

Rebecca Kneale Gould  
Middlebury College

## **Religion in America (RE 170) -- Contextual Comments and Rationale**

### **I. The College Context**

Middlebury College is a highly selective liberal arts college (usually on the "top 10" list of the U.S. News and World Report) located in Middlebury, Vermont. Middlebury is a small town with rural surroundings and the closest urban center (Burlington) located roughly 50 miles north. The size of the student body is roughly 2350 students, a number that has increased over the past seven years. The comprehensive fee for a year at Middlebury is currently just over \$41, 000. The admissions policy of Middlebury is "need blind," but recruitment is still largely from middle and upper-middleclass communities. High percentages of students come from the east and west coasts, Greater Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul etc., with significantly less of the population coming from other regions. Thus, in terms of class location, only about 37% of the student body required financial aid in the last few years. Just under 50% of our students have graduated from private high schools. Below is demographic profile of the college -- based either on our most recent class (2008) or statistics from the past four years. This profile also can be surmised by a quick survey of student parking lots!

International students -- 8-10%

Percentage of private school students -- 49%

Class of 2008 comes from 47 states and 38 countries

Gender: 52% of the class of 2008 are women, 48% are men.

Comprehensive Fee: \$41,000

Percentage of student body needing financial aid -- 37%

Race/Ethnicity:

Caucasian: 74%

Asian: 7%

African American: 3%

Latino: 5%

Native American: .05%

(the remaining are "unknown" or "other")

The student body at Middlebury has been steadily increasing in diversity and is particularly notable for its strong percentage of international students. Middlebury College also participates in the "Posse Program" which brings students from urban, lower income communities (these students are usually African American or Latino). "Posse" students have already come to know each other and receive special training in high school so that they come to Middlebury with a system of peer-support already in place. Rural Vermonters from public schools also are encouraged to apply and are given strong aid packages. International students, Posse students and Vermonters add tremendously to the life of the college and often emerge as student leaders on campus.

I have found teaching at Middlebury College to be a new experience culturally in a variety of ways. In some senses, having gone to high school in a Massachusetts suburb and then to undergraduate education at Harvard-Radcliffe, the "scene" at Middlebury is very familiar. On the other hand, while elitist in many respects, Harvard can justifiably boast about its considerable racial, ethnic, religious and class diversity (in its undergraduate student body, if not yet the faculty). Harvard's internal diversity and urban setting, coupled with contrasting admissions statistics (over 70% of the undergraduate student body from public schools and on financial aid) accustomed me -- myself a public school kid from a single-parent family with a full financial aid package -- to a university setting quite distinct from where I would eventually find myself professionally.

Especially significant (and different), have been the expectations students bring when they arrive at Middlebury. Those from private schools are accustomed to having teachers who are simultaneously dorm parents and coaches. As expected, these students demand a lot of attention and guidance (which they and/or their parents perceive as having "paid for" as "customers" of the college). They also need to be educated about the "other lives" that faculty try to maintain as researchers and writers. My own undergraduate memories -- positive ones -- were of listening to eloquent lectures (often read as seamless pieces of prose) from somewhat larger than life professors who shared their research with us. Course work often involved going to the library and figuring things out for myself. I had the good fortune of being warmly received in office hours to muse about Keats or Eliade, but I would have never considered simply "dropping by to chat" with Dr. Jones or asking him to read a draft of my upcoming paper.

Not surprisingly, I initially found responding to Middlebury students' expectations to be quite a challenge. I began with total indulgence ("This is what I was hired to do, I'm going to do it to the max!"). Two years later I burned out and started to rebel ("Is all this hand-holding really preparing them for the outside world?" or simply, "This is driving me crazy!"). I have lately adopted what I hope to be a healthy (for them and for me) middle position of understanding *why* they have the expectations that they do, striving to fulfill them when reasonable and simultaneously trying to push them to a level of intellectual and personal independence that will serve them well in the future. (I find this easier to do in seminar than in a survey course such as the one described here -- but it remains a goal.)

In reflecting on these matters, I have come to realize the perhaps obvious fact that teaching and advising is not only a matter of developing courses that are appropriate to the context of one's institution, but also a matter of meditating on one's own educational experiences and figuring out what to borrow, what to avoid, what to enhance etc. when bringing those experiences to a new place. (I have also found it helpful to remember that those of us who went on to become professors were not necessarily "normal" college students. In short, I have come to think of teaching as a kind of alchemy, that unites my past with their present. Alchemy takes practice -- and also luck.

Despite my on-going ambivalence about the contemporary construction of college education as a "consumer" experience, I have come to develop a very warm affection for Middlebury College and its students. They are smart, polite, outgoing and will do almost anything you challenge them to do in the context of a course. They work *very* hard and are eager to learn. My own role is: to push them beyond pursuing the A to pursuing intellectual experience for its own sake, beyond being dutiful to being adventurous,

beyond being "right" to being creative, beyond asking me "what do you want?" (for this test, paper etc.) to asking themselves what they are looking to discover through their time in my class. When this happens (and it does) teaching them is enormously gratifying and fun.

## **II. Structure of the Class and Role of the Class in the Departmental Curriculum**

### **A. The Course:**

"Religion in America: From Protestantism to Pluralism" (RE 170) is a survey class that I inherited in different forms from two predecessors (both of whom emphasized Protestantism and theology more than I currently do). It counts as credit toward a general distribution requirement for graduation, and as credit toward majors in religion, American history and American civilization. As such, it attracts students who may know nothing about religion or American history and, alternatively, may know quite a bit about religion, but not American history (or vice-versa). As a result, I've designed the course to be a one hundred level class (introductory, broad in scope, no pre-requisites), but with a certain amount of intellectual heft.

Frankly, I have no idea whether it is really a good thing to teach (or take) a course that goes from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present in twelve weeks and involves encounter with Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Native Traditions, sectarian movements and transplanted Asian traditions, while also trying to consider the impact of race, class, gender, ethnicity and politics. There are many other kinds of courses to teach about religion in American that could be more in-depth and more provocative, that could involve fieldwork or archive work, that would be less Protestant, or more theological. The list goes on. But this is the course that is one of two "bread and butter" courses I am slated to teach and so I am striving to be creative within its parameters.

I first taught this class in 2003-2004, then again in 2005-2006 while simultaneously under tenure review. Needless to say, neither of these years were good ones for extensive intellectual or pedagogical risk-taking. Now I hope to experiment more boldly. I still consider the course to be an adventure and a work in progress, trying to turn it from bread and butter to something more tangy, yet basic and fulfilling -- maybe Vermont cheddar with honey mustard on rye.

My goals? In **content**: To provide students with a course that responsibly acknowledges the cultural impact of Protestantism, as well as the wide range of religious diversity that has shaped and continues to shape our national culture. To ask the "big questions" about how to define, explore and question both religion in general and particular expressions of religion. To have students learn about the various ways in which religion is expressed (through theology, doctrine, institution, architecture, music and ritual, as well as through food, domestic culture, literature, socializing and making a living). To have students understand that religious history is shaped by elites, religious authorities and intellectuals, as well as by mothers, steel workers and domestic servants. To have students recognize religious and cultural continuity and change in America over time and with attention to regional difference. To have students reflect on the doing of history, the meaning of historiography and the subjectivity and diversity of perspectives involved in the way that "the American story" (itself a false construct?) is told. In

**process:** to get students to take an active role in their own learning, to expose them to a variety of media through which to think historically (often texts, but also art, architecture, music, political cartoons, documentary films etc.), to ask them to develop skills of analysis that are oral and written, specific (for example, to remember historical figures, theological concepts, political events) and synthetic (for example, to describe how three different authors see the relationship between religion and gender in the mid-nineteenth century). I want students to have the experience of working in solitude, in pairs and in small groups, to spend 30 minutes analyzing two paragraphs and to spend 30 minutes on another occasion summarizing major themes that emerge in a particular 50-year period. In many ways, I feel I have accomplished these goals and my hope is that the annotated syllabus reflects how I strive to achieve them.

