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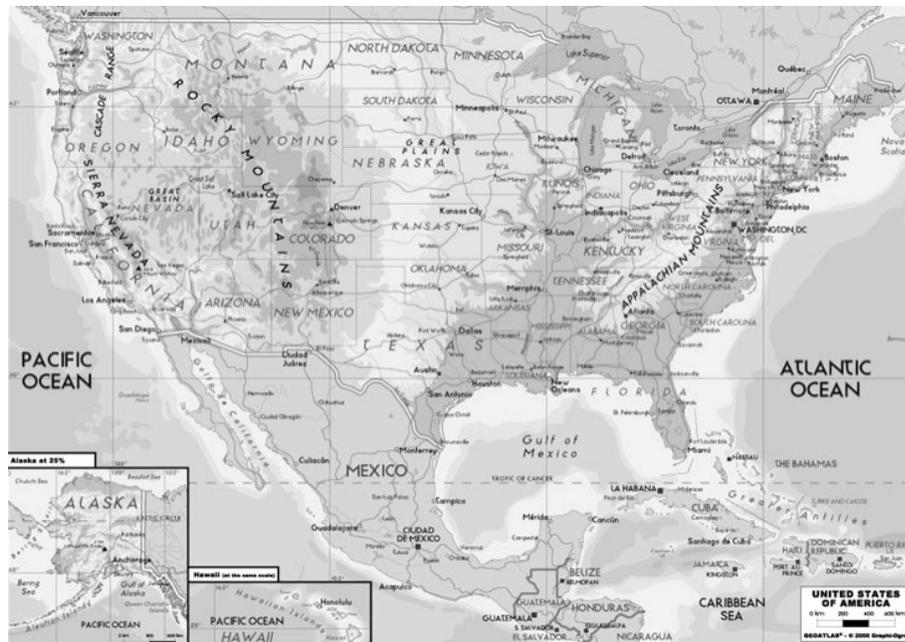
Religion in America (Religion 104)
From Missionaries to the “Nones:” American Religious History
Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 11-11:50am
Hickory Hall 204

Springfield College Catalogue Description:

This course is a study of religious thought and institutions and their influence on American culture. It focuses on major denominations and thinkers in this country, from the seventeenth century to the present.

Our Course Introduction

Look at this map of the United States—you’ve seen a map like this hundreds of times, but take a moment to really look at it again:



Look for the place where you were born and places you’ve visited and where you live now. Look for places you’d like to visit. Think about the ways these places felt or smelled or sounded alike or different. Remember which places had the best food or most interesting people.

This class is a study of the religious history in the land currently bound by the nation of the United States. One goal of this course is to investigate the religion and religions in different pockets throughout this land, as it has been lived by different people and cultures in various historical contexts.

Studying religious history in the United States requires that we move back and forth between the broad themes of historical narrative and particular people and places practicing and interacting with religion. This introductory course moves between the particular and the broad through exploring four themes throughout the quarter: (1) religious interaction, contact, and exchange; (2) the role of religion in shaping the U.S.; (3) the role of the U.S. in shaping religion; (4) religious places and spaces.

I have organized this semester so that we approach these themes and questions from two different perspectives. During the first half, the course is organized by geographic region. This allows us to pay attention to the different nuances of these places and the ways religion looks in each of them. This organization also allows us to think about religion in the U.S. as having multiple beginnings: in the Southwest, in Alaska, in New England. And with multiple “original” religions: Catholic, Protestant, Russian Orthodox, Native American.

The second half of the course focuses on religious history in the U.S. from the Civil War to present-day. This part is organized chronologically. Within three different timeframes, we will explore themes of religious history ranging from Black churches after the Civil War to Pentecostalism to the impacts of the 1965 Immigration Law on the religious landscape of the U.S. Just as a geographic focus doesn’t preclude chronology, our chronological focus will still try to pay attention to geographic variance and overlapping events. My hope is that these two different organization schemes remind us that *how* and *from where* we decide to study religious history affects what we learn about religious history in the U.S.

My goals for this class are that it:

- Highlights major moves of religious history of the U.S;
- Introduces students to the role of religion in U.S. history;
- Teaches students to think critically about how and why religion gets practiced in the U.S.
- Considers multiple perspectives in studying religious history of the U.S.

