

To Do Right in the World: Religion and U.S. Global Activism

Syllabus Rationale

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Institutional Context

Saint Louis University (SLU) is a Catholic, Jesuit university located in midtown Saint Louis. We were founded in 1818, and enroll 8,600 undergraduates and 4,800 graduate students. Over 60% of our students come from out of state, and anecdotally at least, my sense is that the majority come from the Midwest. Many, though certainly not all, of our students come from Roman Catholic backgrounds.

American Studies at SLU is its own free-standing department, and the only one to grant a Ph.D. in American Studies from a U.S. Jesuit university. We were founded in 1963 as a doctoral program in the History Department, and those roots show in our continuing commitment to graduate education: as a small department of six tenure-track faculty, we train over thirty Ph.D. and M.A. students and divide our teaching equally between graduate and undergraduate seminars. Our undergraduate major is small but growing, comprising a committed and creative group of students with whom we work to build a tightly-knit community within the larger university. Our undergraduate classes tend to take the form of discussion-oriented seminars. American Studies majors make up about a third of the students in our classes, and they are joined by other students from around the university taking the classes as electives. As a result, in each undergraduate course, we teach students of all levels, from Freshmen to Seniors, and of a variety of backgrounds, majors, interests, and levels of preparation for reading and writing in the humanities.

Course History and Structure

In terms of department needs, this course is designed to increase our course offerings in transnational American Studies—one of the long-time strengths of our department, and the official definition of my position—as well as to expand the religious content of our undergraduate curriculum.

In terms of the larger university, this course is meant to appeal to students with humanitarian experience, goals, and ambitions. SLU frames its Jesuit mission in part in terms of social justice and service, and many of our students come to the university with similar priorities. There are myriad programs for both domestic and international service work, sometimes with a religious connection, and our students take advantage of these and build their own: in 2014, the *Washington Monthly* ranked SLU fourth on a list of community-service oriented universities. I would like this course to offer students a venue for thinking openly, critically, and creatively about the history and multiple cultural contexts of this kind of work.

Each week is thematic and, beginning with Week 3, organized roughly chronologically, stretching from the nineteenth century to the present, but weighted more towards the twentieth century. The assigned readings are secondary sources; class time will be spent discussing these readings and doing various primary-source analysis activities.

For the purpose of this class, I am defining “global activism” as involving missions, domestic political activism on global issues, and efforts to provide relief and aid abroad. This focus is far from comprehensive, yet is still quite broad. I hope that it will allow students to follow some consistent analytical themes through the diverse readings. I have some particular themes in mind: the changing scope and shape of U.S. global power; the (much debated and debatable) notion that U.S. global humanitarianism has become secularized over the past century and a half; the changing shape of missionary work; and the role of race and sex/gender in the definition and formation of global religious activism. These themes are first introduced in the big-picture essays during Week 2, and will form the basis for our course’s evolving meta-vocabulary.

For assignments, I have taken advantage of our small class-size (and the help of our fantastic archivists) to arrange a group research project in the University Archives. Because many students in American Studies classes have no experience with research, or with the humanities in general, I have curated this research project. Advance research in the archives with two graduate assistants has allowed me to identify two themes running through a number of our collections: the activities of SLU-affiliated professors, students, doctors, and nurses in World War II and SLU’s partnership with the Peace Corps in Honduras in the 1960s. Early in the semester, students will receive an introduction to and tour of the archives from the archivist, and they will be given finding aids that I created, one for each theme. The finding aids are intended to help guide beginning researchers: they limit the scope of the available material and identify and describe particular boxes and folders that contain what I think is promising material for a short research project. To enable the students to contextualize the primary sources, I have also created a short bibliography of appropriate and available secondary sources, and put these texts on reserve in the library. Throughout the semester I will guide students through the production of this research project through one-on-one meetings, multiple trips with me to the archives, and progressive assignments, drafting, and revision.

In addition to the research project, I use a reading journal to motivate students to read and to offer them an opportunity for personal reflection. I have planned a midterm and final exam to bring the various weekly themes together and allow us to concentrate on the big picture, and I use the gradual group construction of a timeline, as well as midterm and final exam review sessions and study guides, to help advance this goal.

