

HIS 3362: RELIGION IN AMERICA
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Department of History
YSAR class of 2004-05

Course rationale: I teach this course at Baylor University, which was chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas. At about 14,000 students, Baylor is the largest Baptist university in the world. I offer this course once every four semesters in the history department. The course mostly attracts history majors, with assorted other humanities and social science students. Most of the students I get are Baptists or similar types of Christians. I can assume a fair amount of knowledge about the Bible, but not as much historical background.

My primary goals in the course may appear contradictory. They are to 1) help students understand the diversity of American religion, and 2) help students understand the history of Baptists and/or evangelicals. The evangelical tradition is central to my own research interests, explaining its central role here. I hope that my course will help students become more intelligent, responsible members of their respective congregations, and of American civic society.

My approach here is eclectic, and the material does not all hang on one "hook." As a 3000-level survey course that covers pre-European contact to the 21st century, the coverage must be episodic. Nevertheless, the persistence of American religiosity, the diversity of religious expression, and the significance of the evangelical tradition are recurrent themes.

The course typically enrolls about 10-12 students, and I usually spend about half of each class meeting on interactive lecturing, and half on discussion of readings. The last time I taught the class, my lecturing really was on the "interactive" side, as about half the class was intensely invested in most of the material and constantly asked questions. Often I got through very little of the planned material, which was fine with me. In class discussions, I heavily relied on students' journal entries on Blackboard, which let me know ahead of time what they wanted to discuss about the readings.

Under course assignments below, you will see more detailed comments on course readings and assignments.

Course Description:

A study of the variety and persistence of American religious beliefs and practices from the meeting of European and Native American peoples in the 16th century to the turn of the 21st century.

Required Materials:

Harry Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism*. 1991.

Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias*. 1994.

Patrick Allitt, ed., *Major Problems in American Religious History*. 2000.

Course Objectives:

As a result of studying the history of this period, the student should be able to:

1. recognize and understand the significance of the major events, people, and developments;
2. explain how these events, people and developments have shaped North American religious history;
3. appreciate more fully the spiritual traditions that have shaped their faith communities and others';
4. apply critical and philosophical analysis to the interpretation of specific historical events;
5. enhance their writing, communication, research, and study skills through readings, discussions, writing assignments, and examination.

Course Grade:

The course grade will be based on the following:

1. Class Participation	10%
2. Short essays	30%
3. Exams	30%
4. Research Paper	20%
5. Online journals	10%

Assignments:

Online Journals

- 1) You will regularly complete online journal entries on Blackboard. During the semester, we have 22 class meetings in which you are responsible for readings, but have no formal essay due. You are to write journal entries for 20 of these meetings. You are

to write one-half to one (1) double-spaced page in Microsoft Word of critical reflection for each entry. These reflections will be graded pass/fail. Not every entry will pass—they must show conclusively that the student has completed *all* the readings. The entries should reflect basic comprehension of *all* the assigned reading, and raise at least one analytical question about the readings (that is, a question or issue we could discuss in class, such as, to what extent was the Civil War a religious war?).

You should initially compose entries in a Word document (which you should save as an ongoing course journal), then copy and paste that entry into an online journal entry on Blackboard (under “Tools”), and submit the entry to me by class time. No entries will be counted if received after class time. If (only if) Blackboard is down, you may print out your entry and bring it to class. Your journal grade will be counted as the number of passing entries divided by 20.

Short Essays

2) Each student will write three **short papers** of 3-4 pages during the semester, and the due dates are listed in the syllabus. The basis for each review will be a book, but reviews should integrate thought and criticism of other relevant articles and primary source readings. Instead of simply listing what the readings are about, the student will be expected to evaluate the readings, both commending their strengths and criticizing their weaknesses. The reviews that will receive the highest marks will be those which demonstrate original and critical analysis while integrating material from multiple class materials, including readings, lectures, and discussions. The instructor highly encourages students to seek advice and criticism of their work from the instructor during the semester by visiting during office hours or scheduling timely appointments.

Essay Assignments:

Due on Sept. 16, Harry Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (1991).

1. Read the book and respond to the following, or a topic of your choosing:

- Do you think we should see Whitefield as a hero, or a sell-out? Was he honestly motivated by his faith to use any tactic to bring others to faith, or was he a huckster who loved fame and attention?