Where am I trying to improve? I still feel that I lecture too much and that in preparing and delivering lectures I feel like a kind of three-dimensional textbook. I never lecture in seminars and feel that I have crafted Socratic and dialogical approaches well in those contexts. The next time I teach this course, I plan on being *much more* dialogical and to use readings and handouts more for the background material. Still, sometimes one simply needs to *tell* students things and I, myself, loved to listen to the old-fashioned "passive learning" lectures of the mid-eighties. These are not all bad and I expect I will still engage in this style of teaching when it seems appropriate. Also on the improvement front is my hope that I can overcome my internet technophobia sufficiently to use websites and related material as good teaching tools (I hope readers of this syllabus will send me their tips). On the other hand, some students have expressed relief that my class relies on "talk and chalk" when all of their other courses are based in Power Point. So neo-Luddites have their place in the academy, I am relieved to hear.

**B. Format.** Large courses (over 45) at Middlebury tend to meet in a Monday, Wednesday, Friday format of 2 hour lectures, plus three sections of 15 students. The sections are taught by me (there are no graduate students) and I also do all of the course logistics and grading. Given this structure, I do tend to dominate more in the lecture hours and give students full range to talk in the sections. In many ways, however, the course is crafted around sections as the central experience (although this could easily be reproduced in small groups for classes without sections). In general, I use sections to closely examine primary texts. The lectures before and after as bookends, setting up a discussion and drawing questions and conclusion from it. In other large courses, when I have taught on this model and "saved" sections for Friday, I have found that students see it as an "add on" and often do not have the energy to give to the process at the end of the week. I like my current system much better and use it as a way for students truly to engage in being historians.

### **C. Topics: Those Selected and Those Neglected**

Twelve weeks is a very short time to move from colonial-native contact to the contemporary religious scene. What to do and what not to do? Below are some thoughts on the decisions I have made. Again, I welcome input and suggestions from those who may be reading this syllabus.

1) Emphasis on Christian (and post-Christian) liberalism more than evangelicalism. Partly, this is a matter of taste. Partly, it comes out of my sense that students are well aware of (if not highly educated about) Christian evangelical culture in America, but are less aware of the extent to which liberalism and pluralism are also rooted in our early national history. From a curricular perspective, I include a focus on Channing, Emerson, abolitionists etc. because this enables me to "prep" students who may take my seminar on religion and social change (mostly nineteenth century) in America.

2) Short shrift on Mormons, Christian Scientists, Millerites, Adventists, Oneida and other forms of "American homegrown" religion. Leaving this material out pains me, but in searching to make cuts, I have done this partly because a colleague of mine in religion and sociology focuses on many of these groups in a course he teaches on American religious communities. I try to flag this material in week seven of my class and encourage students to explore these topics in papers if they are interested. For the time being, I have picked one group, the Shakers, as a case study to focus on in this category of homegrown religion. In future years, I may rotate topics and address other groups.

3) Not as much as students would like on contemporary religion in America (church-state issues, the religious right, religion and politics/social issues etc.) Again, there are other courses on this (an ethicist colleague of mine teaches a course on religion and politics) and the class is a history class. Still, I find myself wondering if there is more I can or should do to make contemporary connections (as I do in week four) along the way, or if I should shorten an earlier section of the class to give more attention to contemporary topics toward the end (not just in the last week, when students are generally exhausted).

4) Other issues: not as much as I would like on Latino religion, still considerably less attention to Catholics and Jews than to Protestants and post-Protestants (but appropriately proportional given the cultural dominance of Protestantism?), more New England focused than, say, Western or Southern focused (but again, appropriate to the New England setting of the college?)

### **III. Decisions, Decisions: Texts and Assignments**

#### **A. Textbook -- Yes or No?**

The first time I taught this course, I used the new version (co-authored by Leigh Schmidt) of Gaustad's *Religion in America*. My students found it informative, but rather dull and not worth the expense. There were many sections of the book that were not applicable to the material I was covering. Albanese's textbook (*America: Religion and Religions*) I like in many ways, but her way of conceptualizing "extraordinary" vs. "ordinary" religion and her chronological choices are somewhat distracting to the way I have framed the course. For the moment, I have settled on Allitt's *Major Problems in American Religious History*, a book that has a wonderful collection of primary documents (sometimes too short) and secondary essays. I often refer to sections of it that I *haven't* assigned and find that

students respond well to suggestions for further reading. I supplement Allit with my other primary and secondary sources (including textual selections from Albanese and images from Gaustad) that I put on e-reserve. For students who need more background, I have the Peter Williams text placed on regular reserve and, again, often refer to it in class (i.e. "if you want to know more about Lutheranism, consult the following pages in Williams"). For many lectures, I place references on the board to background reading from Gaustad, Williams, Albanese and sometimes Ahlstrom so that students know where to go for more.

### **B. Assignments -- More Smaller Assignments vs. Fewer Bigger Assignments?**

Pedagogically, I believe that more, smaller assignments often can lead to more engaged learning throughout a class (when I teach seminars, students write or give oral presentations almost every week). Practically, I have learned the hard way that if I have over 40 students in a class, where I teach two lectures and three sections, this is just not feasible. For courses of similar size and scope, I used to do weekly or bi-weekly response papers, but soon found that it was hard to keep up with these, that students expected some sort of commentary on them (regardless of what was laid out on the syllabus about this as being primarily a means for *them* to prepare for section) and that even if I returned them the following week with few comments, our collective minds had already turned to the new material we were considering.

My "resolution" to my pedagogical ideals vs. practical realities dilemma (still a work in progress), is to have few formal assignments (an extensive take-home midterm and a choice between a final paper or a final exam), but to place a high percentage of the grade on class participation which includes co-leading section discussion once, bringing in outside material to class (newspaper articles, websites etc.), preparing questions and observations for each section discussion (which I sometimes collect) and asking questions/giving responses in lectures. I also reserve the right to assign more response papers or give pop quizzes as part of class participation if I suspect students aren't doing the reading.

I have found placing a high emphasis on participation to be a useful approach on several counts: it *does* keep students active and engaged from week to week, while reducing grading for me and it also builds skills of oral participation and retention of material over time. (For instance, I may ask in lecture, "how does Angelina Grimke's critique of slavery compare to the speech by Garrison that we read last week?" "How does her sense of herself religiously differ from Ann Bradstreet's?" and gather student responses.) Students at Middlebury tend to be good writers, but often resort to "hey dude" self-presentation in speech (sometimes, I think, because it is cool not to seem *too* smart). Asking them to take a leadership role in section discussions and to be active participants in class throughout, invites them to experience the difference between chatting with friends and "professional" communication.

#### **IV. Some Notes on Pedagogy and Related Matters:**

1) In sections, discussion sometimes proceeds in the "think, pair, share" model<sup>1</sup> (ponder a portion of the text, pair off with a classmate to discuss and bring observations and questions back to the section as a whole) or on a "round-table" model. I vary this depending on my sense of what will work well at a particular moment and also so that I can stay fresh from section to section. In general, I find I use pairing off more in the early part of the course to get everybody used to talking and round-table discussion later on, when everyone is comfortable with one another. Some sections are explicitly student led by a group of two or three students who have met outside of class to prepare.

2) Study of Religion "Hippocratic Oath": "First, do no harm."

In the first meeting of almost any class I teach (usually in the more intimate setting of sections), I give some version of my "this is a safe space to be who you are" speech. I talk about the difference between the *study* of religion as an academic field, and religion as it may have been taught in Sunday School, Hebrew School etc. I mention that professors of religion are sometimes religious themselves and sometimes confirmed agnostics or atheists who are fascinated by the phenomenon of religion -- and that the issue of whether and how one can or should be religious (or not) while also being a scholar of religion is a matter of lively debate in the field. I acknowledge that around this table "some of us may be serious Christians, Buddhists, Hindus or Jews and some of us may be areligious or feel quite negatively about religion. Some of us may have been raised religiously, but know little about other religious traditions and some of us may feel we know little or nothing about religion at all."

I make clear to the students that the classroom is a place where everyone must feel safe to be who they are and that part of my job is to make sure that happens. I tell them that no one is expected to speak from their own religious experience and that I will never call on someone and say, "Jane, as a Buddhist, what do you think about that?" On the other hand, those who *want* to make connections from their own experience on their own initiative should feel free to do so, while keeping in mind that the bottom line for the class is a mutual respect for differences of all kinds and confidentiality within the class (i.e. if Tom and Jim discuss their very different responses to parochial school in class, that doesn't mean their conversation can be the subject of the Thursday night beer hour unless Tom and Jim choose to bring it up).

I try to set a tone that is light-hearted and warm, but also serious. I tend to say that talking about religion is something many of us did not do at the dinner table and that learning how to talk about it as scholars, but also as human beings, is something we will be trying throughout the class. We shouldn't expect to be perfect at it from the outset.