To Do Right in the World: Religion and U.S. Global Activism
ASTD 3500

American Studies Department
Saint Louis University
Spring 2016

Monday and Wednesday, 1:10-2:25
Room XXX

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Adorjan 105
Office Hours: XXX

What does it mean to be a global citizen? To pursue social justice abroad? To bring religious faith and commitment to the task of building a better world?

These questions have motivated American women and men for generations, and they continue to do so today. This class invites students to explore the U.S. history of faith, transnational activism, and non-governmental organizations from the nineteenth century to the present. We will examine the aims, experiences, and ideas of American missionaries, reformers, and relief workers: examples include U.S. Christian missionary women in China in the early twentieth century, Jewish relief programs in World-War-I Europe, American adoption agencies in Korea during the Cold War, and current debates about global feminist advocacy.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The required reading for this course is made up of articles and book chapters. These are available on Blackboard.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this class, you can expect to:

- become familiar with the history of religion, humanitarianism, and U.S. global activism. This will involve learning about major themes and changes over time, but it will also involve thinking about critical questions that people have brought to activist projects in the past, and that we might bring to similar projects in the present.
- develop basic archival research skills and (I hope!) a sense of the fascinating detective work that can be done with archival sources.
- improve your writing skills through progressive assignments, drafting, and revision.
- strengthen your ability to engage in critical, thoughtful, and rigorous intellectual discussion and debate.

EXPECTATIONS AND EVALUATION

Participation (20%)

Throughout this semester, we will work together to make this class a productive and enjoyable learning community. On most days, we will spend our time discussing the readings and doing

activities related to the analysis of primary sources presented in class. It is important both to your own personal success, and to the success of the group as a whole, that you attend class and participate actively. Because of this, participation is a significant portion of your grade.

Participation includes:

- coming to class, and coming on time.
- doing the reading, bringing it with you to class, and arriving prepared to talk about it.
- actively engaging in class activities.

To foster a rigorous, thoughtful, and welcoming atmosphere in class, in the second week of the semester we will create a group-authored statement of best practices for in-class discussion.

You will receive an estimate of your participation grade halfway through the semester.

Midterm and Final (30% = 15% each)

There will be a midterm and a final exam. For each test, a study guide made up of possible questions will be distributed in advance, and a class period will be dedicated to review and preparation. In other words: the midterm and the final will not be surprises. Rather, they are opportunities to step back from the specific discussions we have each day and to think about the big picture. Throughout the semester, we will also be creating a class-produced timeline, to help bring the various course readings together.

Reading Journal (15% of your course grade)

On each day of the class on which reading is due, you will be asked to turn in a 1-page response to the reading. This response can be typed or hand-written, and must be turned in before class begins. It should contain two elements:

- 2 or 3 timeline terms to add to our group timeline
- a paragraph or two of personal response to the reading: what you found important, confusing, or revelatory, and why

The journal responses should indicate that you have done the reading carefully, but they do not need to be elegant or formal writing, and can include academic analysis or personal commentary. They are opportunities for you to think through the material before class discussion, and to keep a record of your responses for the midterm and final exam.

Journal responses will be graded full credit (100), half credit (50), or no credit (0). You will receive no credit if you fail to submit a response or if it does not relate to the reading, half credit if it is late, does not demonstrate significant reading, or does not contain all the necessary components, and full credit if it fulfills the assignment. You will be allowed to drop the lowest two of your grades; the others will be averaged to produce your reading journal grade for the course. You will receive an estimate of your reading journal grade halfway through the semester.

SLU Archives Research Project

This course will raise a number of questions about how we think about the history of religion and global activism, and we will bring those questions home to our own community through a guided research project in the SLU University Archives. Students are not required to have any experience with research, archival or otherwise, before the beginning of this project: you will be introduced to research methods (and the joys of the archive!) as we go, and you will have many opportunities to receive feedback as you build your research paper. The components of the research project are as follows (a detailed assignment sheet will be distributed in the beginning of the semester for each component):

Primary Source Report (15% of your course grade)

In the first half of the semester, you will choose one of two research groups, each built around an event in SLU's history: (1) SLU and WWII or (2) SLU and the Peace Corps in Honduras. You will receive a finding aid for your chosen research group, designed specifically for this class. Your finding aid will direct you to specific boxes and folders in the University Archives that contain interesting material related to your theme.

