

Religion 498/633  
U.S. Christianity & the World  
Winter 2015                      Tu 16:00-18:30  
Credits: 3                              Classroom TBA  
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### Institutional Context

Concordia is a public university in downtown Montreal with 37,000 undergraduates and 8,000 graduate students. It has a large business school and growing science programs. On the humanities side, it is one of the best known schools in Canada for fine arts, drama, and communications studies. It is also at the forefront of promoting “research creation,” a movement to express academic concepts/research through art and performance.

Concordia was created in 1974 during a province-wide push to improve access to higher education in Quebec. Sixty-five percent of its students come from within the province. In my classes, most students grew up around Montreal and somewhat over half speak English as a first language. The rest speak French or another language as their first. Like other Canadian universities, admission requirements differ from program to program. Some are competitive and others have a low bar to admission, which speaks to Concordia’s mandate to provide accessible education. Students in my classes range from highly capable to really struggling.

The Religion Department is one of the oldest in Canada. Faculty areas of expertise include Christian/Jewish biblical studies, Gender Studies, Islamic Studies, and Canadian Jewish Studies. I am the only faculty member who works on U.S. religion. Very few of the undergraduate students in my courses are departmental majors; my class is often their one Religion elective (sometimes only humanities elective). I draw a fair number of students from the fine arts programs too.

### Course History and Structure

RELI 498/633 will run for the first time in 2015 and will enroll upper-level undergraduate and MA students. I designed it for two reasons. First, I have made my *Introduction to North American Christianity* course less rigorous than I had originally intended so as to attract more students. This seminar will give students who have taken the intro class a chance to work with me more closely and to expand on the material in more detail. Second, I have regretted not being able to do more with transnational/global movements in the intro, especially since that is where my own interests lie. RELI 498/633 gives me a chance to explore that theme more closely with the students.

The class follows the standard format for seminars in our department: it meets once a week for 2.25 hours. We will mainly read secondary sources, complementing the introductory course’s focus on close reading primary documents. However, I’ve also included a short primary “Document to Discuss” most weeks. I’d like students to really benefit from the experience of a

small seminar. For that reason, I've emphasized discussion, with a significant portion of the grade (20%) devoted to thoughtful participation. The "Either/Or" assignments allow us to cover more material and will give students a chance to practice small group work, peer teaching and presenting. I also tried to move away from the usual midterm/book review/final paper (which I use in the intro class). I taught another seminar at Concordia and the students did wonderfully with more creative assignments. With that in mind, I kept one "traditional" paper and added a Golden Rule supper, where we will recreate a charitable event using a Near East Relief instruction guide from 1925 (a primary source from my research). Students will be responsible for different components of the dinner. During the meal, we will reflect on the experience, and the course as a whole, guided by the questions provided below.

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U.S. Christianity & the World

**Description**

North American Christianity has been coloured by encounters and exchanges, shifts in understanding and missionary sensibilities. American Christians have left home and brought their form of religion with them; immigrants have arrived with new forms of Christianity too. With globalization, people, ideas, and ministries cross borders with increasing facility – through televangelism and the internet, by way of missions and NGOs, because of wars or economics.

Intent on crafting a cohesive national story, scholars have not always been as attentive to these flows as they might be. This course builds on *398: Introduction to North American Christianity* to explore this topic in depth. We will look at a variety of disciplinary perspectives and time periods in order to ask how American Christians confront and encounter "the World." Our task is to complicate the geographic boundaries of "American Christianity" in order to reimagine our subject in new ways.

**Assignments & Grading**

*Dates may be subject to change.*

This is a 400-level seminar so attendance is mandatory. The bulk of our time together will be spent discussing the readings. You will note that there are comparatively few lengthy written assignments and no exams for this course. I have arranged it that way so that you can focus on reading all the assigned documents. Please come to class prepared to engage them.

Following standard procedure in the Religion Department:

- Assignments are due in hard copy.
- Late assignments will be penalized (5% per day up to 5 days late), and I will NOT accept them without prior permission (which will be granted in the case of emergencies or illness with a medical note). *If you have a legitimate reason for missing class or handing in a late assignment please do not hesitate to let me know.*

The breakdown of assignments is as follows:

### **Participation: 20%**

Participation is more than attending and being on time. It means active engagement. *You should take careful notes as you read at home so that you are prepared for the discussion. Bring all readings and notes with you to class.* Everyone is expected to attend our class at the Redpath museum. Also, 10% of this grade is for participation in the Golden Rule supper.

