

Rosemary Gooden Course Syllabus

Prepared for the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture by:

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The Center is pleased to share with you the syllabi for introductory courses in American religion that were developed in seminars led by Dr. Katherine Albanese of the University of California, Santa Barbara. In all of the seminar discussions, it was apparent that context, or the particular teaching setting, was an altogether critical factor in envisioning how students should be introduced to a field of study. The justification of approach, included with each syllabus, is thus germane to how you use the syllabus.

I. Syllabus Justification

The DePaul University undergraduate catalog describes "The American Religious Experience" as follows: "Major religious movements in America with emphasis upon the development of religious pluralism. Impact of religious beliefs and values upon American culture." Since I will have the opportunity to teach this course at DePaul, I used this course description as the basis for my syllabus. I also considered the institution, student body, and time. DePaul University is Catholic (Vincentian) and has a very diverse student body. The catalog states: "From its inception, DePaul has viewed itself as serving a heterogeneous grouping of students drawn from an urban metropolis rich in ethnic and social diversity, pluralistic in its cultural and religious heritage." I expect that, given the diverse population of metropolitan Chicago, students in this course will bring both a personal religious heritage as well as some knowledge of or exposure to other religious traditions one might find in Chicago. I planned the syllabus with these assumptions in mind and also with specific goals for the course enumerated below. Also, DePaul is on the quarter system. This was a major factor in determining the course syllabus. I discussed with a colleague in Religious Studies the impossibility of teaching American religious history in one course in ten weeks. We will confer during the 1992-93 academic year to discuss revising the introductory course to expand it into three chronological periods. My approach to an introductory course in American religious history is historical and reflects my training in American Studies.

The primary goal of "The American Religious Experience" is to examine the beliefs and practices of the major religious traditions and movements in American history. Along with acquiring certain factual information, another purpose of the course is to critically analyze and understand the interaction between religious beliefs and social, cultural, and intellectual forces in American culture. These goals will be achieved through lectures, class discussions, small group discussions, careful reading of assigned texts and articles, and other academic exercises.

II. Course Syllabus

Religious Studies 211
Dr. Rosemary Gooden

Autumn 1993
T,Th, 8:30-10:00

The American Religious Experience

Course Description

This course surveys major religious traditions, movements, and themes in American history from the colonial period to the present. Additionally, we will explore the relationship between religious values and beliefs and other aspects of American culture.

Required Texts

- Dickson D. Bruce, Jr. *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974.
- Lis Harris. *Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family*. New York: Summit Books, 1985.
- Richard E. Wentz. *Religion in the New World: The Shaping of Religious Traditions in the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Other assigned readings are on reserve in the library.

Recommended for Reference

- Sydney E. Ahlstrom. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Catherine L. Albanese. *American Religions and Religion*. 2d. ed. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1992.
- Charles H. Lippy and Peter Williams, eds. *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience: Studies of Traditions and Movements*. 3 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.
- Martin E. Marty. *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1984.
- Daniel G. Reid, et. al. *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Course Requirements

1. Critical reading of assigned books and articles:
You are expected to read the assigned material before class and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Although this is a lecture course, classes will occasionally combine lecture and discussion. Some classes will be devoted solely to discussion of assigned reading.
2. Regular attendance and participation in discussions:
The material presented during lectures is not duplicated in the assigned readings. It is imperative that you attend all scheduled class sessions.
3. Response papers (1-1/2 - 2 pages):
During the quarter, you will be asked to write short papers of your responses and reactions to selected readings, films, or other course material. Some of these response papers will be in-class assignments; others written outside of class must be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and submitted on the due date. Late papers will receive reduced grades.

4. Midterm examination:
The midterm examination, October 13, will be comprehensive. It will cover readings, lectures, and discussions. The midterm is an essay exam and will combine shorter and longer topics plus identifications. Exams must be written in ink in bluebooks (8-1/2x11).
5. Final examination:
The final examination, December 1, will be comprehensive. It will cover readings, lectures, and discussions. Like the midterm, the final will be an essay exam of shorter and longer topics plus identifications.

Evaluation

Your course grade will be computed as follows:

- Response papers 25%
- Midterm examination 35%
- Final examination 35%
- Class participation 5%

Schedule of Classes and Readings

Sept. 17 Introduction: The Study of Religion in American Culture

Sept. 22 Christendom and the Reformation

Reading: Wentz, 3-44.