2. Outside research is not necessary for this assignment, though you may include evidence already read or heard in class. If you do use other sources, footnoting (as always) is required. As long as the form is consistent and understandable, it does not matter how you footnote sources (you may want to use the Chicago Manual of Style form seen above). Citations of the book need only be page numbers in parenthesis, with quotations when appropriate.

3. The essay should be 3 to 4 pages in length, with normal margins, double-spaced and a 12 point font. Papers shorter than the required length will almost certainly receive a lower grade, and I will stop reading at the end of 4 pages.

4. See policies on late papers and extensions- please plan to turn the paper in on time.

5. The best essays will accomplish the following:

- A) It will make a strong, clear, and thoughtful argument. It will not be a book report, but instead will express the student's own thoughts on argument, style, and evidence, as well as the essay question above.
- B) It will demonstrate that the student has not only read but also thoughtfully engaged with the book and other class materials.
- C) It will be clearly written with no spelling or grammar errors.

6. Please come see me (Tidwell B08) or e-mail me (Thomas_Kidd@baylor.edu) if you have any questions or concerns.

Due on Sept. 30, Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias* (New York, 1994).

1. Read the book and consider the following question:

What is it about American religious history that has opened up the possibility for groups like the Matthias's cult? Do you believe that this is an outgrowth of a distinctively revivalist and market-oriented American culture, or does Matthias tap into tendencies present everywhere? Make an argument about these or other issues.

2. The same parameters as above apply here, as to the other two essays.

Due on Nov. 11, Malcolm X (with Alex Haley), *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (orig. published 1965).

1. Read the book and consider the following question:

Why did Malcolm X convert to Islam, and what did he find in Islam that was more attractive than Christianity? What was the nature of Malcolm X's complaint against white America? Make an argument about these or other issues.

Research Paper

3) Each student will complete a **research paper** of 11-13 pages on a topic of their choice. This paper will require engagement with primary sources from the relevant time period and secondary sources that are recent, scholarly, and historical analyses of your topic. Students' papers should show significant engagement with the primary sources at hand, and also discuss at least 4 *secondary sources* (books or articles) directly relevant to your subject. At least three of these should have been written after 1985, and all must be from scholarly sources (i.e. university presses, peer-reviewed journals, etc.). You must cite these sources properly, preferably in the style of Kate Turabian, *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers* (University of Chicago Press), which is the style used by academic history books and articles. Sources such as internet sites of dubious reliability, encyclopedias, and popular magazines should be avoided.

In order to move along toward timely completion of the project, each student will turn in a topic and list of sources for the instructor's approval in week 5, and then

will turn in a good, complete first draft of the project for comment in week 11. The final papers will be due the last day of class.

You may do any project you like (with instructor's approval) but I often recommend that students choose a project related to some major historical text or figure on which there is a great deal of scholarship. Remember that whatever you choose, you will be writing about it as an historian, not for devotional or polemical purposes, and will engage historical debate about the topic and offer your own take on some big question(s) related to it.

Note also that if you choose a major historical figure such as Jonathan Edwards or Martin Luther King, Jr., you MUST NOT set out to write a biographical sketch of that figure, but instead you must choose some specific topic or issue relevant to that figure ("Edwards and women," "King and nonviolence"). Please also focus on figures whose major work/lives ended before about 1975—for instance, Billy Graham is not an option.

Among the books, topics and persons I might suggest for historical interest and accessibility of the primary sources:

Native American religions (choose specific group(s) and time period)

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*.

Roger Williams

Anne Bradstreet, poetry

Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*.

Allen Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations*.

William Penn and the Quakers

Jonathan Edwards

Isaac Backus and the New England Baptists

Baptists and the separation of church and state

First Great Awakening

George Whitefield

Thomas Jefferson and religion

Mother Ann Lee and the Shakers

Second Great Awakening

Charles Finney

Joseph Smith and the Mormons

Catholic immigrant identity

Anti-Catholicism in American politics

Nat Turner, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*.

Abolitionists

Christian defenses of slavery

John Brown

Revival of 1857

Charles Hodge

Washington Gladden

Mary Baker Eddy and Christian Science

Women's rights and Christianity

Dwight Moody

J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*.

Scopes Trial

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement

H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*.

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History, Moral Man and Immoral Society*.

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*.

Billy Sunday

Alternative Bible translations (i.e. RSV, NIV)

Aimee Semple McPherson

Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*.

