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United States Religious History

Rationale

In order to be effective in ministry, one must be familiar with the general historical narrative of the nation of one's ministry and with the major religious issues and social/religious dynamics that have been operative in the history of the nation, helping to shape the context of ministry

Objectives

To survey the expansion of Christianity from Europe to North America

To provide insight into the religious unfolding of the USA, including key historical developments, themes, and emphases, regarding the Christian Church and its theology, as well as the Church's interface with other religious expressions in its midst

To assist students in the analysis and interpretation of the historical data.

To explore the implications of the analyses for contemporary ministry and Christian faithfulness.

Class Schedule, Assignments (Numbered readings are found in course reader; those marked by outlined font are from assigned book volumes)

Jan. 14 Overview of course and expectations.

(1, Ellingsen)

English Reformation; Rise of Puritanism.

(2, Kee)

28 The Church in British Colonial North America; Covenant Theology; Religious Declension, Revival.

(Hastings, 416 – 28; 3, Eerdmans; Porterfield, Introduction, Chaps. 7, 8)

Feb. 4 "One Nation Under God:" Religion's Role in the Nation Aborning

(4, Bedell, Introduction; 5, Butler, pp. 1-9, 31-36; 6, Eerdmans, pp. 71-90)

11 Church and the Frontier; Revived Revivalism.

(Hastings, pp. 428 – 440; 7, Eerdmans)

Student Reports: Discernments from Readings; small group discussion.

18 "A Church Within a Church": African-American Religious Development.

(8, Eerdmans; 9, Raboteau; 10, Graveley; Porterfield, Chaps. 10,11)

MID TERM DISTRIBUTED

25 Religion and the National Sense of Identity and Destiny

(11, Williams, pp. 168-76; 12, Bedell, pp. 14 – 32; 13, Eerdmans; 14, Lawrence/Jewett)
MID-TERM DUE.

Mar. 4 Native Americans and Christianity. Film.
 (15, Norwood; 16, Berkhofer)

11 NO CLASS: READING WEEK

18 Women, Piety, and Ministry
 (17, Ruether/Keller; 18, Eerdmans; 19, McManners; Matheson, Chap. 6; Porterfield,
 Chaps. 2, 9; Bednarowski, Chaps. 2, 4, 13)

25 Frontier Faith: Religion in the US West
 (20, Szasz, Preface, Chaps 1-3; 21, Guarneri, et. al, Chaps. 1, 2, 9, 13, 5; 22, Baker,
 Chaps. 7.5 – 7.7)

Apr. 1 Student Reports: Discernments from Readings; small group discussion

8 Easter Break; No Class.

Apr. 15 Post-Civil-War Religious Developments.
 (Hastings, 440-445; 23, Eerdmans; Bednarowski, Chap. 6)

The Fundamentals of the Faith and the Challenges of Modernity
 (Hastings, 446 - 448; 24, Eerdmans; Porterfield, Chaps. 3, 4)

22 The Church in the Twentieth Century;
 (25, Ellingsen; Bednarowski, Chap. 6)
 Protestant, Catholic, Jew, and . . . : The Changing Face of Religion in the US
 (26, Eerdmans; 27, McManners [Marty], Chap. 11; 28, Eck; WEB articles on Islam,
 Buddhism, and the variety of Judeo-Christian religious expressions in US)

29 The US Church in Global Perspective.
 Discussion: History and Contemporary Ministry
 (Hastings, 449 – 457; 29, Kee; Bednarowski, Chap. 16)

Course Evaluation.

**FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED; DUE May 7, 9 a.m. SUBSTANTIAL PENALTY FOR LATE
 SUBMISSIONS.**

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance** at all class sessions. **Participation** in discussion. There will be a reduction in grade for each class session missed. Please notify the instructor ahead of time to see if make-up work is available if a given session unavoidably must be missed. **20%**
2. Mid-term. Take-home essay questions. **20%**
3. You are to take **weekly notes** (1-1½ pages) on your reading, indicating key points; insights gained; issues the readings raised for you; questions you have or matters of unclarity; etc. Your notes are to be submitted at the beginning of each class session. There will be a reduction of credit for papers submitted after the mid-point of the given class session. **30%**
4. **Final Examination.** Take-home, essay questions **30%**

Assigned Readings

A course reader [available for purchase in class] containing reprinted sections of the following works:

- Berkhofer, Robert, Salvation and the Savage.
- Comby, John, How to Read Church History.
- Eerdmans, Handbook to Christianity in America.
- Ellingsen, Mark, Reclaiming Our Roots: An Inclusive Introduction to Church History.
- Graveley, Will, "The Rise of African Churches in America."
- Kee, Howard Clark, et. al., Christianity: A Social and Cultural History.
- Lawrence, John Shelton, and Jewett, Robert, The Myth of the American Superhero.
- McManners, John, The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity.
- Norwood, Frederick, "Conflict of Cultures;" "Two Contrasting Views of the Indian."
- Raboteau, Albert J., Slave Religion
- Ruether and Keller, Women and Religion in America.

In addition, you are asked to purchase or secure regular access to the following:

- A People's History of Christianity, Vol. 5, Peter Matheson, editor; Vol. 6, Amanda Porterfield, editor; Vol. 7, Mary Farrell Bednarowski, editor. Fortress Press, 2008.
- Hastings, Adrian, A World History of Christianity, Cassell, 1999.

On a regular basis, there will be discussion sessions in class, affording the opportunity to explore the assigned readings; to relate them to the array of subjects that the course addresses; to integrate the work of this course with that of other courses; and to discern concrete applications to ministry vocation.

*NOTE: I encourage you to make an appointment to see me if you have conditions which require special assistance or accommodations in the classroom, in handling the reading and writing assignments, or any other areas related to our work together. I can adapt my mode of presentation; mentoring/ tutorial assistance can be arranged; assignments can be modified; and so forth.

**Cellular phones must be turned off or placed on silent signal during class. Students are

not to leave class to answer calls except in extreme emergency. Also, laptop and other personal computing devices are not to be used during class time, except for note taking or for internet searches related to topics being addressed in the class session.

Recommended Additional Reading

American Religious History (Blackwell Readers in American Social and Cultural History), [Amanda Porterfield](#) (Editor)

Critical Issues in American Religious History: A Reader (Second Revised Edition), [Robert Mathisen](#) (Editor)

American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of A Mainstream Religious Movement. [Barry Hankins](#)

The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity, [Mark A. Noll](#)

Recent Themes in American Religious History: Historians in Conversation, [Randall J. Stephens](#)

New Directions in American Religious History, [Harry S. Stout](#), [D. G. Hart](#)

American Religious Traditions: The Shaping of Religion in the United States, [Richard E. Wentz](#)