

Christian History 3: North American Christianity (HSTY-5230)

North Park Theological Seminary
Spring 2022
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Course Description (from the catalogue)

This course traces the mutual impact of Christianity and North American culture, politics, and economics from the sixteenth century through the twentieth, enabling a developmental understanding of the ministry contexts in which students will likely serve.

Course Objectives

Be capable of conveying the Christian tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the Church.

Contribute to student's capacity to engage diversity and inter-cultural competence for ministry particularly through the courses emphases on the particularities of race, class, ethnicity, and gender in the history and development of distinctively American Religious movements.

Demonstrate an understanding of general developments North American Christianity as well as some of the most important persons, ideas, and movements.

Gain a greater capacity to read and interpret primary texts.

Learn to think historically. Gain the ability to construct and present arguments based on historical evidence with proper attention to context.

Plan a learning trip in Chicago in order to strengthen peer teaching skills and learn to engage with a city as an important discursive space.

Hone skills of oral and written communication for future ministry.

Students will assess the interrelationship between text in context through presentations on historically significant sermons and speeches.

Think about history theologically as a repository of wisdom and warnings.

Books to Purchase

Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (978-0199832699)

Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (978-0812224368)

Jennifer Graber, *The Gods of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West*, (978-0190279615)

Choose one: Marilyn Robinson, *Gilead*; James Baldwin, *Go Tell it on the Mountain*; Toni Morrison, *Beloved* {see instructions below}

ASSORTED; PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

Assessments and Grading Scale

Book Review— (15%) Students will choose/ or be assigned one of the following novels [first come; first served] --Marilyn Robinson's, *Gilead*; James Baldwin's *Go Tell it on the Mountain*; Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. What themes, ideas, movement, questions are central to these novels? If you were going to explore American Religious History with your chosen novel as a starting point what kind of evidence would you find most central, significant, important? What is the role of memory and remembering in each of these novels?

Participation (10%)

Primary Source Analysis (25%): Students will write one short (3) page paper on a primary source in American Religious History to be distributed by email to classmates. Primary sources to be assigned by instructor and will be the focus of class discussion.

Comparing monographs -

Discuss the type of sources the historians utilize? How effective is their use of sources? Are some perspectives missing? Is the author clear about the method employed in choosing and organizing sources? Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. Does it change the way you think about the subject? Both books give a complex account of how social transformation occurs and the complicated interplay of forces sometimes involved. Do you find this level of analysis helpful for your ministry? What are specific lessons from these books about the role of economics and social location in the life of the church? What contribution does the work make to an existing body of knowledge or to a specific group of readers? You might pay attention to how scholars have reviewed the book. Are these two books well regarded?

Take Home Final Exam(30%)