Malcolm X

Latino churches and Protestant/Catholic conflict

Asian-American churches

You should also feel free to scan the bibliographies in Allitt for examples of topics and books reflecting current scholarship in American religious history- these may give you ideas for topics and good secondary sources.

Exams

4) A **midterm examination and final examination** will both involve a selection of essay and identification questions. Study guides will be handed out a week or so before each.

Course Outline and Assignments:

WEEK 1: August 24 and 26

Introduction to American religious history

For Thursday, Allitt, pp. 12-22 (articles by Finke and Stark, R. Laurence Moore)

[We begin the course with some “big picture” essays on American religious history. Finke and Stark problematize the declension/secularization narrative. Most students seem to come to the course with the idea that America “used to be” more religious than it is now. Moore helps students think about the peculiarities of religious disestablishment, and the nature of Americans’ commitment to toleration. Both pieces work well with students as introductions to the course.]

WEEK 2: August 31 and September 2

Colonial religious encounters- European missions, New France and New Spain

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 25-29 (docs. 1,2)

[This week I focus on Catholic missions and the meeting of Native American and European Catholic religions. The documents for today introduce students to Spanish/Native American interactions. Today I lecture some on the development of Spanish mission work.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 30-32 (doc. 3), 50-57 (Ronda article), screening and discussion of clip from *Black Robe*

[The Ronda piece introduces students to Native American theological and cultural resistance to Christianity. The clip from *Black Robe* shows a fireside debate between a

French Jesuit missionary and his Native American targets, and they effectively dismiss and ridicule his ideas about heaven.]

WEEK 3: September 7 and 9
Colonial religious encounters- British North America

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 61-62, 75-83 (doc. 1, article by Perry Miller)

[John Winthrop and Perry Miller introduce the students to the Puritans' errand in New England.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 72-75 (doc. 8); Kidd article, "Early American Uses of Islam," at <http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=11689383&db=aph> [Baylor access only: off-campus users must sign into the library system first]

[Today we deal with alternatives to the Puritan way, including witchcraft. Document is on detecting witches, always a favorite with students. I also have the students read my article on Islam to show a largely forgotten "other" that colonial Americans had to confront.]

WEEK 4: September 14 and 16
Awakenings

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 95-99, 100-101, 111-117 (docs. 2,4, Bonomi article)

[Here I begin to introduce the First Great Awakening and American evangelicalism. Nathan Cole's testimony is a hit with students.]

For Thursday, read Stout, *The Divine Dramatist*, **essay 1 due**.

[The first essay is due today, and we spend the whole time talking about Whitefield. I am especially interested in getting the students to reflect on the relationship between evangelism and the media, which resonates with them a great deal.]

WEEK 5: September 21 and 23
Awakenings, continued

For Tuesday, read Allitt, p. 99-100, 109-110 (doc. 3, 9); Rhys Isaac, "Evangelical Revolt," at <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28197407%293%3A31%3A3%3C345%3AERTNOT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>

[Today is mostly focused on evangelicalism and egalitarianism. Isaac introduces students to the radical potential within the evangelical movement (especially Baptists), which is a little difficult for them to grasp. I hesitate to use articles from scholarly journals, but Isaac is a reasonably accessible piece. One of the documents is a poem from Phillis Wheatley, who works well with students.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 132-134, 145-152 (doc. 3, Hatch article)

[Students really engaged the document from Charles Finney for today, seeing the difference between Edwards's and Finney's revivals.]

TERM PAPER TOPIC AND LIST OF SOURCES DUE

[I have students come meet with me individually to discuss their term papers, and how the class is going.]

WEEK 6: September 28 and 30

The Antebellum Hothouse

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 127-130, 134-137 (docs. 1,4), 152-159 (Raboteau)

[Today we discuss the Mormons, who are endlessly fascinating to the students.]

For Thursday, read Johnson and Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias*

Essay 2 due

[Students **love** reading Johnson and Wilentz, always one of the most popular readings. Helps establish the place of new movements emerging from Christianity, the problems of disestablishment.]

WEEK 7: October 5 and 7

Religion and the Civil War

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 176-183 (docs. 6,7,8), 188-194 (Genovese article)

[Very valuable session introduces students to the Bible's literal proslavery argument. Most students have assumed that the Bible is clearly antislavery.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 198-199, 202-203, 213-225 (docs. 1,3 Moorehead, Wilson articles)

[Again, conflicting Biblical interpretations of the Civil War.]

