

CH 462: American Religious Histories
Spring 2011, Section 2 (Thursday)
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
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Purpose of the course: The United States is the most religiously diverse nation in the world. This course is designed to acquaint students with the rich histories of America's many religious communities, the role these communities have played in America's history, and the dynamics that have shaped American religious life.

Expectations of the course:

1. *Attendance and readings.* Students are expected to complete readings by the due dates listed in the syllabus and attend all classes prepared to discuss what they have read with their classmates.
2. *Class discussions.* Every student is expected to participate in each weekly class discussion. Toward that end, students are required to write brief “discussion points” based on the current monograph reading assignment. Two copies are required: one to be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of class, and the other to be kept by the student for reference. Written discussion points will be graded on a ✓, ✓+, ✓- system, should fill no more than half a double-spaced page, and should include:
 - a) a one-sentence summary of the central argument of the text
 - b) a one-sentence evaluation of the argument
 - c) a least one question or observation about the text to share during class discussions
3. *Term papers.* Each student may
 - a) EITHER write three 1,500 – 2,000-word essays based on the required readings,
 - b) OR write a single 4,500 – 6,000-word term paper based on a text or texts chosen from the course bibliography (must be negotiated in advance with the instructor)
4. *Field trip.* At least once during the term you will be required to experience worship in a religious community with a significantly different history or spiritual outlook from ones with which you have had personal experience. For instance, if you are a liberal Presbyterian, attending worship at a liberal Methodist or liberal UCC church will not fulfill this requirement. But attending worship at a Jewish synagogue or a Hindu Temple or a fundamentalist Presbyterian church will. In fulfilling this requirement, please show respect for the community you visit. It may be advisable, for instance, to contact the community's leader in advance, explaining the assignment, asking permission to attend, and inquiring about what etiquette visitors should observe. The report to the class can be informal and does not need to be written out, but should demonstrate some effort to relate your worship experience there to what you have learned about that community in the context of this class. This assignment will not be graded, but is required for successful completion of the course.
5. *Final paper.* In the final paper, students will construct an overarching American religious history narrative around one of the six major themes explored in the course: Pluralism, Freedom, Revelation, Reason, Gender or Survival.

Required Texts:

Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*
Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*
Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*
Alfred Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*
Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation*
Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street*
George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*

Course Schedule:

Class 1) Feb. 10: *Introduction: The Challenge of Pluralism*
Class 2) Feb. 17: *Church and State in American History*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapters 11 & 12 (pp. 256-299); Hatch, chapters 1-4 (pp. 3-122)
Class 3) Feb. 24: *The Evangelicals*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 5 (pp. 109-133); Hatch, chapters 5-8 (pp. 125-219)
Class 4) Mar. 3: *Deism/Atheism*
READINGS DUE: Paine, *Age of Reason*
FIRST SHORT ESSAY DUE OR TERM PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE
Class 5) Mar. 10: *Native American Religion*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 1 (pp. 19-39); Raboteau, chapters 1-3 (pp. 3-150)
Class 6) Mar. 17: *African-American Religion*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 6 (pp. 134-152); Raboteau, chapters 4-6 (pp. 151-322)
READING WEEK: Mar. 21-25 (No class)
Class 7) Mar. 31: *Restorationism & the Latter-day Saints*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 7 (pp. 154-177); Mauss, chapters 1-6 (pp. 3-101)
SECOND SHORT ESSAY DUE OR TERM PAPER WORKING THESIS AND OUTLINE DUE
Class 8) Apr. 7: *The New Age*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 8 (pp. 178-197); Mauss, chapters 7-12 (pp. 102-214)
Class 9) Apr. 14: *The Christian Immigrant Experience and American Catholicism*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 3 (pp. 59-80); Orsi, Introductions (pp. ix-xlix) and chapters I - IV (pp. 1-106)
MAUNDY THURSDAY & EASTER RECESS: April 21-26 (No class)
Class 10) Apr. 28: *The Non-Christian Immigrant Experience and American Judaism*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapters 2 & 9 (pp. 40-58; 200-226); Orsi, chapters V - VIII (pp. 107-231)
THIRD SHORT ESSAY OR TERM PAPER DUE
Class 11) May 5: *Liberalism*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 4 (pp. 81-108); Marsden, Introduction & chapters I-XIV (pp. 3-123)
Class 12) May 12: *Fundamentalism and the "Third Force" in Christianity*
READINGS DUE: Albanese, chapter 10 (pp. 227-253); Marsden, chapters XV-XXV & Part 5 (pp. 124-257)
MAY 13: COURSEWORK DUE FROM GRADUATES
Class 13) May 19: *American Religious History Narratives*
FINAL PAPER DUE

Basis for Grades

- Course attendance – 10%
- Weekly written “discussion points,” and discussion participation – 20%
- Short papers or term paper – 30%
- Final paper – 40%

Excused Absences: Absences will be excused for illness, family emergencies, unsafe traveling conditions due to inclement weather, or similar unavoidable situations. The instructor should be notified of such situations as soon as is practical.

Format for Short Papers, Term Papers and Final Paper: Papers will preferably be emailed to the instructor in Microsoft Word or in Rich Text Format, and are due prior to class on the due date published in the syllabus.

Expectations for Auditors: Auditors are not expected to write papers or take the final exam. Auditors are invited to participate in class discussions if they have read the assignments for the day.

Extension Policy: Performance in the course is evaluated on the basis of work submitted by the end of the final class session. Extensions will be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. Extraordinary circumstances include: serious illness on the part of the student, or serious illness or a death in the student's family. The instructor must agree to an extension by the final class session. If critical health issues prevent the student from negotiating an extension with the instructor by the final class session, the student is responsible to notify the instructor as soon as possible and negotiate an extension promptly.

If no exception is granted, a grade will be submitted based on the work submitted by the last class session. If an exception is granted, a formal petition for extension will be filled out by the student and must be submitted in lieu of a grade no later than the deadline to submit grades for the course. The period of extension is not to exceed six months from the end of the term. Any renewal of an extension must be approved by the instructor and filed with the registrar prior to the due date on the original petition. No extension or its renewal will exceed six months from the end of the term in question.