By the end of the first half of the semester, you will have looked through that material and chosen one primary source—a document, a letter, a photograph, etc.—that you think is particularly interesting. You will write a short (3-5 page) paper describing that source's nature, content, context, and provenance (where it came from and why we have it today). You will share your primary source report with the class during our Primary Source Conference day.

Research Paper (20% of your course grade)

In the second half of the semester, you will build a research paper from your initial Primary Source Report. We will spend more time in the archives as a class (and you will be encouraged to go there independently) so that you can gather other primary sources that relate to your first one. You will also choose one secondary source—a book written by a scholar about your topic—from a list distributed to the class. You will use these sources to write a longer paper (6-8 pages) making an argument about the meaning of your primary sources.

A draft of your research paper will be due before the end of the semester, and you will have a chance to revise that draft—using my comments—before you submit the final draft for a grade at the end of the semester.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 – Introductions and a Case Study: or, Getting Our Feet Wet with TOMS Shoes

M 1/11 Introductions

W 1/13 Video: Blake Mycoskie – The Global Leadership Summit 2010. Youtube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5OCcD4qbk8>.

Podcast: “TOMS Shoes, A Closer Look,” *Tiny Spark: Investigating the Business of Doing Good*, 19 August 2012. <http://www.tinyspark.org/podcasts/toms-shoes/>

Week 2 – Big Picture(s)

M 1/18 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

W 1/20 Emily Rosenberg, “Missions to the World: Philanthropy Abroad” in *Charity, Philanthropy, and Civility in American History*, Lawrence J. Friedman and Mark McGarvie, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 241–57. (17 pages)

Michael Barnett, “Introduction: The Crooked Timber of Humanitarianism” in *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 1-15. (16 pages)

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, “‘I Take Your Point’: Entering Class Discussions,” in *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), 163-166. (4 pages)

Week 3 – Looking Westward

- M 1/25 Emily Conroy-Krutz, “Missions as Settler Colonies,” in *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 102-129. (28 pages)
- W 1/27 Conroy-Krutz, “American Politics and the Cherokee Mission,” in *Christian Imperialism*, 130-150. (21 pages)

Week 4 – Archives! And Meetings!

We will meet this week in the University Archives, Pius XII Memorial Library, 3rd Floor. Each student will also schedule a half-hour meeting with me to discuss their interests and the challenges/possibilities of the research project.

- M 2/1 Tour of the Archives and Introduction to Archival Practice
Please prepare for your introduction to the archives by reading the class finding aids and by looking at the web page “Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research” by the Society of American Archivists. (You can find links to both on Blackboard.)

You can read the whole Using Archives page if you are curious, but everyone should read the following sections:

- What Are Archives and How Do They Differ from Libraries?
- Types of Archives
- Visiting an Archives

****DUE: Before class, please email me your research group preference. Also, please sign up on the Doodle for a meeting time with me.**

- W 2/3 Archives Research Day
No reading: just make sure you are aware of your group’s meeting time at the Archives.

Week 5 – Missionaries Abroad

- M 2/8 Jane Hunter, “Chinese Reform, American Mission, and ‘Woman’s Work,’” in *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 1-26. (26 pages)
- W 2/10 Jane Hunter, “Imperial Evangelism” in *The Gospel of Gentility*, 174-229. (56 pages – long but worth it!)

Week 6 – Colonies

- M 2/15 Andrew Preston, "Cuba, the Philippines, and the First Crusade" in *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Anchor Books, 2012), 207-32. (26 pages)
- W 2/17 Judith Raftery, "Textbook Wars: Governor-General James Francis Smith and the Protestant-Catholic Conflict in Public Education in the Philippines, 1904-1907," *History of Education Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 143-64. (22 pages)

Week 7 – War Relief

- M 2/22 Julia F. Irwin, "Taming Total War: Great War-Era American Humanitarianism and Its Legacies," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 4 (September 1, 2014): 763-75. (12 pages)
- Jaelyn Granick, "Waging Relief: The Politics and Logistics of American Jewish War Relief in Europe and the Near East (1914-1918)," *First World War Studies* 5, no. 1 (April 30, 2014): 55-68. (14 pages)
- W 2/24 Primary Source Conference
****DUE: Primary Source Report, and please prepare a brief presentation on your source for the class.**

Week 8 – Midterm Week

- M 2/29 Midterm Review
****DUE: Please bring a copy of the class timeline to class and be prepared to discuss how you would edit/make sense of it.**
- W 3/2 Midterm

Week 9 – Spring Break

Enjoy!