My objectives are that, after these two quarters, students will be able to:

- Analyze the history of religion(s) in the U.S from multiple points of view;
- Recognize the role of perspective in studying religious history;
- Read primary sources and analyze them in their historical and religious contexts.

Expectations and Evaluations

The challenge of this class is to pay attention to both broad historical themes of religious history in the U.S. *and* to see what specifics in this history really piques your interest. I expect that you come to each class meeting group prepared by having read and thought about the readings.

Assessment

Reading and Class Participation (10%)

Rather than one required text for this course, I have put together a course pack with selections from both primary and secondary sources. I’ve also included several assignments to study maps, view videos, and/or look at images. I consider these visual assignments just as valuable and important as the readings, so please do not skip them.

We will discuss how to read primary sources in the second class, but a good way to think about reading primary sources is to imagine that you are trying to learn all you can about someone from reading their email. There will be things that make very clear sense and other references for which you will have to struggle to figure out its context in order to understand it—for example, “that night” doesn’t mean anything specific unless you know about the bonfire where Amy kissed Jason even though Jason is dating Kyra. Or imagine someone 125 years from now trying to figure out what LOL means. This is the challenge of primary texts. Please do your best with the reading and come to class and discussion groups prepared with reflections and questions.

Four 2-page papers (30%; 7.5% each)

The goal of these papers is to try to think about some of the main themes from the lectures, readings, and discussion. They are intended to help you think about and synthesize what you have been learning. Possible paper topics are listed in the syllabus, but you are most welcome to discuss other ideas with me.

Due Dates: 9/23, 10/7, 10/31, and 11/11.

Midterm Assignment (20%)

Choose from one of the three:

- Create a map of religion in the U.S., pre-Civil War. Write a three-page description of your map and defense of your reasoning
- Write and illustrate a children’s story or comic book about pre-Civil War religion in the U.S.
- Choose two of the individuals from the first part of the course and imagine a conversation between them (4-5 pages)

Due: 10/21.

Timeline Project (15%)

This class moves broadly and quickly. There are so many intriguing moments and people in this history that we will either just touch on briefly or have to skip over all together. This project is a chance for you to learn a bit more detail in one specific area. The goal of this project is for you to take a particular topic or event or religious tradition that you find particularly interesting and map a timeline for it. This timeline can take the shape of a standard chronological timeline or you can get more creative about it. I hope that you are able to find something that piques your curiosity. I am also available to provide ideas. This is not intended as a big research project, but I am asking you to do some outside research for this project.

Proposed Topic Due 11/21; In-class exhibit due:12/14.

Take-home Final exam (25%)

The final for this class is a take-home exam I will ask five questions from the material (readings, lectures, discussions) from the semester and ask you to respond to **three** of them. This is a chance for you to gather together what you have learned over the quarter and put it together into a meaningful and summative response.

Due 12/19 at 10:15am. In person.

Course Schedule

W 9/7. Introductions

F 9/9. Thinking about religion in the U.S.

In-class writing: Write down three things you know right now about religion in the U.S.

Part I. 17th century-1865: Geographic Orientations

The Southwest

M 9/12. Native Americans in New Mexico

Reading:

- Gutiérrez, Ramón, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, Chapter 1: “The Pueblo Indian World in the 16th century,” pgs. 3-36.

W 9/14. Catholic Missions in the Southwest

Readings:

- Herbert Bolton, *Rim of Christendom: A Biography of Eusebio Francisco Kino, Pacific Coast Pioneer*; Map of Kino’s Travels.
- *Kino’s Historical Memoir of Pimería Alta: A Contemporary Account of the Beginnings of California, Sonora, and Arizona by Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, S.J., Pioneer Missionary Explorer, Cartographer, and Ranchman, Vol. 1*; Chapters VI-XI; pgs. 239-258. Accessible at Google books: <http://alturl.com/5b7q>.