Sept. 24 Native American Traditions

Reading: Wentz, 45-62.

Sept. 29 Puritanism as a Religious Movement

Reading: Wentz, 63-96; Harry S. Stout, "Word and Order in Colonial New England," in Nathan Hatch and Mark Noll, eds. *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History* (1982), 19-38.

Oct. 1 Catholicism in American Culture

Reading: Wentz, 129-150; Richard Rodriguez, Chapter Three, "Credo," in *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), 77-110.

Oct. 6, 8 Methodists, Revivalism, and The Great Awakening

Reading: Wentz, 151-189; *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*.

Oct. 13 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Oct. 15 Public Expressions of Religion

Reading: Wentz, 190-206; Karen DeWitt, "Teacher Inspired Clinton's 'New Covenant,'" *The New York Times*, July 17, 1992, A12; Stanley Elkin, "A Demonstration of Democrats," *The New York Times*, July 19, 1992, E17.

Oct. 20 Restoration and Millennialist Movements

Reading: Wentz, 207-228; 299-312; Chapter Two, "Mormonism and American Culture," in Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (1981), 45-83.

Oct. 22 Utopian and Communitarian Movements

Reading: Introduction and Chapter Four, "Shaker Doctrine and First Residence at Watervliet" in Jean M. Humez, ed., *Gifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson, Black Visionary, Shaker Eldress* (1981), 1-64, 197-228; Documentary Film, "I Don't Want to be Remembered As a Chair."

Oct. 27, 29 Evangelicalism and Social Reform Movements

Reading: Garth Rosell, "Charles G. Finney: His Place in the Stream of American Evangelicalism" in Leonard I. Sweet, ed., *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (1984), 131-147; Chapter One, "The Origins of Evangelical Sunday Schools," and Chapter Two, "Sunday Schools and American Education," in Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution 1790-1880* (1988), 6-59.

Nov. 3 African American Religion

Reading: Wentz, 268-283; Jualyne E. Dodson and Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, "Something Within: Social and Collective Endurance in the Sacred World of Black Christian Women," in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, eds., *Women and Religion in America Volume 3: 1900-1968* (1986), 80-130; "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind," in James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963), 23-67.

Nov. 5, 10 Judaism in America

Reading: Wentz, 229-250; Chapter Two, "Historical Sketch," and Chapter Five, "Individual and Community: Affiliation and Disaffiliation," in Joseph Blau, *Judaism in America: From Curiosity to Third Faith* (1976), 21-45, 91-110; Lis Harris, *Holy Days: The World of a Hasidic Family*.

Nov. 12 The Power of Positive Thinking: Father Divine, Norman Vincent Peale, and Robert Schuller

Reading: Wentz, 284-298; Introduction, "Father Divine and the Black Religious Tradition" and Chapter Three, "The Peace Mission in Robert Weisbrot, Father Divine and the Struggle for Racial Equality (1983), 3-8, 59-90; Father Divine, "The Realness of God, to you-wards..." in Milton C. Sernett, ed., *Afro-American Religious-History: A Documentary Witness* (1985), 404-412; Douglas Miller, "Popular Religion of the 1950s: Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham," *Journal of Popular Culture*, 9 (Summer 1975), 66-76; Chapter Four, "Twelve Principles for Managing Problems Positively," in Robert Schuller, *Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do* (1983), 72-90.

Nov. 17 Fundamentalism and Neo-Evangelicalism: Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell

Reading: Wentz, 313-328; Introduction and "Liberty Baptist" in Frances Fitzgerald, *Cities on a Hill: A Journey Through Contemporary American Cultures* (1987), 11-24, 121-202.

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Nov. 19 New Religious Pluralism in the United States: Ancient, Asian and Arabesque Traditions and Santeria

Reading: Wentz, 329-350; George Brandon, "Sacrificial Practices in Santeria, an African- Cuban Religion in the United States" in Joseph E. Holloway, ed., Africanisms in American Culture (1990), 199-147; Carol Rust, "The Rhythm of the Botanica," Houston Chronicle Magazine, Nov. 3, 1991, 6-9.

Nov. 24 NO CLASS

Nov. 26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Dec. 1 FINAL EXAM