Week 10 – Solidarity

- M 3/14 Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "The Origins of Central America's Civil Wars" in *Convictions of the Soul: Religion, Culture, and Agency in the Central America Solidarity Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 30-52. (23 pages)
- W 3/16 Sharon Erickson Nepstad, "Martyr Stories" and "Making Politics Personal" in *Convictions of the Soul*, 95-136. (42 pages)

Week 11 – Archives again!

We will meet again this week in the University Archives, Pius XII Memorial Library, 3rd Floor. Each group will have one class period dedicated to archival research and another class period dedicated to secondary source research. There is no reading assigned for this week, but I would *highly* recommend that you spend this week reading your secondary source.

M 3/21 Archives Research Day (Group 1)/Library Research Day (Group 2)

W 3/23 Archives Research Day (Group 2)/Library Research Day (Group 1)

Week 12 – Adoption

M 3/28 Happy Easter Break!

W 3/30 Arissa Oh, “A New Kind of Missionary Work: Christians, Christian Americanists, and the Adoption of Korean GI Babies, 1955-1961” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 161-88. (28 pages)

Week 13 – Short Term Missions

M 4/4 Brian M. Howell, “Pour Out Your Soul” in *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 146-70. (25 pages)

W 4/6 Howell, “Of Course You Can Always Grow Close to God on a Mission Trip,” in *Short-Term Mission*, 171-196. (26 pages)

Week 14 – Faith-Based Aid

M 4/11 Jonathan Benthall, “Islamic Humanitarianism in Adversarial Context” in *Forces of Compassion*, Peter Redfield and Erica Borstein, eds. (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2010), 99–121. (23 pages)

W 4/13 No class—individual meetings with me about your research paper. Your draft is due at the time of our meeting.
****DUE: First draft of research paper**

Week 15 – Saving Women

M 4/18 Melani McAlister, “Suffering Sisters? American Feminists and the Problem of Female Genital Surgeries” in *Americanism: New Perspectives on the History of an Ideal*, Michael Kazin and Joseph A. McCartin, eds. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 242-62. (21 pages)

W 4/20 Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women (Still) Need Saving?” in *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 27-54. (28 pages)

Week 16 – Research Presentations

M 4/25 Research Presentations: Group 1

W 4/27 Research Presentations: Group 2
****DUE: Final research paper**

Week 17 – Course Wrap-Up

M 5/2

Final Exam Review

****DUE: Please bring a copy of the class timeline to class and be prepared to discuss how you would edit/make sense of it.**

POLICIES

Attendance. You are required to attend all classes. But sometimes we all get sick. So each student is given a grace period of 2 absences, after which any additional absences will lower your participation grade. Because I believe it is impossible to distinguish fairly between the two, I don't make a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If a major crisis prevents your keeping up with class attendance and coursework, please see me as soon as possible to work out a solution.

Late work. You each have one free pass for a 48-hour extension on one piece of written work. After that, any late papers will be graded down by 4 points for each day late, including weekends. (Late journal entries will receive half credit; if they are more than 48 hours late they will receive no credit.) To use your extension, you must inform me in advance, and (if applicable) you must still be prepared to present your work in class.

Technology. Laptops, tablets, and cell phones are lovely in general, but not in a discussion-based seminar. Any use of this technology in class will result in an absence for the day.

Academic integrity. Please make sure that all of the work you submit in this class—whether formal or informal writing, drafts or final essays, assignments or in-class exams—is your own work. If it is not, you will get a zero on the assignment and risk failing the class and losing your status at the university. If you are concerned about fulfilling an assignment and tempted to cheat, it is *always* better to see me and discuss options for help in the class, and please never hesitate to do so. The SLU policy on academic integrity is as follows:

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%206-26-15.pdf.

Accommodations. In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484) to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.