### **Golden Rule Supper**

Our course will end with a Golden Rule supper. The Near East Relief (NER) was a successful charitable body that grew out of northeastern networks in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. It began in WWI to provide emergency relief and it pioneered innovative techniques for consciousness- and fund-raising among U.S. Christians. In the 1920s, NER started its most well-known campaign: a Golden Rule supper. For one night, Americans nation-wide were invited to events to eat like the orphans in missions in the Middle East. Each supper included hymns, photo displays, and a message (a sermon).

Using a copy of NER's guidelines from the period, we will recreate our own version of a Golden Rule supper. Student will sign up in pairs for a task (e.g. music, message, food). You may follow the recipes and guidelines from 1925 or innovate as you wish. During our meal, we will discuss the questions related to our second writing assignments (see below).

Although I have not attached a grade to the Golden Rule supper, it is mandatory. Note that it comprises 10% of your participation grade and the second writing assignment (25%) relies on it.

### **“Either/Or” Reading Presentations: 30% (10% x 3)**

On Week 2, Week 7, Week 9 there is an “either/or” reading choice. Each student will choose or be assigned one set of readings. Each group of students will be responsible for reading the articles on their own and then meeting outside of class time in order to decide how to best impart the major points to your peers in the rest of the class. If there are multiple articles, you must synthesize how they relate to each other (compare/contrast).

You will then present your points in class in a 15 presentation. A PowerPoint or handouts are not required but you must be *well organized*. Following the presentation, each group will submit a 2-page summary of points that should quote or refer to *specific passages* in the text by page number. It can be in point form but please make sure it's sufficiently clear that I can follow it.

*Note:* Week 11 is also an either/or but there will be no presentation. It will be up to students to bring the main points from their assigned article into our discussion.

### **Writing Assignments: 50% (25% x 2)**

During the semester, you will hand in two writing assignments of 2,000-2,500 words each (6-8 pages). Both should be well organized around a particular theme and written in clear prose.

#### Assignment 1

You will sign up for a week in our course that interests you. You must draw on TWO of the readings from the syllabus for that week and at least TWO other sources of your choice (this can include one primary source, if you wish). The essay should be well-structured around a theme of your choosing that is relevant to the course. Before you begin writing, please clear your topic with me – either during my office hours or after class. *\*It is your responsibility to clear the topic with me at least two weeks before your assignment is due.\** You must hand in a draft of the assignment on the week in question but you can choose to submit a final copy at any point before 5 pm on April 21.

#### Assignment 2

The second essay is a reflection on the Golden Rule Dinner. In order to write it, you must refer to THREE secondary sources from our syllabus (no outside sources should be used). You will be responsible for handing in a draft immediately after the dinner. I'll send you comments and you will then submit your final reflection one week later (before 5pm on April 21).

The assignment should consider ONE of the following questions:

- a) How has Christianity created and maintained global linkages, both real and imagined?
- b) Is the NER's Golden Rule dinner "religion"? How or how not?
- c) How have factors related to American culture affected U.S. Christians' global outlook and modes of engagement?

## Schedule

### **Week 1 (Jan 13): Mapping & Imagining the World**

For our first class, please come with:

- (A) *An image of a map of the world*. Think outside the box: maps can look like many things depending on the historical era or culture in which they were created. Feel free to bring in a few examples. A site to peruse is historian Susan Schulten's *Mapping the Nation*: <http://www.mappingthenation.com/>
- (B) Notes on the Anderson, Miller and Kuklick readings

Readings:

- Benedict Anderson, "Introduction" and "Old Language, New Models" *Imagined Communities* [1983] (Verso 2006) 1-7 and 67-82.
- Perry Miller, "Introduction" *Errand into the Wilderness* [1956] (Harvard UP 2000) 1-15.
- Bruce Kuklick, "Myth and Symbol in American Studies," *American Quarterly* 24 (Fall 1972) 435-50.
- David Chidester, "Outside, Looking In" *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) pp 223-31.

### **Week 2 (Jan 20): Theories of the Global**

Either/Or Week. You will be responsible for reading ONE pair of texts. Please think about: (a) How are these two texts in conversation? (i.e. why are they paired?) (b) What are the main points that can be presented to your classmates?

PAIR 1:

- Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" *Theory, Culture & Society* (1990): 295-310.
- Kathinka Froystad, "The Return Path," in ed. Thomas J. Csordas, *Transnational Transcendence: essays on religion and globalization* (UC Press 2009) 279-304.

PAIR 2:

- Girish Daswani, "The Globalization of Pentecostalism and the Limits of Globalization," in Michael Lambek, *Companion to Anthropology of Religion* (Wiley 2013) 239-254.
- Kevin L. O'Neill, "Cities of God: International Theologies of Citizenship," in *City of God: Christian Citizenship in Post-war Guatemala* (U of California Press, 2010) 170-98.