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to Wendy Cadge for giving me the phrase to capture this way of doing things.

My general approach in this discussion is to plunge into some textual material first to get the class going, and then save 15-20 minutes for this broader discussion of how we will proceed as a section/seminar. I have found taking the time to do this to be invaluable and students have often remarked on how much they appreciate it.

**RE 170: Religion in America: From Protestantism to Pluralism**

Professor Rebecca Kneale Gould  
Ext. 2548; rgould@middlebury.edu  
23 Adirondack View, #201

Spring 2005

Office Hours: Monday 3-4:30, Tuesday 9:30-11 and by appointment.

**e-reserve password: 2947rg**

**Course Description:**

America has often been paradoxically defined as simultaneously the "most religious" and "least religious" of nations. This course, an historical survey of American religious life, will trace the unique story of American religion from colonial contact with native cultures to the present. Along the way, we will examine Puritan life and thought, the emergence of evangelicalism, liberal and radical challenges to the Protestant mainstream, the impact of Jewish and Catholic immigration, African-American religious experience, the importance of women's history and the on-going challenges of religious diversity. Readings include sermons, essays, diaries and fiction, as well as secondary source material.

**Readings: Books for purchase (and on reserve at Starr Library):** Patrick Allitt, *Major Problems in American Religions History: Documents and Essays*; Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*; Anzia Yezierska, *The Bread Givers*; Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*. **All other readings are on e-reserve.**

**Requirements:**

**Class Participation:**

**25%**

This includes regular attendance, participating in class discussion and performing occasional "civic duty" (such as looking up a reference, bringing in an example from a website, etc.) for the rest of the class. Strong class participation does not mean simply "talking a lot" in class. It means speaking in an informed way about the readings, synthesizing the comments of others and listening with respect and attention to the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of your peers. For each discussion section you should bring a sheet of paper (or a note card) that includes: 2 questions you have about each reading, 2 observations or responses you have to each reading and one particular section of each reading that you would like to focus on. Short response papers or quizzes may also be included.

**Take Home Midterm Exam:**

**25% To be administered in Week Five. (Handed out 3/11, due in class 3/18)**

This will be a 10 page take-home, essay style exam.

**Final Exam or Final Paper:**

**50%**

Exam is three-hours long, blue-book style. Student-scheduled, but cannot be taken after May 15. Paper assignments will be handed out in class and involve considerable freedom (with the corresponding expectation of your intellectual independence in doing research) as to topic. Writing a religious history of your family is one of the options.

## **RE 170 -- Schedule of Meetings and Readings [Annotated]**

[The descriptions in brackets below represent a fusion of what I have done in this class over the past two years. I haven't done *all* of it each time and usually I find myself not accomplishing everything I set out to do and trimming along the way. I leave myself the option to once a semester simply cancel some of the reading and do a "catch up" day. Along with the syllabus, I hand out a student information sheet that gives me an opportunity to get to know the students better and a sheet called "the Nitty Gritty" that includes information on citing sources, plagiarism, the Honor Code, etc.]

### **Week One (2/7): Encountering Religion in America**

**Monday:** Introduction to the Course: Ways of Thinking About American Religious History

[On opening day I begin with an exercise where I ask students to pair up and have a conversation with each other on the images (and phrases, but I try to emphasize the visual) that first come to mind when the phrase "religion in America" is used. I then put these ideas on the board and invite dialogue about the images that the class has generated and the questions that arise from these images. I generally try to make connections between the images and the syllabus as a way of looking ahead to what we'll be doing in the class. For instance, students have often mentioned the dollar bill and "in God we trust" on American money. I solicit discussion on: What is the history of the phrase? What kind of message does our money send to non-Americans? What idea of God is implicit here? Does this phrase speak to all Americans? I then introduce the idea of civil religion and talk about how this concept will be addressed at several points throughout the class and especially toward the end. Another example: students will often mention the image of a white church with a steeple on a village green (such as the Congregational church in Middlebury, Vermont). I ask students to discuss: Why does this image come to mind more often than a synagogue or a cathedral? What might this architecture signify about the worshippers who attend such a church? Is religion only present in buildings? Here I often anticipate the reading we will do of Orsi's *Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> Street* and the notion of "religion of the streets." I also spend some time forecasting the first sets of readings, which have to do with native religious traditions and spiritual practice that very seldom occurs in buildings. These conversations are always improvisational and I try to keep a list on the board of the bigger questions that arise from this discussion. I then shift gears and walk through the syllabus, requirements etc. I try to close with a return to the "big questions," saying that these are the questions that are lively and interesting to me (e.g. "is there something distinctive about *American* religious life? What counts as religion and what does not and by whose criteria?" etc.)

### Wednesday: Discussion Sections

**Reading: Primary Sources:** In **Allit**, "European-Indian Encounters" section, Documents # 3 (Joseph Jouvency), #4 (Roger Williams), #5 (Mary Jemison), pp. 30-36. **E-reserve** Jean Brebeuf, "Instructions to Missionaries" (source, **Edwin Gaustad**, *A Documentary History of Religion in America* [henceforth **Gaustad, DH**]).

[In sections, I give a bit of background on the French *Jesuit Relations* as a source for much of our knowledge of Huron, Iroquois and Algonkian culture and spiritual life, though mediated, of course, through a Catholic missionary lens. I have students discuss the ways in which Jouvency and Brebeuf seem to be sympathetic or culturally sensitive to those to whom they are preaching and the ways in which they dismiss or reject what they cannot recognize or do not understand. We also examine a section of Williams' "A Key into the Language of America" to see how what is ostensibly a "dictionary" is also a cultural commentary revealing both fascination and repulsion on the part of Williams. If there's time for a discussion of Jemison, it makes for a good contrast, as she is a captive who chose to remain with the Seneca.

Students are often quick to criticize the missionaries for their cultural insensitivity, so I often use this class to introduce the idea of "presentism" and to talk about how the doing of history involves imaginatively standing in the shoes of those of others. I ask them to talk about how Jouvency, Brebeuf or Williams might explain the meaning of what they were doing to a friend or relation.]

### Friday: Colonizing the "New" World: Patterns of Settlement and Encounter

**Reading: Secondary Sources:** In **Allit**, James Ronda, "Indians' Views of Christian Missionaries" and in **Allit**, Catherine Albanese article on Algonkian Indian Lifeways.

[In this class, I begin looking at contrasting maps of what will later become the United States. One is largely empty space with large territories labeled "England," "France" and "Spain"; the other is a map chock full of the names of Indian tribes. We discuss how this territory was empty space to be possessed and filled with the light of the gospel on the part of colonizers and how missionary activity and land possession/ resource extraction often went hand in hand. I also use the class to talk about the broad range of tribal diversity at the time of contact and the mistake of generalizing too much about "Native American culture." We then go on, in fact, to make some generalizations (!) with the help of Albanese's article. We also discuss Ronda's re-thinking of missionary history. In this class, I also make sure students have a sense of the range of impulses behind colonization and a sense of the diversity of European presence (Protestant and Catholic, French, Spanish and English) on what will later be the United States. I encourage them to consider a) how missionaries saw themselves as doing the most meaningful work they could ever imagine and b) the impact of that work on the religious and cultural destruction of indigenous Americans. Often we examine the image on the Great Seal of Massachusetts as a point of departure for discussion.

Colin Calloway's *New Worlds for All* is a great book on colonial-native contact and cultural influence in both directions. I have drawn on this text for my own use in

lecture/discussion. Some illustrations from the text are also useful to photocopy or project as slides for the basis of discussion.

## **Week Two (2/14): Religious Experiments: Massachusetts and Beyond**

**Monday:** Film: *Black Robe*.

**Reading: Primary Sources:** "Corn Mother Creation Myth" from Ortiz, ed. *Native American Myths and Legends*.

**Secondary Sources:** Carolyn Merchant, "From Corn Mothers to Puritan Fathers" from Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions* [this chapter talks about theology but focuses more on gender and economics -- a nice social history reading.]

[We look at the first 40-50 minutes of *Black Robe* and begin a discussion of the themes of the film, connecting back to the readings of the previous week. The film, for those who don't know it, is a story of a French Catholic missionary in Canada. The research for the film relied heavily on *The Jesuit Relations* and also involves a figure of local import, Samuel de Champlain.]