F 9/16. Buddhism in California

Reading:

- Rick Fields, “Gold Mountain and Rice Bowl Country: The First Chinese and Japanese in America,” in *How the Swans Came to the Lake*, pgs. 70-82.
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The Northwest

M 9/19. Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska

Reading:

- Aram G. Sarkisian, “Russian Orthodox Missions to Alaska” (4 pages)

W 9/21. Protestant Missions in Pacific Northwest

Reading:

- Laurie Maffly-Kipp, “Assembling Bodies & Souls: Missionary Practices on the Pacific Frontier” in *Practicing Protestants: Histories of Christian Life in America, 1630-1965*; pgs. 51-76.

F 9/23. Religion(s) in Hawaii

****Paper 1 due.** *Possible paper topics:*

- Think about where you grew up. How does that affect your approach to this material?
 - Track two similarities and two differences between the ways missionaries approached different regions.
 - Consider the idea of “contact.” Choose one of the readings so far. What does contact mean for the people you’ve chosen to think about?
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The Northeast

M 9/26. Puritans & Pilgrims

Reading:

- John Winthrop, “City Upon a Hill,” 1630:
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/winthrop.htm>

W 9/28. Catholics in the Colonies

Reading:

- “The English Jesuits Establish the Mission of Maryland” (1634) in *American Catholic History: A Documentary Reader*, ed. Mark Massa, Catherine Osborne; pgs. 12-14.

F 9/30. Women, Religion, and the Colonies

Reading:

- Susan Hill Lindley, “*You Have Stept Out of Your Place:*” *A History of Women & Religion in America*; Chapter 1: “Anne Hutchinson,” pgs. 1-7.

M 10/3. Religious experiments: Transcendentalists and Unitarians

Reading:

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Divinity School Address*, 1838:
<http://www.emersoncentral.com/divaddr.htm>.

W 10/5. Religious tolerance in the new nation

Reading:

- Jefferson “Act for Establishing Religious Freedom”:
<http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/avaact.html>.

F 10/7. Religious intolerance in the new nation

Reading

- *Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk, as Exhibited in A Narrative of Her Sufferings During her Residence of Five Years as a Novice in the Hotel Dieu Nunnery at Montreal, Ontario*; pgs. 45-52.

****Paper 2 due.** *Possible paper topics:*

- Is the history of the U.S. one of religious tolerance or intolerance?
 - Compare and contrast the Puritans and the Transcendentalists.
 - Choose three words to describe the religion of the colonies and argue why those are apt descriptors.
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The South/Southeast

M 10/10—No Class, Columbus Day Observed

W 10/12. Slave Religion and Black churches

Reading:

- George Liele and Andrew Bryan, “Letters from Pioneer Black Baptists” in Sernett, ed.; pgs 44-51.

F 10/14. The Great Awakening(s)

Reading:

- George Whitefield (1714-70). Choose one sermon to read:
<http://www.ondoctrine.com/2whitefi.htm>
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The Middle West

M 10/17. Religion on the Frontier

Readings:

- Sr. Claudia Duratschek, *The Beginnings of Catholicism in South Dakota* (1943), pgs. TBA
- Explore map of 19th century Lutheran churches in Middle West:
http://www2.elca.org/archives/ruralchurches/establishing_roots.html.

W 10/19. Protestant Missionaries in the West

Reading:

- Lyman Beecher, *A Plea for the West*, excerpt in *The American Whigs: An Anthology*, pgs. 133-147.
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F 10/21. Midterm Wrap-up and Discussion

****Midterm Assignment due.** Choose from one of the three:

- Create a map of religion in the U.S., pre-Civil War. Write a 4-page description of your map and defense of your reasoning
 - Write and illustrate a children’s story or comic book about pre-Civil War religion in the U.S.
 - Choose two of the individuals from the first part of the course and imagine a conversation between them (5-6 pages)
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Part II. 1865-Present: Historical Trajectories

1865-1918: Religion & Rebuilding the Nation

M 10/24. Religion and the end of the Civil War

Reading:

- Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address” (1865)
<http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html>

W 10/26. Women and nation-building in the West

Reading:

- Anne Butler, “Nuns on the Frontier,” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/16/opinion/nuns-on-the-frontier.html>

F 10/28. Religion and immigration

Reading:

- Robert Orsi, “The Religious Boundaries of an Inbetween People: Street *Feste* and the Problem of the Dark-Skinned Other in Italian Harlem, 1920-1990,” *American Quarterly* Vol. 44, No 3. (September 1992); pgs. 313-347: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2712980>

M 10/31. Rise of Pentecostalism

Viewing:

- “1906 Azusa Street Revival,” http://www.onlybelievetv.com/view_video.php?viewkey=1ed0583367a12a79a9ef

****Paper 3 due.** *Possible paper topics:*

- Imagine yourself as Lyman Beecher. How would you respond to the *fiesta* to Madonna in Italian Harlem?
- What do you think so far: Is the U.S. a “Christian nation?”
- Imagine three newspaper headlines in the American West that describe the nuns at work. Describe why these headlines might have existed.

