

Roberto R. Trevino Course Syllabus

Prepared for the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture by:

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The Center is pleased to share with you the syllabi for introductory courses in American religion that were developed in seminars led by Dr. Philip Gleason of the University of Notre Dame. In all of the seminar discussions, it was apparent that context, or the particular teaching setting, was an altogether critical factor in envisioning how students should be introduced to a field of study. The justification of approach, included with each syllabus, is thus germane to how you use the syllabus.

I. Syllabus Justification

The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) is the youngest and smallest member of the four-campus University of Colorado system. Enrollment at UCCS has remained at about 6,000 for some time and, until 1996 when student residences were constructed, the school had been strictly a commuter campus. The student body is predominately white (81%); the minority population is about 16%, about half of which is Latino. UCCS students are typically non-traditional-- working- or middle-class and about 28 years old. Most students are native to "the Springs" or long-time residents of the region, but a significant number are transient military personnel from the city's five military installations. The city has a population approaching 400,000 and it is experiencing a demographic and economic boom. Colorado Springs is headquarters to more than fifty evangelical Christian organizations, which represents an important part of the local economy and partly explains the city's conservative climate. A large military presence bolsters this conservatism but, along with ongoing in-migration of people from throughout the nation, it is also a source of slowing increasing ethnic diversity.

Course Description and Goals

This course is a survey that emphasizes linkages between religion and other aspects of American historical development rather than the history of particular religions. The main focus is on the interplay of the sacred and the secular in "making" history rather than on theological or doctrinal knowledge per se. Stated generally the primary goals of the course are to help students (1) appreciate the importance of religion in shaping critical issues and events in American history and (2) understand what historians actually do; an important secondary goal is to enable students to understand the historical diversity of the American religious landscape. The course content is divided into four periods presented chronologically. The first part sets the stage by examining the world views of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans. Part two highlights the diverse religious experiences among these groups in the context of conquest, colonization, and the birth of the United States. The third part explores intersections of religion and issues of modernity. Part four of the course samples some of the roles religion played as Americans faced the social changes of post-World War II society.

In order to explain how religion has affected American politics, identities, community-building, and other concrete examples of historical development, students will replicate the historian's work: They will analyze historical works by identifying the arguments and critiquing the use of evidence in their required readings; and they will research a topic and present their findings in a thesis-driven final essay. Students will also gain a general grounding in the tenets and historical development of various faiths through the basic course textbook, Gaustad, *Religious History of America*, augmented by readings in Williams, *America's Religions*. Williams's detailed theological and doctrinal discussions fill a gap in Gaustad's book but lack the kind of historical perspective Gaustad provides.

The class meets once a week in two-and-a-half hour sessions. The course material is examined in a variety of formats: professor's lectures, guest speakers, films, small-group and whole-class discussions, and writing workshops.

II. Introductory Course Syllabus

HISTORY 300, SPECIAL TOPICS - RELIGION IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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Course Description:

This overview of religious history emphasizes the interplay between religion and secular culture, and how this has affected American history. The course is presented from a social history perspective and takes an expansive view of what constitutes American religions, their functions, and influences in shaping the nation's past. The material is presented chronologically against the background of the developing United States with religious expression and traditions appearing as they came onto the American scene, but without tracing their entire histories. Instead, we selectively explore some important links between 'sacred' and 'secular' arenas that influenced the way America and its peoples evolved. Thus some of the recurring topics of the course include the impact of religion on: identity, community and nation building, social and political change, class, gender, and ethnic relations, and so forth. The course will introduce students to the myriad religious traditions in American history but, more importantly, it will deepen their understanding of religion as a historical force, and hone their skills of historical analysis and writing. Activities designed to achieve this include lectures, films and, most importantly, structured small-group exercises that emphasize the critical evaluation of historical evidence and formulation of coherent arguments necessary for writing thesis-driven essays.

Required Readings:

- Edwin Scott Gaustad, *A Religious History of America*
- Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*
- David G. Hackett, *Religion and American Culture, A Reader*
- Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion*

- Library reserve readings (Butler and Stout, Religion in American History, Williams, America's Religions, others)

Course Requirements:

1. two critical book reviews (each 3 pp.; each 15% of the course grade)
2. two readings response paragraphs (each 5% of the course grade)
3. an in-class mid-term examination (20% of the course grade)
4. one research paper (10 pp.; will count as final exam; 30% of the course grade)
5. excellent attendance, active class participation, and on-time completion of all assignments (10% of the course grade)

PLEASE NOTE: All papers must be typed; late paper penalty: a letter grade per calendar day.

COURSE SCHEDULE

August 29: Introductions:

- (1) course content, requirements, and expectations
- (2) the study of American religious history

Part I - Prelude: The Religious Worlds of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans

September 5: Native American and African Spirituality

Readings: Williams, America's Religions, chapter 1 (library reserve)
Gutierrez, "The Pueblo Indian World" (in Hackett)
Richter, "War and Culture" (in Hackett)
Raboteau, Slave Religion, chapters 1-2

Activities:

- (1) Guest Lecture - Professor Linda Watts: Native American Spirituality
- (2) Workshop - Identifying an argument

September 12: Jewish and Christian Backgrounds

Readings: Williams, America's Religions, chapters 3-11 (library reserve)

Activities:

- (1) Guest lecture - Rabbi Howard Hirsch: Judaism
- (2) Workshop - assessing historical evidence

Assignment: For next week, write a paragraph identifying the argument and main points of Richter, "War and Culture" (from Sept. 5 readings).