WEEK 8: October 12 and 14

Gilded Age Religion

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 232-234, 236-239, (docs. 3,5) 249-256 (Taiz article)

[Students are interested in learning about the Salvation Army, which they hardly realize is a Christian organization. Raises the problem of the cities for the churches.]

For Thursday, MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 9: October 19 and 21

Fundamentalism and Modernism

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 266-269 (docs. 4, 5) 275-281 (Marsden article)

[Readings introduce students to the debates over higher criticism and inerrancy. Students definitely see what is at stake in these debates.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 259-263 (docs. 1, 2), 475-477 (doc. 5); George Marsden, "Why Creation Science?" in Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Eerdmans, 1991), 153-181 (**on 2 hour reserve at Moody Library**).

[Again, students see what is at stake in the evolution debates, and are confused because many have come from creationist backgrounds.]

WEEK 10: October 26 and 28

American Catholicism

For Tuesday, read Allitt, 228-230 (doc. 1); 245-249 (Orsi article)

[Introduces students to Catholic popular culture, which is totally foreign to most students.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, 434-437 (doc. 3), 448-452 (Villafane article); Rod Dreher, "What Juan Diego Saw," *National Review*, Sept. 2002,
<http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=7207739&db=aph>

[Introduces students to the critical subject of Hispanic Catholicism. To me, every resident of Texas should know about Juan Diego and the Virgin of Guadalupe, but many students don't.]

WEEK 11: November 2 and 4

African-American Piety and Protest in the 20c

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 360-365 (docs. 1,2) 379-384 (Garrow article)

[Students love reading about Martin Luther King, and often have failed to see him as a religious leader. They see his ideas about non-violent resistance as impractical, though.]

Complete draft of term papers due Nov. 2

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 366-369 (docs. 3,4), 384-392 (McGreevy article)

[How did the churches respond to the Civil Rights movement? The problem of the white churches' resistance to the movement is troubling to some.]

WEEK 12: November 9 and 11

The New Immigrants and Religion

For Tuesday, read Allitt, pp. 429-434, 440-444 (docs. 1,2,5), Stephen Warner, "Coming to America," *Christian Century*, Feb. 2004,
<http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=12190145&db=aph>

[Students have little exposure, except perhaps through a Religion class, to non-Christian, or immigrant religions in America.]

Islam in America

For Thursday, read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
Essay 3 due

[Students love reading the *Autobiography*. I initially expected to get more resistance to it. Anyway, we have a great discussion about why Malcolm rejected his father's Christianity, and why he saw Islam as the superior religion for African Americans.]

WEEK 13: November 16 and 18
Post-WWII American religious/cultural conflict

For Tuesday, "With God on our Side" PBS video on Religious Right

[Fabulous video, introduces students to the key players in the Religious Right.]

For Thursday, read Allitt, pp. 398-400 (doc. 2), 471-475 (docs. 3,4), 483-86 (doc. 8), 495-502 (Ammerman article)

[Introduces students to post-1960s culture wars, church/state issues.]

WEEK 14: November 23

For Tuesday, **no regular class meeting**. Screening of *The Apostle* [schedule TBA]--write a review of the movie, no more than 2 pages long. Review will count toward class participation grade. You may respond to the question, "Is Sonny a man of God or a scoundrel?"

[One of my all-time favorite movies, and wonderful to discuss because students either love or hate Robert Duvall's character. I have my upper-level students over to our house for the movie and dinner.]

No class Thursday, Thanksgiving Holiday

WEEK 15: November 30 and December 2

America and global Christianity

For Tuesday, read "A NEW CHRISTENDOM," By: Jenkins, Philip, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 3/29/2002, Vol. 48, Issue 29;
<http://search.epnet.com/direct.asp?an=6455392&db=aph>

[Introduces students to non-American Christian growth, and shows students how integrated global Christianity is becoming, often driven by American religious media.]

The persistence of American religiosity

For Thursday, read

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Wilfred McClay, "The Soul of a Nation," *The Public Interest*.

<http://ezproxy.baylor.edu/login?url=http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=cookie,ip,url,uid&db=aph&an=13864997>

GWB address to joint session of Congress on Afghan war

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

[On this last day we discuss post-9/11 American civil religion. Great discussion, students have wide-ranging opinions about the appropriateness of GWB's religious language.]

FINAL DRAFT OF TERM PAPERS DUE December 2

Final Exam on THURSDAY, DEC. 9, 9-11 a.m.