## **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading: Primary Sources:** in Allitt, "Religious Life in the British Colonies" section, Document #1 John Winthrop, "Excerpt from a Model of Christian Charity." pp. 61-62.

**Secondary Sources:** Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*, Chapters 1-4.

[In sections, I have students turn in response papers that draw together the readings of the previous week, as well as their responses to *Black Robe*. These are ungraded, but it gives me an opportunity to learn a bit more about who they are and to see if there are any students who may need special attention as writers.

In discussion, we use the figure of John Winthrop as a window into Puritan culture. Morgan has several goals in mind: to rescue Puritans from their generally negative portrayal in popular culture, to characterize the Puritan dilemma of being "in the world, but not of the world," and to give some attention to the social history that both shaped Puritanism in England and led to distinctly American forms in the colonies. Morgan's goals, student responses to them and the difficult concept of predestination make up the bulk of discussion. (Morgan's text has good and bad points. It is obviously a celebration of Winthrop. But it is very clearly written and provides the English history background that is vital, but which I do not want to spend much time in lecture covering. It explains Puritan theology and culture well.)

I also use discussion and/or the following lecture to begin to get at the general ideas of intellectual history, social history and cultural history. In terms of the former, I ask them to think about the history of ideas and what ideas coming from Winthrop and Puritan culture generally are still present in our culture today. In terms of social history, I ask students to name those factors beyond the strictly theological that Morgan sees as influencing the rise of Puritanism in England and on the development of Puritanism in

America. I return to cultural history when we discuss David Hall on Samuel Sewall in the following week

### **Friday:** Puritan Worldviews

**Reading: Primary Sources: E-reserve,** "Reasons for Removal: The Pilgrims" (excerpt from William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*); "Reasons for Removal: The Puritans" (John Winthrop, 1629 document) [**both Gaustad, DH**].  
**Secondary Sources:** Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*, chapters 5-8. **E-reserve,** Catherine Albanese, "Word from the Beginning: American Protestant Origins and the Liberal Tradition," in *America: Religion and Religions*, pp. 102-219.

[In this class, I give a fairly "bread and butter" lecture on Puritan theology and culture. I talk about the legacies of Puritanism in our own time, including intellectual culture, the work ethic, exceptionalism and the "Chosen People" idea, typological thinking and biblical culture, and more on the paradoxes of predestination (emphasizing that while it sounds terrible to many of us (presentism again), the idea that God was sovereign and *would* bring grace to some sinners was actually a source of comfort and inspiration to many Puritans. I also usually bring in some examples of the ways in which Puritans had fun. I haven't done this yet, but I am considering holding this one class in the Congregational Church in town, which is a perfect example of "the plain style" in architecture.]

### **Week Three (2/21):** Tensions Among the Puritans

#### **Monday:** Puritans and Early American Pluralism

**Reading: Secondary Sources: E-reserve:** David D. Hall, "The Mental World of Samuel Sewall," Chapter Five, *Worlds of Wonder*; Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*, chapter nine (on the Anne Hutchison trial), documents under the heading "Special Cases: Maryland, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania" [**Gaustad, DH**].

[In this class, I finish up what remains from the Friday lecture and then broaden the portrait of colonial America (for which the Albanese reading from the previous Friday prepares them) to talk about New York, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania as more religiously pluralistic, comparatively speaking, colonies. We also discuss why Anne Hutchison, Roger Williams and Quakers were all considered "dangerous" to Massachusetts theological and social order.] A theme I am introducing here is the extent to which colonial immigration to North America created patterns of pluralism and diversity far greater than what was generally experienced in Europe. At the same time, we see early examples of sectarianism and religious intolerance. Both themes will continue throughout the course.

At several points along the way, I ask myself what terms and concepts do I want to be sure my students come away from the class understanding and retaining (at least for

a while). These terms and concepts also usually show up on a "short answer" section of an exam. For instance, at this point in the class, I hope to have students familiar with the following terms and concepts: Corn Mother, manitou, Arminianism, the gathered church, sola scriptura, sola gratia (as opposed to "works"), sola fides, the plain style, covenant/federal theology, typology, the city on a hill and the requirement of conversion narratives for church membership.

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading: Primary Sources:** Selected poems of Ann Bradstreet (on **e-reserve**) and others in **Allit**, Document #5, pp. 67-68. (Bring Hall article also.)

[In this discussion, I use some of the time as a "check in" to see what is on students' minds in this, the third week of class. What do they feel they have a grip on? What are they confused about, intrigued by etc. from prior classes that they want to discuss further? Then I ask them to consider what their reactions are to Bradstreet's poetry and to Sewall, as portrayed by Hall. I ask them first to self-consciously *indulge* their presentism, which often leads to the labeling of Sewall as "neurotic" and "obsessive." I have found it helpful to point out to students that this language was not available to us pre-Freud, but that now we use this language unthinkingly and that our use of psychological categories is practically like the air we breath. I then ask them to consider that for the Puritans biblical language and categories were similarly second nature. (I've also made the comparison between discussion of television characters to explain daily life "last night was just like the Seinfeld episode when..." and Puritans' use of biblical characters to interpret their daily experience.) Such comparisons only go so far, but they help to make the strange familiar in ways that are often useful for students.]

### **Friday: no class, Winter Carnival**

[If I had a class on this day, I would like to add a day on "material culture" and religion, looking at the development of hymnody and architecture, from the English church, to Puritan plain styles, to new American innovations across the denominations in the Early Republic. I haven't worked up such a lecture/multi-media presentation yet (and I welcome suggestions on how to do so) -- but would consider cutting something in the previous weeks to be able to add such a presentation.]

### **Week Four (3/28): Awakenings, Enlightenment and Revolution**

**Monday:** The "Great Awakening"

**Reading: Primary Sources:** In **Allit**, "Religious Life in the British Colonies" section, Document #2, "William Bradford Sees God's Mercy and Judgment (1654)," pp. 62-63. In **Allit**, "Awakening and Revolution" section, Document # 1, Jonathan Edwards, "A Faithful Narrative" (describing the Great Awakening in Northampton, Massachusetts,

1738); Document #2, "Nathan Cole . . . Hears the Preaching of George Whitefield," 92-99.

Secondary Sources: In **Allit**, Patricia Bonomi, "The Great Awakening," pp. 111-117 and Jon Butler, "Enthusiasm Described and Decried: The Great Awakening as Interpretive Fiction" in Jon Butler and Harry Stout, *Reader in American Religious History*.

[In this class I lecture on the various forces that led to "declension" or fears thereof on the part of those involved in revivals and awakenings. Among these: fears of creeping Arminianism and Enlightenment ideas, concern about rationalism and the elitism of the clergy (and the need to respond with an emphasis on the "affections" and on the religious experience rather than training of the clergy), anxiety about religious pluralism, behavioral laxity etc. I use Bradford's poem to show that "declension" was a concern almost from the beginning. I give some background on Edwards and Whitefield and the differences and points of contact between them. I then ask students to discuss and consider the main points of disagreement between Bonomi and Butler on the matter of the "Great Awakening," whether it really happened, the extent to which it was created by Whitefield and others and whether the term ought to be used. Some of the subtler points made by Butler and Bonomi may be lost on them, but I have decided that this is OK. I use this exercise as a way of introducing them to the concept of historiography.]

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading: E-reserve,** Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"(1741) and in **Allit**, "Awakening and Revolution" section, Ben Franklin, "Letter to Joseph Huey," (1756), pp. 100-101; **E-reserve,** Jefferson/Unitarian Creed, *The Letters of Thomas Jefferson* and James Madison, "A Memorial and Remonstrance (1785)."

[I ask students to prepare to take the side of an imagined debate between Jonathan Edwards on the one hand and some combination of Jefferson, Franklin and Madison on the other. I use this section to get at the competing forces of evangelicalism and liberalism as they are coming into play in the period between the 1730's and the 1780's.]

### **Friday: Enlightenment Voices**

**Reading: Primary Sources:** In **Allit**, "Awakening and Revolution" Section, Document #8, Thomas Jefferson, "Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom Enacted In Virginia (1786)," pp.109-110.

[I use this class to discuss the early history of the idea of the separation of church and state. I lecture on: Jefferson's religious views (and a bit on a Vermont Deist, Ethan Allen) and on the influence of French and English rationalism on American liberalism. I ask students to bring in some contemporary examples of church-state battles (from the last 10 years) and we discuss how Thomas Jefferson and James Madison might comment on them. Sometimes I ask students to examine the website for "People United for the

Separation of Church and State" and to analyze its effectiveness and intellectual credibility.]