PAIR 3:

- William Madsen, "Religious Syncretism," in R. Walpole, ed., *Handbook of Middle American Indians*, vol. 6, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967) 369-91.

- Manuel Vasquez and Marie Friedmann Marquardt, “Theorizing Globalization and Religion,” in *The Transnational Studies Reader* (2008) pp 315-326.

*Purpose of weeks 1 & 2:* Think about how national borders become important in the study of “American” religion, and how those borders are created and imagined; explore how contemporary scholars have conceived of “the global” and “the nation.”

## THEOLOGIES OF THE GLOBAL

### **Week 3 (Jan 27): Go Forth & Make Disciples**

This week’s readings are mainly primary source texts. Please read them carefully and keep in mind when each one was written.

- “The Formation of the Church and Its Witness in a Pluralistic World,” In Robert A. Hunt, *The Gospel Among Nations: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010) 3-8.
- In your bible: Galatians; Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1-2, 15); Matthew 28.
- “Christianity on the Boundaries of Rome,” “Dominican Documents,” “Papal Bull,” “Las Casas” In. Hunt, *The Gospel Among Nations* (2010) 44-51, 62-64; 68-73.
- William Carey, “Enquiry into the obligations of Christians to use means for the conversion of the heathens” (1792) – Introduction and Section I (pp1-13).  
<http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/enquiry.html>

### **Week 4 (Feb 3): Territory Unbound in Early America**

- Thomas Bender, “The Ocean World and the Beginnings of American History,” in *A Nation Among Nations* (Hill & Wang 2006) pp 15-60. *Please skim.*
- Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra “Racial, Religious, and Civic Identities in Colonial Spanish America” *American Literary History* 2005 (17) 420-437
- Laurie F. Maffley-Kipp, “Eastward Ho!” in Thomas Tweed, ed. *Retelling U.S. Religious History* (California 1997) pp. 127-48.

### **Week 5 (Feb 10): Translations & Missions**

- Patrick M. Erben, “Translating Pennsylvania: Visions of Spiritual Community in Promotional Literature,” *A Harmony of the Spirits Translation and the Language of Community in Early Pennsylvania* (UNC 2006) pp. 1-21, 63-71, 104-126.
- Lamin Sanneh, “Missionary Translation in African Perspective,” in *Translating the message: The missionary impact on culture* [1989] (Orbis, 2008) 191-226.
- Peter Gow, “Forgetting Conversion: The SIL Mission in the Piro Lived World,” in

Fenella Cannell, *The Anthropology of Christianity* (Duke UP, 2006) 211-39.

- Document to discuss: “On Polygamy,” *Minutes of the Fourth Session of the India Mission Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church USA, held at Binour, 1868*, pp. 86-91.

*Purpose of weeks 3-5:* Weigh the theologies that undergird Christianity’s global expansion, as well as more contemporary theologies/ideologies of U.S. Christianity’s place in such translations and expansions.

## TECHNOLOGIES OF THE GLOBAL

### **Week 6 (Feb 17): Economies of Unity**

#### READING

- Simon Coleman, “Expansive Agency” in *The Globalization of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge UP, 2000) pp187-207.
- Erica Bornstein, “Child Sponsorship, Evangelism and Belonging” in *The Spirit of Development* (Stanford UP, 2005) pp 67-96.
- Peter R. D’Agostino, “The Church Encounters the Order of Sons of Italy in America, 1913-1921,” *Rome in America* (UNC Press 2004) pp.132-57
- *Document to discuss:* “A sermon, preached before the Massachusetts Missionary Society at their annual meeting in Boston, May 26, 1807 by Elijah Parish.” Selected pages.

### **23 February to 1 March – Reading Week**

### **Week 7 (March 3): Communications & Technology**

- Heather Curtis, “Depicting Distant Suffering: Evangelicals and the Politics of Pictorial Humanitarianism in the Age of American Empire,” *Material Religion: the Journal of Objects, Art and Belief* 8:2 (June 2012): 154-183.
- Marla Frederick, “Neo-Pentecostalism and Globalization,” in Robert Orsi, ed. *Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies* (Cambridge UP 2012) 380-402.
- Deirdre de la Cruz, “Coincidence and Consequence: Marianism and the Mass Media in the Global Philippines,” *Cultural Anthropology* 24 (2009): 455-488.

*Purpose of weeks 6-7:* Consider facets of global religion, beyond missions & colonial expansion.