Part II - Staking Claims, Sinking Roots: Religion, Colonization, and the Birth of the USA

September 19: The Spanish, French , and British Incursions in North America

Readings: Gaustad, chapter; 2-5
(Continue reading Slave Religion)

Activities:

- (1) Film and discussion - "Black Robe"
- (2) Small-group activity - Identifying Richter's argument (Turn in.)

September 26: Religious Diversity in Colonial America

Readings: Gaustad, chapters 6-12
Hall, "World of Wonders" (in Hackett)
Bacon document "Sermon" (in Butler and Stout, library reserve)
Raboteau, the rest of Slave Religion

Activities:

- (1) Mini-lecture - More Pluribus than Unum?: Religious Diversity and American Nationhood
- (2) Small-group activity - groups will discuss Raboteau's argument and outline it on the chalkboard; class will comment.
- (3) Workshop - Analyzing primary documents

Part III -Toward the Modern: Religious Experiences in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

October 3: Religious Fervency, Fragmentation, and Accommodation

Readings: Gaustad, chapters 13-14
In Hackett: Martin, "From 'Middle Ground' to 'Underground'"
Ryan, "A Woman's Awakening"
Shipps, "The Genesis of Mormonism"
Frankiel, "California Dreams"
On reserve: Hinojosa, "Antecedents to the Twentieth Century," in Mexican Americans and the Catholic Church, pp. 13-30.

Raboteau paper is due today.

Activities:

- (1) Lecture - Religious Outsiders: Mormons and Mexican Catholics
- (2) Workshop - Thesis statements and thesis-driven essays

Assignment: For next class turn in a 1-paragraph Thesis statement from one of the week's readings, excluding Gaustad.

October 10: Religion in the Civil War Era

Readings: Gaustad, Chapter 15
In Hackett: Gravelly, "The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness"

Joyner, "Believer I Know"
Wilson, "The Religion of the Lost Cause"
On reserve: Swierenga, "Ethnoreligious Political Behavior" and Douglass
document, "Address on 'Evangelical Flogging'" (in Butler/Stout)

Activities:

- (1) Lecture - Women and Antebellum Reform
- (2) Thesis statement exercise - chalkboard presentations with class critiques (Turn in paragraph.)

October 17: Mid-term examination

October 24: Religion and Industrialization - Immigration, Ethnicity, and Gender Issues

Readings: Gaustad, chapter 16
Orsi, The Madonna of 115th Street, introduction and chapters 1-5

Activities:

- (1) Lecture - Religion and the Progressive Movement
- (2) Structured discussion of Orsi, The Madonna

Assignment: Be prepared next week to orally present and critique Orsi's thesis.

October 31: Immigration, Ethnicity, and Gender Issues (con't)

Readings: Orsi, the rest of The Madonna
In Hackett: Sarna, "Debate Over Mixed Seating in the American Synagogue"
Higginbotham, "Feminist Theology of the Black Baptist Church"
On reserve: Yoo, "Enlightened Identities: Buddhism and Japanese
Americans...1924-1941," in WHQ (Autumn 1996): 281-301.

Activities:

- (1) Whole-class discussion of The Madonna
- (2) Small-group discussion of Yoo, "Enlightened Identities" (emphasis on argument and evidence)

November 7: Religious Responses to Urbanization and Modernist Thought

Readings: Gaustad, chapters 17, 19, 20

Activities:

- (1) Mini-lecture on the rise of Protestant Fundamentalism
- (2) Film and discussion - Balmer, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory (part 2)

Paper on Orsi, The Madonna is due today.

Part IV - Braving New Worlds: Americans and Religion Since World War II

November 14: Religious Renewal and Church-State Issues

Readings: Gaustad, chapters 21-22

Activities:

Film and discussion - Moyers, God and the Constitution

November 21: Religion and Civil Rights Struggles

Readings: Gaustad, chapter 23

In Hackett: Cone, "Martin and Malcolm"

On reserve: Treviño, "Faith and Justice: The Catholic Church and the Chicano Movement in Houston" (Cushwa Center Working Paper, Univ. of Notre Dame, 1995) and Spillers, "MLK and the Style of the Black Sermon" (in Butler and Stout)

Activities:

(1) Lecture - Religion and Social Justice Movements

(2) Small-group discussion of Cone, Treviño, and Spillers (emphasis on argument and evidence)

November 28: NO CLASS TODAY - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

December 5: Aspects of American Evangelical and Fundamentalist Traditions

Readings: Gaustad, chapter 24

In Hackett: Wuthnow, "Old Fissures and New Fractures"

Wacker, "Searching for Eden with a Satellite Dish"

Deck, "The Challenge of Evangelical/Pentecostal Christianity to Hispanic Catholicism"

On reserve: Falwell document, "The Imperative of Moral Involvement" (in Butler and Stout)

Activities:

(1) Guest Lecture - Prof. Maxwell Taylor: The Religious Right

(2) Film and discussion - Balmer, Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory (part 3)

December 12: Brown Power?: Afro/Latino 'Folk' Traditions

Readings: In Hackett: McCarthy Brown, "The Power to Heal in Haitian Vodou"

Activities:

(1) Lecture - "What's 'Folk' About It?: Mexican American Ethno-Catholicism

(2) Interpretation exercise: Why does 'folk' religion persist in 'modern' times?

(3) Faculty/Course Questionnaires

December 19: THE FINAL EXAM (RESEARCH PAPER) IS DUE AT PROF'S OFFICE BY 1:30 PM TODAY

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