**Week Five (3/7):** Antebellum Tensions I: Unitarians and Transcendentalists

**Monday:** The Unitarian Critique of Calvinism

**Reading: Primary Sources: E-reserve,** William Ellery Channing, "The Moral Argument Against Calvinism."

[This class focuses not only on Unitarianism, but also on a larger portrait of antebellum developments. Following on the Jefferson discussion, I give an overview of patterns of church disestablishment in various states, Western settlement and revivalism and the growing connection between revivalism and reform movements. Then I focus on liberalism within (especially Massachusetts) Congregationalism and the rise of Unitarianism via Channing. Here I am "setting up" for the Transcendentalism lecture on Friday, as well as getting students to see that while religious liberalism was numerically small, it had an enormous cultural impact.]

**Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading:** Bring Channing, "The Moral Argument," also **in Allitt**, "Religion in the Early Republic Section," Document #2, Orestes Brownson, (1857), pp. 130-132.

[In this section I focus on "close reading" as both a skill to develop and a way into understanding how theological argument preceded in the antebellum period. I begin class by asking students to put up on the board between 1 and 3 sentences from Channing's "Moral Argument" that they feel captures the most important aspects of Channing's thought. I ask them to write the quote directly, cite the page number and be prepared to discuss why they chose these particular sentences and not other ones.

(This is a **great** exercise to do with students with almost any text; it gets them focused right away and also gets me to see how they are thinking. When the first 5-7 minutes of the class are spent with all sorts of students jumping up and down putting things on the board it creates a nice sense of energy that usually persists throughout the discussion.)

Discussion then tends to proceed organically, with students commenting on the quotations they chose and why they chose them. By midway through the section we usually have a good, collective sense of Channing's argument. I then ask them to take on the role of a detractor of Channing's (perhaps Edwards or Whitfield) and to model how they would argue back to Channing and how Channing would then respond. This is sometimes dramatized, with students taking the role of Channing or a detractor.]

**Friday:** The Transcendentalist Critique of Unitarianism.

**Midterm (take home) handed out.**

**Reading: E-reserve Primary Sources: E-reserve** Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address."

[I begin lecture with a visual diagram of various forms of religious liberalism we have touched on so far: post-Puritan Congregationalism, Deism and its cousins, Unitarianism and Transcendentalism. As a "side-bar" I have students think about key themes in evangelicalism (especially in its Second Great Awakening, "Arminian" versions). I lecture/field questions that elucidate the distinction between various forms of liberalism, and also point out some unlikely connections (e.g. a shared interest in emotion and personal experience -- over formal theologizing -- between evangelicals and Transcendentalists). I then give some historical backdrop to Emerson's "Divinity School Address" and ask students to examine various paragraphs to figure out what the heck Emerson is trying to say. I also use this occasion to talk about the entry of non-Western religious traditions on to the American scene, as a preface for what we will be talking about later in the course.

One of my goals in this lecture/discussion (since the class has a fair number of American civilization and American literature majors) is to get students to see that while we customarily think of Transcendentalism as a literary movement, it was also very much a religious movement, with considerable debts to Channing and his predecessors. This is also a good moment to remind students that in making these connections we are doing intellectual history.

## **Week Six (3/14):** Antebellum Tensions II: Slavery and Abolition

### **Monday:** Apologists and Abolitionists

**Reading: Primary Sources: In Allit**, "Antebellum Immigration and Social Tensions Section," Document #6, Angelina Grimke, Document #7, Frederick Douglas, Document #8, Thorton Stringfellow, pp.176-182. **E-reserve**, documents under "Abolitionists and Apologists" [**Gaustad, DH**].

[In this lecture I give an overview of the development of slavery, from the original arrival of free blacks to American shores to the gradual economic and social institutionalization of slavery, the emergence of legal definitions of slaves as property and the dependence of Northern states on the plantation system. I then give some biographical background on Garrison and Douglas, the differences and points of contact between them. I look especially at Douglas' use of religious arguments and at Garrison's move from defending colonization in his early life to understanding it as a racist movement later in life. I often flag the fact that we are now re-emphasizing social history (for instance, Garrison would not have come to his conclusions about colonization without having lived among free blacks who educated him on the matter) and asking ourselves whether and how religious arguments are shaped by social forces and/or used for social agendas. Mason Lowance has edited a nice collection of primary text documents that can be used here. I have also found Goodman's, *Of One Blood* to be provide useful background for lectures.]

## Wednesday: Discussion Sections

**Reading:** Bring documents listed under Monday's reading.

[In section, the discussion focuses on the different uses of Christian (as well as non-religious) arguments by apologists and abolitionists. I encourage students to move from the primary texts to making lists of descriptors to characterize the distinctions (and points of contact) between the arguments of both groups. We also look at the denominational splits that occurred over slavery and related issues.]

## Friday: Slaveholders and Slave Religion

**Reading: Secondary Sources: In Allit**, Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Slaveholders and the Bible" pp. 188-194 and Albert Raboteau, "The Slaves' Own Religion," 152-159. **Take Home Midterm due in class.**

[This being the lecture before Spring Break (and with the Midterm due in class), I continue to experiment with the contents to make things lively. Last time, I had lecture material to finish and then facilitated a discussion about the Genovese and Raboteau articles. This went fairly well, considering. Next time, I may screen a section of the "Abolitionism" portion of the public television series, "Africans in America." I have used portions of this series in several classes and also recommend it as useful background material for one's own enlightenment.]

**March 19-27, Spring Break -- Enjoy!**

**Week Seven (3/28):** Gender and Religion at Mid-century.

## Monday: The Cult of Domesticity

**Reading: Secondary Sources: E-reserve**, excerpts from Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, Chapters 2 and 4.

[In this lecture, I remind students about the connection between the Second Great Awakening and various reform movements (with both liberal and evangelical roots) that developed before and after the civil war (abolitionism, temperance etc.). I give some biographical treatment of the Grimke sisters and discuss the links between their work and the later push for women's suffrage. There's a PBS documentary on Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton that I have not shown in this class, but have shown excerpts from in a seminar -- useful background and could be used in class.]

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading: E-reserve**, document excerpts from Sklar, *Women's Rights Emerges From Abolitionism* and in **Allit**, "Intellectual Controversies" section, Document #6 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, excerpts from "The Woman's Bible" (1895), pp. 270-271.

[I often have the discussion focus on the differences between the Grimkes' arguments for public, political roles for women and Catherine Beecher's reply to the Grimkes (stay in your sphere and influence your husband). We also look at Stanton and discuss Cott's text.]

**Friday:** Varieties of "Separate Spheres": Mother Ann Lee and the Shakers

**Reading: Primary Sources: In Allit**, "Religion in the Early Republic" section, Document #1, Lucy Wight meets Mother Ann Lee."

[I have not yet assigned, but may add as a secondary source reading, Catherine Albanese, "Newmade Religion," in *America: Religion and Religions*, pp. 217-249.]

[In this lecture I link our more recent, focused attention on the gendered nature of religious movements, social reform and leadership with the varieties of perfectionist, communalistic movements popping up in the nineteenth century. I give brief (to my mind, painfully brief) reference to the Mormons, Christian Scientists, the Oneida community and the Shakers (mentioning that any of these groups would be a worthy topic for a paper). We then focus on the Shakers, comparing gender roles in this group with the portrait of gender in mainline Protestantism (as discussed by Cott). We view portions of the Ken Burns film on the Shakers, "The Shakers: Hands to Work and Hearts to God."]

### **Week Eight (4/4): Immigration and Pluralism I: Jewish Immigrant Experiences**

**Monday:** Invention and Tradition in American Judaism

**Reading: Primary Sources:** Anzia Yezierska, *The Bread Givers* (start) and in **Allit**, excerpt from Abraham Cohen, "The Rise of David Levinsky."

[In this lecture, I give a bit of Judaism 101 (Torah, Talmud, mitzvot etc.) and an overview of the patterns of Jewish immigration, beginning with Sephardic (later deemed "Orthodox") Jews in colonial New York and Rhode Island, then German Jews and Reform Judaism as *first* a German innovation and later an American phenomenon, then Eastern European Jews and the revival of Orthodoxy (as well as an influx of socialism). I introduce Reconstructionism and Mordechai Kaplan as well.

