams, "A Key into the Language of America" in
Porterfield, selection #12

2/11 Raboteau, Canaan Land, pp. 3-20

Homework essay #2 due. *In his sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity", John Winthrop says that all members of the Puritan community "must be knit together as one man". What did this mean on the real life level of Puritan social organization and the relationship between church and state? How is this vision of society positive and empowering? What might be problematic about it? Consider issues of gender hierarchy and religious dissenters in your answer.*

From the Constitution to the Civil War

2/13 Gaustad, "Liberty and Law" pp. 115-127 from A Religious History of America(e-res.)
Th. Jefferson, "Act for Establishing Religious Freedom" in
Porterfield, selection #15

2/18 The Work We Have To do, pp. 50-75
Peter Cartwright, AFrontier Preacher@ (e-res)

2/20 Jarena Lee, "The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee" (e-res)

Phoebe Palmer, A Document 4: A supposition@ (e-res)

Homework essay #3 due: "Religion in the news." Pick a topic involving religion in American culture, society or politics, and find three recent news articles dealing with this topic. Your essay should summarize and evaluate the issues or events discussed in these three articles in one unified essay. Please DO include the citation for each article.

2/25 Beecher, C. and Angelina G., "How Women Should Pursue Social Reform (e-res)

C. Duran, "Women's Place in Religious Meetings" (e-res)

2/27 Test #1

3/3 Canaan Land, pp. 21-41

"Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass" (e-res)

3/5 Canaan Land, pp. 42-60

Henry Highland Garnett, "Calls on the Slaves to Resist (1843)" (e-res)

3/10 Thornton Stringfellow, "A Scriptural View of Slavery" (e-res)

Angelina Grimke, "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South, 1836" (e-res)

3/12 **Homework writing #4 due:** As we've seen, religion and scripture were used to challenge and to justify slavery in the antebellum era. Present *both* sides of the abolitionist debate (as it concerns religion specifically) and evaluate the validity/logic/ethics of these arguments. In your essay, use at least three direct quotes from our primary source materials.

3/24 Communities of Dissent, pp.ix-xiv (Preface)+ pp. 2-14
Joseph Smith, "Wentworth Letter" (e-res) and "Revelation on the Plurality of Wives" (in same e-res file)

3/26 Communities of Dissent, pp. 49-68

John Noyes, on "Male Continence" (e-res)

Ann Lee and the Shakers: Documents (e-res)

3/31 Communities of Dissent, pp. 69-86

Homework essay #5 due: "Religion in the news." Pick a topic involving religion in American culture, society or politics, and find three recent news articles dealing with this topic. Your essay should summarize and evaluate the issues or

events discussed in these three articles in one unified essay. Please DO include the citation for each article; please DO NOT hand in copies of the articles themselves.

4/2 Communities of Dissent, 87-104

Mary Baker Eddy, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" in Porterfield, selection #24

4/7 Test #2

4/9 The Work We Have to Do, pp. 76-97

IMC video: "Protestant Spirit: USA" (from the Long Search series). Viewing times: on the hour when the IMC is open. An additional copy of this video is available for overnight checkout.

4/14 The Work We Have to Do, pp. 98-107

Selection from Jerry Falwell, Listen America (e-res)
Homework writing #6 due. Religion in the News. Pick a topic involving religion in American culture, society or politics, and find three recent news articles dealing with this topic. Your essay should summarize and evaluate the issues or events discussed in these three articles in one unified essay. Please DO include the citation for each article; please DO NOT hand in copies of the articles themselves.

4/16 Canaan Land, pp.61-81, (OK to skip pp. 66, starting with

"The arrival of Northern missionaries" to the top of p. 71)

Benjamin E. Mays, "Born to Rebel" (selections) (e-res)

Research paper topics, with preliminary bibliography due.

4/21 Canaan Land, pp. 82-104

Selections from the Autobiography of Malcolm X, chapters entitled "Nightmare", "Mascot" and "Saved" (e-res)

4/23 Canaan Land, p. 104-122

M.L.King, "Non-Violence and Racial Justice" (selection #33 in Porterfield)

Malcolm X, "God's Judgment of White America" (selection #34 in Porterfield)

Homework writing #7 due. Compare the lives of Malcolm X and Benjamin Mays with a focus on themes relating to racism, identity, and religion. Benjamin Mays says that in growing up in the black church "I had identity" (meaning a positive, affirming sense of self). How did Mays develop this strong identity? How do his experiences and his sense of identity compare to Malcolm's? What influences led Mays to become a

civil rights leader? What influences led Malcolm to become a member of the Nation of Islam?

4/28 Gaustad, "The Courts, the Schools, and the Streets"
(e-res)

4/30 **Research papers due.**

5/5 Communities of Dissent, pp. 123-43

Muesse, "Religious Studies and Heavens' Gate" (e-res)

Homework writing #8 due. *Religion in the News.* Pick a topic involving religion in American culture, society or politics, and find three recent news articles dealing with this topic. Your essay should summarize and evaluate the issues or events discussed in these three articles in one unified essay. Please DO include the citation for each article; please DO NOT hand in copies of the articles themselves.

5/7 **Homework writing #9 due.** In his essay, Mark Muesse argues that the study of religion involves a process of "making the strange familiar and the familiar strange." Write an essay in which you reflect on some occasion(s) during this course in which the strange became familiar or the familiar became strange.