1918-1950s: Two Wars and a Great Depression

W 11/2. The Scopes Trial

Reading:

- William Jennings Bryan, Closing Statement at Scopes Trial (1925): <http://www.csudh.edu/oliver/smt310-handouts/wjb-last/wjb-last.htm>

F 11/4. Liberal/Modern Divine

Reading:

- Harry Emerson Fosdick, “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” (1922): <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5070/>

M 11/7. Black Churches and the Great Migration

Readings:

- African Methodist Episcopal Council of Bishops, “Address on the Great Migration” (1917) in Sernett, ed; pgs. 359-262.
- Map of Great Migration: http://www.oswego.edu/~dighe/great_migration_1916-1930.jpg

W 11/9. Post-WWII Revival

Viewing:

- Billy Graham preaching: “Billy Graham Crusade 1957”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i95RXDyY70>

F 11/11. Religion and Media

Watch:

- Fulton Sheen’s “Life is Worth Living”: “How to Improve your Mind (Part 1)”:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPYu_S6bKRI

****Paper 4 due.** *Possible paper topics:*

- Identify and analyze three issues at stake in William Jennings Bryan’s Closing Statement at the Scopes Trial.
 - Compare and contrast the attitudes of Black churches in this era with those from before the Revolutionary War.
 - Compare and contrast Billy Graham’s preaching with Fulton Sheen’s.
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1950s-present: Contemporary Themes in U.S. Religion

M 11/14. Religious Diversity in the U.S.

Reading:

- Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology*, Chapter III: “From the Land of Immigrants to the Triple Melting Pot: The Third Generation and the Religious Community,” pgs. 27-47

W 11/16. Dharma Bums

Reading:

- Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums*; Chapters 1-5, pgs. 3-27. Available as e-book through Babson

F 11/18. Black Religion(s) & the Civil Rights Movement

Reading:

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail—April 16, 1963” in Sernett, ed.; pgs. 519-535.

M 11/21. Catholics and Vatican II

Reading:

- “How the ‘People of God’ Want to Worship” (1964), in Massa, ed.; pgs. 246-48

****Topic for Timeline Project Due**

W 11/23—No Class, Thanksgiving Break

F 11/25—No Class, Thanksgiving Break

M 11/28. Christian Right, Christian Left

Readings:

- Sojourners’ History: http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=about_us.history
- Jerry Falwell, *Listen America!* Excerpt:
http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/archive/resources/documents/ch36_02.htm.

W 11/30. 1965 Immigration & Nationality Act

Reading:

- President Lyndon B. Johnson's Remarks at the Signing (October 3, 1965):
<http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/651003.asp>

F 12/2. Religion after 9/11/2001: Sikhs, Muslims, and Americans

Investigate:

- "America's Changing Religious Landscape" (2015):
<http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>

M 12/5. Hindu Summer Camps

Viewing:

- "Indian Summer," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PruuM-cGzw>

W 12/7. Religious "Nones"

Investigate:

- Pew Research Center on Religion and Public life, "America's Changing Religious Landscape" (2015), <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>.

F 12/9. Religion and Social Media

Investigate:

- Find an example of religion and social media (e.g. Smartphone app, Facebook group, Twitter hashtag) and post it to Moodle. We will look at these during class

M 12/12. Religion in the 2016 presidential election

- Find a news article about religion in this November's presidential election (Trump vs. Clinton). Write short (100 words) abstract and bring it to class

Take-home exam handed out.

W 12/14. Timeline Exhibits

F 12/16. Conclusions

Take-home exam due: **Monday, 12/19 at 10:15am** in person