## SITES OF NATIONAL EXCHANGE

### **Week 8 (March 10): Immigration, Diaspora, Borderlands**

- Thomas A. Tweed, “Diasporic Nationalism,” in *Gods of the City* (1999), 131-154.
- Paul Johnson, “Shamans at Work in New York,” in *Diaspora Conversions: Black Carib Religion and the Recovery of Africa* (University of California Press, 2007) 125-145.
- David Chang, “Borderlands in a World at Sea: Concow Indians, Native Hawaiians, and South Chinese in Indigenous, Global, and National Space, 1860s-1880s,” *Journal of American History* 98 (September 2011): 384-403.
- Clarence E. Hardy, “From Exodus to Exile: Black Pentecostals, Migrating Pilgrims, and Imagined Internationalism,” *American Quarterly* 59:3 (2007) 737-57.
- *Document to Discuss*: “Nigerian Church Has Huge Expansion Plans in US” Voice of America broadcast (please read the short article by journalist Jerome Socolovsky at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/nigerian-church-has-huge-expansion-plans-in-us/1777453.html>)

### **Week 9 (March 17): Dialogue & Display**

Either/Or Week

#### **Either**

- Amy Kittelstrom, “The International Social Turn: Unity and Brotherhood at the World’s Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893,” *Religion and American Culture* 19:2 (2009): 243-274

#### **OR**

- Ian Dyck, “Founding of the Anthropological Division at the National Museum of Canada: An Intertwining of Science, Religion, and Politics,” in *Revelations* (2001) 3-34.

Everyone:

- Erin L Hasinoff, *Faith in Objects: American Missionary Expositions in the Early Twentieth Century* (Palgrave: 2011) pp 31-54, 121-169.
- *Document to Discuss*: “The Parliament Blog”  
<http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/news/index.php/category/previous-parliaments/1893-parliament-chicago/>

Our second “document” this week is the McGill’s Redpath Museum. We will take a look at the ethnology collections, which include many artifacts donated by missionaries. *\*Our class will meet in the lobby of the Redpath instead of our usual classroom\**

## **Week 10 (Mar 24): New Modes of Pluralism**

- Deirdre Meintel “Catholicism as Living Memory in a Spiritualist Congregation,” *Quebec Studies* 52 (2011-12): 69-86. (Please look back through your notes on hybridity).
- Janel Kragt Bakker “The Sister Church Phenomenon: A Case Study of the Restructuring of American Christianity against the Backdrop of Globalization,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 36:3 (2012) 129-134.
- David Chidester, “Shamanic Religion” in *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) 172-189.

*Purpose of weeks 8-10:* Building on Week 1, explore the places where (religious) people encounter each other. Consider how this plays out in practice in North America.

## SITES OF INTERNATIONAL ENCOUNTER

## **Week 11 (Mar 31): Religion in War & Diplomacy**

Either/Or Week

- Kate Carte Engel, “The SPCK and the American Revolution: The Limits of International Protestantism,” *Church History* 81:1 (2012) 77-103.
- Peter R. D’Agostino, “The Transnational Symbolic Contest for Rome, 1878-1914,” *Rome in America* (UNC Press 2004) pp.52-80
- Andrew Preston, “Cuba, the Philippines and the First Crusade” and “Woodrow Wilson and the Second Crusade” *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (Vintage Canada 2012) 207-37.

### **Either**

- Jonathan Ebel, “The Great War, Religious Authority, and the American Fighting Man,” *Church History* 78:1 (2009): 99-133.

### **OR**

- Amy Kaplan, “Violent Belongings and the Question of Empire,” *American Quarterly* 56 (March 2004) 1-18.

\*This week we will meet for an extra hour in order to discuss the Golden Rule supper. In preparation, read this short text from Jeffrey Wattles, *The Golden Rule* (Oxford UP 1996). [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/understanding\\_golden\\_rule.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/understanding_golden_rule.php)

## **Week 12 (April 7): Uniting the Nations**

- Amy Kaplan, “Manifest Domesticity,” *American Literature* 70:3 (1998) 581-606.
- Emily Rosenberg, “Missions to the World: Philanthropy Abroad,” in Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark D. McGarvie, eds., *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) 241-58.

- Dana L Robert, “Cross-Cultural Friendship and the Creation of Twentieth Century World Christianity,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 35:2 (2012) 100-108.
- Andrew Preston, “John Foster Dulles and the Quest for a Just and Durable Peace” *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith* (Vintage Canada 2012) 384-409.
- *Document to Discuss*: Three articles from *Commonweal*, a liberal U.S. Catholic newspaper: Internationalization of Jerusalem.

### **Week 13 (April 14): End of Year “Golden Rule” Supper**

\*We will recreate the Golden Rule Supper during our regular evening time slot. We’ll meet in the Religion Department or the Multifaith Center, depending on availability.

*Purpose of weeks 11-13*: Explore the impact of American religion in the international arena, namely in foreign conflicts, diplomacy, and charitable aid.

**April 21**: The last day to hand in your writing assignments. Please do so by 5 pm in my box.