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading:** Discussion of *The Bread Givers*.

[The reading is an autobiographical novel by Anzia Yeziarska (an excerpt of which can be found in **Allit**). It's a bit of a long read and could be excerpted. I use this because it gives a portrait of Lower East Side Judaism from the perspective of a young woman who rebels against her traditionalist father. Gender, class, second generation issues and Americanization are all addressed here and this makes for a nice warm-up to Orsi's book which presents the same issues through an academic study rather than fiction, and for Catholics, rather than Jews. As with other occasions when I do not have a debate or text study explicitly scripted, I let the students leading the discussion shape the conversation. I have found that these students are often struck by the living conditions of immigrants more than any explicitly "religious" issue and I encourage them to think about why this is so and what the relationship may be between poverty and the various religious stances of the characters in the book.]

**Friday:** Identity Negotiations

**Reading:** Finish Yeziarska. **Secondary Sources:** **In Allit**, Jena Weissman Joselit, "Jewish Food and Jewish Identity," and "Jonathan Sarna, "Seating and the American Synagogue" (p. 317).

[In this lecture, I fill in more of the story of Reform Judaism in America and then look at Conservative and Reconstructionist Judaism as American originals, responding to issues of Americanization (and "Protestantization" within Reform), tradition, assimilation, and the influence of class and gender on how American Jews imagine and institutionalize Judaism. I then remind students of questions about historiography that we raised with the Great Awakening and other themes and ask them to consider the differences between Joselit and Sarna as historians.]

### **Week Nine (4/11): Immigration and Pluralism II: Catholic Immigrant Experiences**

**Monday:** Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism

**Reading: Primary Sources:** **In Allit**, "Antebellum Immigration and Social Tensions" section, Document #2, Maria Monk from "The Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk" (1836) and Document #3, John Francis Maguire, "The Irish in America" 165-171.

**E-reserve**, selections from Josiah Strong, *Our Country* and documents listed under "Nativism" [source, Guastad, **DH**].

[I give a lecture on patterns of immigration among Catholics, going back to the Carroll family and Catholic toleration and lack thereof in Maryland and following some of the same demographic waves discussed in the Judaism lectures. I focus on anti-Catholic sentiment as a deep theme in the Protestant tradition, the founding of national churches,

the unique characteristics of American Catholicism and the dynamics of various "Americanist" controversies. I attempt to show students the ironies of the anti-Romanism sentiments of nativists and the anti-American sentiments of various Popes. This year, we also discussed the legacy of John Paul II and how he was memorialized (and Americanized) in the American press. Nativist and Know-Nothing cartoons are useful images to examine (there's a nice one on p. 509 of Albanese, *America: Religion and Religions*.)

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading:** Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*, selected chapters.

[This year, I had students divide into small groups, some focusing on Orsi, some focusing on the nativist material. I asked them to think about the question "if your source material were the only material you had to draw on to portray the story of Catholicism in America to a group of visitors to our class, what story would you tell?" I then have several students serve as "visitors" asking students of each small group various questions. I have found this to be a good exercise in getting students to see how historians "work" and what gets shrouded and revealed based on the source material one draws upon.]

### **Friday: Immigration, Assimilation and the Locus of Religion**

**Reading:** Finish Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*. **In Allit**, "Assimilation and Adaptation" section, Document #5, Mordecai Kaplan and Document #6, Will Herberg, pp. 302-308.

[This year, I had enough unfinished material from the Monday class that I used this lecture as "catch up." We also discussed the Al Smith and Kennedy campaigns. With more time, I might have further discussed Orsi's *Madonna* and the Herberg excerpt from *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*. Another option I have considered (but not yet done) is to show excerpts of "Going My Way" in which the Bing Crosby character is clearly created as a counter to nativist stereotypes and the making and popularity of the movie itself is an example of increased acceptance (though also "Protestantizing") of Catholics. ]

### **Week Ten (4/18): Twentieth Century Tensions: Fundamentalism and Modernism**

#### **Monday: Fundamentalism as Response to Modernity**

**Reading: E-reserve**, Harry Emerson Fosdick, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" **In Allit**, Nancy Tatom Ammerman, "Fundamentalism and Politics," 495-502.

[In this lecture, I introduce the students to the Social Gospel movement and to the features of twentieth century Christian liberalism. I mention Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch and the embrace of science, social science and German Higher criticism

by liberal Social Gospelers and others. I then introduce Fundamentalism as a response to modernism, discussing the differences between modernist and fundamentalist responses to the bible, to "culture," to science, to social reform, to understandings of the millennium etc. This background is intended to be a good "set up" for the debate in sections. If there's time, we also discuss what students do and don't know about the Scopes trial. Sometimes I have students look at anti-modernist cartoons (found in Gaustad and Schmidt).]

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading:** Bring readings listed under Monday's reading.

[In this section, I stage a debate premised on a meeting of Presbyterian ministers some of whom must decide whether they will break off to form their own fundamentalist association. On the one side are those who think like Harry Emerson Fosdick, on the other, fundamentalists who object to Fosdick. Using the readings as a jumping off point, the debate proceeds. A third group serves as panelists who will judge which side has won the debate and by what criteria. The "panelist" group is effective in keeping the debate serious, so that it does not spill over into caricature. Often, the fundamentalists have won on the basis of the confidence with which they have expressed their views and supported them biblically.]

### **Week Eleven (4/25): Religion, Civil Rights and Civil Religion**

#### **Monday: King's Christian Vision**

**Reading: Primary Sources:** **In Allit**, "Religion and Protest Movements" section, Document #1, Martin Luther King Jr., "Loving Your Enemies" and Document #2, James Baldwin, from "The Fire Next Time," pp. 360-365. **E-reserve**, King, "Why We Can't Wait." **Secondary Sources:** **In Allit**, David Garrow, "Martin Luther King's Leadership," pp. 379-384.

[In this class I facilitate a discussion on what we do and don't know about King. I fill in some gaps on King's early history, his move from being a comfortable academic to a social change leader, his early experiences at Crozier theological seminary, his intellectual debts to Niebuhr (sometimes we examine portions of *Moral Man and Immoral Society*), changes in his understanding of what it means to be a Christian in America etc. We discuss the social context for the civil rights movement, the involvement of Jews and Catholics, and whether King's Christian language would be effective in a social movement today (and why or why not). Sometimes I show an excerpt from the PBS series, "Eyes on the Prize," especially the "Awakenings" section which focuses on the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the role of the church mass meetings as both a strategic technique and a source of religious inspiration. I have found Taylor Branch's *Parting the Waters* to be a good reference for this lecture.

### **Wednesday: Discussion Sections**

**Reading:** Bring readings listed under Monday's reading.

[I have used this section to be a free-floating discussion of the role of religion in the Civil Rights movement. We focus on material King has authored and discuss the "construction" of King as a figure (with religion sometimes emphasized and sometimes de-emphasized) by other American politicians and intellectuals. The uneasy position of women in the Civil Rights movement also gets discussed, with connections made back to the emergence of first wave feminism from abolitionism. I also use this section to discuss upcoming papers and/or exams.]

**Friday:** The Idea of Civil Religion

**Reading: E-reserve,** Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America"

[I use this class to discuss what Bellah means by "civil religion," whether and how civil religion "looks Protestant," whether and how the Civil Rights movement can be seen as an example of "civil religion," etc. We look at several of George W. Bush's political speeches and evaluate why or why not they would fit in the civil religion category.]

### **Week Twelve (5/2):**

**Monday:** Religious Pluralism Revisited

**Reading: E-reserve,** Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America*, pp.123-141 and chapter six, "Afraid of Ourselves."

[I use this class to give some (but not too much; it's the last week and the students are saturated!) background on post-1965 immigration and the implications of this for religious pluralism. We discuss what "pluralism" means when compared to "diversity" and "toleration" and explore what is similar and what is different when we compare contemporary pluralism to the immigration waves of the nineteenth century. I often share stories of my own work on Diana Eck's Pluralism Project (which I worked on and helped write portions of as a graduate student). I show excerpts from the PBS production "Becoming the Buddha in L.A."]

**Wednesday: Discussion Sections:**

**Reading: E-reserve,** "Credo" from *The Education of Richard Rodriguez*.

[In this section, I ask students to take a stand on the question (using the readings of this week and the course as a whole): Is America primarily a Protestant nation or primarily a religiously pluralistic nation? (neither or both are also options, if students come up with them). I ask them to support their stances with particular examples and explicit criteria.

We also discuss Rodriguez's credo, which ends (nicely) with his own meditation on how he imagines himself connected to and different from the Puritans. This gives the last reading of the course a bit of resonance with the first readings of the course.]

**Friday: Course Wrap Up**

[If time is needed for a bit more of "Becoming the Buddha in LA," I use it -- especially to talk about parallels between the Americanization of Buddhism, and that of Catholicism and Judaism in earlier periods. I then ask students to articulate what they feel are the big themes and lingering questions coming out of the course. These tend to include: individualism (and a corresponding longing for community), exceptionalism, experimentation, pluralism (real or imagined), the tight connection between religion and politics (and the legacy of the separation of church and state), the ways in which religion is shaped by gender, race, class, and geography, the ways in which religion pervades American culture (civil religion) and the ways in which Puritan and/or Protestant legacies remain in our culture. We also do a bit of imaginative forecasting about what the American religious scene might look like in fifty years, with an emphasis on how what we know as historians leads us to make these predictions.]

**Next pages: Appendices -- Midterm, Final and Paper Assignments**

[In these assignments, I have emphasized thinking over memorization. At the same time, I am looking for students to be able to have a sense of historical and conceptual specificity and to be able to clearly link authors with their ideas.]

## **RE 170 -- Take Home Midterm**

**Instructions:** The exam is due in class on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup> of March. You may turn it in before then at the Department of Religion, Munroe Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. Make sure to staple the paper and to put a **cover sheet with your name and the honor code on the back of the midterm. Please do not put your name on any other page but the cover page.** This is an open book exam. Therefore, it is expected that the quality of the writing (in both substance and style) will be more akin to that of a paper, as opposed to an in-class bluebook style exam. Use a normal font (about this size), double spacing and 1 inch margins on all sides.

[I ask them to put names on the back (which I cover up with yellow stickies) so I can grade the midterms blindly. I am always surprised by the results, a few students I expect to do well don't and vice-versa. I really believe in this approach where the focus is on the work and not on the students who produced it.]

Short Answers: There are 12 terms or quotations below, from which you should choose 10 to discuss.

In some cases, a term or quotation below is followed by a particular question I am posing. If not followed by a particular question, your general approach should be: discuss what the term or quotation means, mention in what context(s) it has appeared in the course (e.g. lecture, specific reading(s) etc.) and what is significant about this term to our understanding of a particular person, historical period, theological concept or broader theme or issue in the study of American religion as we have encountered it so far. If there are other key terms associated with the term listed, you might mention those. For instance, if the term "Arminianism" were listed below, you might mention the Synod of Dort, or the concept of "preparation for salvation" or "the doctrine of predestination" and describe how these terms relate to the term that appears. Make clear in your responses what quotes and terms you are picking and write about 5 substantive sentences for each term or quotation.

1) • "'The fact that a man behaved in a 'sanctified' manner, breaking none of the laws of God, was no evidence that he was saved. In Puritan terminology this meant that 'sanctification' was no evidence of 'justification,' that men's lives in this world offered no evidence of their prospects in the next."

2) • manitou

3) • "There were not, they insisted, Separatists. They were not 'of those that dreame of perfection in this world.' They did not disavow their membership in the Church of England." (In discussing this question, also make clear who the Separatists *were* and the basic differences between the two groups.)

4) • Afflictions

5) • "the telling of a relation"

6) • "come over and help us"

7) • "Methinks I see some great change at hand,  
That e're long will fall upon this poor land;  
Not only because many are took away,  
Of the best rank, but virtue doth decay."

8) • "In 1738 the synod had further ruled that no minister would be licensed unless he could display a degree from a British or European university, or from one of the New England colleges (Harvard or Yale)."

9) • Describe the relationship between **typology** and **covenant theology** (i.e. explain what each term means, but then make clear how they are related).

10) • The Jefferson Bible

11) • The Halfway Covenant and "In short, of **all** religious opinions there are **some**, and the most of none at all." Discuss the term and the quote. Then discuss what relationship there is between them.

12) • Antinomianism

### Essay Questions:

**Instructions:** There are four essay questions below, of which you should respond to three. Everyone should respond to questions 1 and 2. For the third essay, **choose** between 3 and 4. In quoting from the texts you use, please provide a clear documentation of the source and page numbers (e.g. Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in Allit, 61). You may place these citations in the text of your essay as parenthetical citations, or you may use footnotes. You need not provide full publication information if you are citing texts from the course.

1. John Winthrop, Ann Bradstreet and Samuel Sewall could all be said to be "representative" Puritans. Drawing on material written by and/or about these three historical figures (as well as material discussed in lectures and sections), describe the ideas and attitudes that these three figures hold in common (including, but not limited to, their theological views). What aspects of Puritan life and culture do they share? Then, consider the ways in which Winthrop, Sewall and Bradstreet *differ* from one another in the ways they attempt to live out Puritanism in their daily lives. Finally, consider that Edmund Morgan has chosen Winthrop as his "representative" of Puritanism, while Hall has chosen Sewall. Discuss why, in your analysis, each author has picked the person he has. Whom would you pick (if you could only pick one of the three) and why? (Length: at least 3 and no more than 4 pages.)

2. Patricia Bonomi has argued that the first Great Awakening "broke down social cohesion in America" and "simultaneously elevated the individual" (Bonomi, "The Great Awakening," in Allit, 117). Drawing on her own essay, as well as lectures, discussions and other readings, discuss the ways in which you think her argument is correct. Then, consider what counter-arguments you would make. Is there evidence that the Great

Awakening did NOT do these things, or even may have done the opposite? Finally, consider three primary sources that are NOT part of the Great Awakening, but, in their contents, also seem to "elevate the individual." Show how the authors of these texts seem to be promoting individualism and working against trends of social cohesion (or social control). In other words, if individualism is a dominant theme of American religion, what other sources of individualism are important to consider, beyond the possible contributions of the Great Awakening?  
(Length: at least 3 and no more than 4 pages)

**Choose One of the Two Options Below:**

3) The encounter between colonial settlers and missionaries (both French and English) and native, indigenous peoples was an encounter fraught with misunderstandings on all sides. Drawing on lectures and discussions, the relevant primary sources, James Ronda's essay and the film "Black Robe" discuss those ways in which colonialists and various Indian tribes interpreted (and misinterpreted) each other's religious lives. What aspects of Catholic or Puritan culture were fundamentally misunderstood by the tribes who encountered them? What did the Catholic and Protestant missionaries fail to see or understand? Why was this the case? Are there examples of moments when these different cultures *did* seem to understand one another? How and in what circumstances did Indians resist the pressures of the missionaries and how and in what ways was that resistance thwarted?  
(Length: at least two and no more than 3 pages)

4) Write an imaginary dialogue in which Jonathan Edwards and William Ellery Channing meet for a conversation. Don't spend too much time on the exchange of niceties (you don't have room), but get right to the ideas you think they will be most interested in talking about. Assume that each has read each other's work and shape the dialogue around both the points of contention between them and the ideas or sentiments they might hold in common. Draw on the lectures, discussions and texts written by both Edwards and Channing. In creating the dialogue, try to capture the breadth of their thinking, don't just focus on one idea, but do your best to convey the complexity of each minister's thought. Try also to convey something of the social, political and historical context in which each of them lived.  
(Length: at least two and no more than 3 pages)

## **Guidelines for RE 170 Final Paper or Exam**

[I met with many students individually to discuss these options.]

**Purpose of the Assignment:** The final paper is an opportunity for you to dig into a topic under the general rubric of American Religious History and explore it in some depth.

**Due No Later than May 14 in the Religion Department Office, 2nd Floor Munroe.**  
Length, 7-10 pages.

**There are a number of approaches you can take to the paper:**

1. Develop a paper on a topic we have already considered (or are going to consider) in class such as: the feminism of the Grimkes compared to the ideals of "domesticity" as described by Nancy Cott; an analysis of the various ways Christianity and the institution of slavery intersected (e.g. apologists versus abolitionists, or the differences between slaveholders and slaves' perceptions (and practices) of Christianity, a close reading of a several of William Ellery Channing's works, an analysis of the theological themes in Jonathan Edwards' sermons, a comparison of Catholic and Jewish immigrant experiences through a comparative analysis of *The Bread Givers* and Orsi's *The Madonna of 115th St.* For this paper, you can draw mainly on the sources we have used in class, while (depending on the topic) enhancing it with reference to outside sources.

2. You may also choose to examine a topic that we have **not** considered in class, or touched on only briefly such as: an analysis of William Penn's religious views and how they influenced his attitude toward Native Americans and religious tolerance, a study of Mormonism, Christian Science, or the Shakers as an example of "American grown" religious movements. This will require more outside research and independent work, but will enable you to pursue a particular interest we may not have touched upon.

3. Write a religious history of your own family, in which you interview relatives and consult family resources to develop a narrative. Does your family's story resemble or contrast with the stories of immigrant religious life represented by Orsi or Yeziarska? Does it fit the analysis Herberg gives of religion's role in American culture? Or can it perhaps be interpreted as a story of the legacy of Puritanism or Evangelicalism? In other words, in writing a religious history of your family, think about what larger narrative your family's religious history fits into.

[Students tend to love this assignment and get into it -- but in both #2 AND #3, I still have to work hard to get them to be not simply descriptive, but also analytical.]

In terms of **topics**, I am quite open to whatever you might propose, you may look at the thought of a **particular individual** (such as Jefferson or Sarah Grimke), consider the dynamics of a **particular movement in a specific time period** (such as the early

development of Reconstructionist Judaism), **do a comparative analysis of particular thinkers and/or movements that interacted with each other** (such as Garrison and Douglas in the nineteenth century or liberals and modernists in the twentieth century).

In terms of **approach**, I have some particular expectations:

- 1) Do not bite off more than you can chew, pick a topic that is "do-able."
- 2) Whatever topic you choose, make sure that the paper goes beyond mere **description and summary. In other words**, make sure that you give your own **analysis** of the topic, whether it is guiding your reader through the thought of particular individuals (a "close reading" of primary sources paper) or presenting a number of interpretations of a particular movement or period (a broader topic, with attention to secondary sources paper).

**Sources to Consult:** The **Allitt** text has a "Further Reading" pages at the end of each section which are a great place to start. You should also consult the Gaustad, Williams, Albanese and Ahlstrom text books that are on reserve.

**Library Sources to Consult:** Articles on J-Store, the ATLA Religion One Index and appearing in journal such as : The William and Mary Quarterly, The Journal of American History, The Journal of the American Studies, Religion and American Culture, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. Reference librarians are an invaluable resource to consult. If you use the Web for research, make sure you know the difference between a reliable and scholarly source of information and an unreliable source.

**Citation:** For papers, please use standard history footnote and bibliographic format (consult Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Theses and Dissertations* or *The Chicago Manual of Style* if you are uncertain about how to do this).

**Final Exam Structure: (self-scheduled, blue book style, must be completed by May 15). (3 hours to complete)**

There will be three sections to the exam. I. A short answer section where you will be expected to answer 8 out of 10 questions/terms (**this part will be closed book**). II. An essay section in which you will be asked to write 2 essays. You will have choices on one of the essays, but not on the other. This section will be **open book**.

Please let me know, in writing (not e-mail) which option you plan to take. I will pass a sheet around in class on Monday the 25<sup>th</sup>. If you are planning to write a paper, however, it would be best to get started thinking about it as soon as you can.

## **RE 170 -- Religion in America -- Final Examination**

**Instructions:** The first part of the exam is closed book. No books or notes may be used in this section of the exam. Be sure to put your name and the honor code on each blue book that you use.

### **I. Short Answer Section (Closed Book)**

**Choose 8 out of the 10 below.**

For each term or quotation you select below discuss what the term or quotation means (if there are two terms, discuss the relationship between them), mention in what context(s) it has appeared in the course (e.g. lecture, specific reading(s) etc.) and what is significant about this term to our understanding of a particular person, historical period, theological concept or broader theme or issue in the study of American religion as we have encountered it so far. If there are other key terms associated with the term listed, you might mention those. For instance, if the term "Garrison" were listed below, you might mention the distinctions between Garrison's thought and that of Frederick Douglas. Make clear in your responses what quotes and terms you are picking and write about 8 substantive sentences for each term or quotation.

- 1) "The invitational periods at the mass meetings, when we asked for volunteers, were much like those invitational periods that occur every Sunday morning..."
- 2) Josiah Strong **and** Maria Monk
- 3) Mordecai Kaplan **and** *mitzvot*
- 4) "To believe in the Virgin Birth as an explanation of great personality is one of the familiar ways in which the ancient world was accustomed to account for unusual superiority."
- 5) The "Americanist" Controversy
- 6) The Pittsburgh Platform
- 7) The Tract Society **and** The Sunday School Union
- 8) Walter Rauschenbusch
- 9) "The Selling of Joseph" **and** *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes*
- 10) "Women bore huge and very heavy altars of candles arranged in tiered circles"

### **Extra Credit:**

- a) Discuss the difference between anti-slavery and abolitionism.
- b) Discuss the difference between post-millennialism and pre-millennialism
- c) Discuss a term or quotation you thought might appear on this list, but didn't.

## **Essay Section**

(Open Book -- You may use books and notes for this portion of the exam).

### **II. Essay Section Part A -- Choose One of the Following Questions**

1) In the excerpts you read from Nancy Cott's *The Bonds of Womanhood* ("Domesticity" and "Religion") Cott explains how the cultural ethic of "domesticity" came into being. Explain what the culture of "domesticity" was in American Protestantism and what its relationship was to the Second Great Awakening. Then discuss in what ways the ideals of domesticity keep women out of public life and in what ways it may have prepared them to enter it. Finally, consider the contributions of the Grimke sisters to the debates over "The Woman Question." To what extent did these women participate in or assent to ideals of domesticity? To what extent did they resist it? What role did Christianity play in their views and what interpretations of Christianity did they express?

2) Religious (and sometimes non-religious) arguments were used on all sides of the debate over slavery in the decades preceding the Civil War. How would you explain this moment in American Religious History to someone who knew something of the basics, but not much about the role religion played?

Drawing on the primary texts (as well as lecture, discussion etc.) of anti-slavery advocates on the one hand (Frederick Douglas, William Lloyd Garrison, the Grimkes etc.) and apologists for slavery (Thorton Stringfellow, John England, Samuel Howe etc.) on the other, describe the differences you see in the way players on each side make their arguments and in the understandings of Christianity and American society that emerge from those arguments.

In shaping the essay, you could draw on the work of the Genoveses ("Slaveholders an the Bible") to illuminate the perspectives of Christian slaveholders and/or Al Raboteau "The Slaves' Own Religion" to discuss how and why many slaves continued to be Christian, despite the fact that slave-holders were also Christian. [There are a number of ways you can approach this essay, just be sure that you bring both primary and secondary sources into the discussion, though you need not treat every author mentioned.]

3) In Anzia Yeziarska's autobiographical novel, *Bread Givers*, religious life is interpreted through the main character as being primarily (though not exclusively) oppressive. In contrast, Robert Orsi, in his study, *The Madonna of 115th St.* argues that the *feste* has multiple meanings and functions, some restrictive and some liberating. Using the two books as your main sources, but with reference to other material on American Catholicism and Judaism from readings, lectures and discussions, describe the challenges that Catholics and Jews faced in the first and second waves of immigration, the religious changes and innovations that were part of the immigration experience and the ways in which religious ideas and practices functioned as restrictive, liberating or both for these religious groups.

### **III. Essay Section Part B -- Common Question**

Some scholars have argued that America is the most religiously pluralistic country in the world and, to a certain extent, has been religiously pluralistic all along. Others maintain that American religion (and American culture more broadly) has always been heavily shaped by Protestantism. Which approach would you side with, and why? (Or would you make a different kind of argument altogether?)

In answering this question you will want to think about what definition(s) of pluralism will guide your answer. You should also think about the many different aspects of religion in America you want to bring into your discussion i.e. you might think about pluralism in terms of "who's here" and "who isn't" at various points in American religious history, about what ideas are culturally dominant, about who has power and control, about the role of religion and government etc. Regardless of which side of the argument you care to pursue, write your essay in such a way that you address the matter of pluralism and of religious change over time, giving some consideration to the broad sweep of American religious history from the time of European contact to the present. Obviously, you can only say so much (!) but design your essay so that you can account for important moments in the story you choose to tell.

While all of these questions are challenging, remember that you have read and thought about many different aspects of American religion this semester and have more to say than you think. Best of luck and have fun with it.

**-- Professor Gould**