

Keith Harper 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. Grant Wacker of Duke University Divinity School. 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

I teach at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS), an institution owned and maintained by the Southern Baptist Convention. Most of Southeastern's student body comes from a Southern Baptist background. Likewise, most are white males who are preparing for vocational ministry. My students are all college graduates but they vary greatly in age and life experience.

Personally speaking, the most challenging aspect of teaching at Southeastern is working between two different worlds. By that I mean that seminaries fill two very different functions. On the one hand they prepare students for denominational service and ministry in local church and parachurch ministries. Many of our students, therefore, do not plan to further their education beyond the M.Div. degree. On the other hand seminaries must also prepare some students for academic training beyond the M.Div. Balancing a courses' academic requirements with its practical implications for ministry can be difficult because most of our courses are open to both M.Div. and Th.M. students.

INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Southeastern requires eight hours of history in the core curriculum, six hours of general church history and two hours of Baptist history. The second semester of the church history sequence emphasizes U. S. religious history. Consequently, anyone taking American Religious History, H 2120, will already have some background in American religious development. They will also take this course as an elective which means that classes will tend to be small (about 20). This allows for great class discussion. Moreover, I will have taught many of these students in their church history classes and will have a good idea of what they find interesting.

STUDENT CONSIDERATIONS

Our students are expected to attend all class meetings but this, of course, is not always possible. Many of our students are already serving as ministers or associate ministers in local churches and their obligations force them occasionally to miss class. Other students work either full or part-time in non-ministry related

jobs. I do not want these students to fall behind if they must miss class. As a result, I tend to follow a chronological narrative and stick fairly close to the textbook's format. Additionally, I put the assigned readings on reserve in the library. Students are free to copy these articles and read them as their schedules permit.

The non-text supplemental readings along with the required text form the backdrop for our class discussion. Classes meet one time per week and last for about two hours. This allows sufficient time for lecturing and discussion. The readings I chose for this course emphasize an evangelical perspective for two reasons. First, the majority of my students already have a world view that has been profoundly shaped by evangelicalism. Second, I believe this approach will assist them in the formation of their respective ministries. Hopefully, the readings will be provocative enough for the in-class discussions to be "lively." In a similar manner, the readings should raise important questions. For example, is America a "Christian" nation? If so, how might one account for Jon Butler's thoughts on witchcraft in colonial America? How do religion and politics intersect in issues such as warfare? Going one step further, how might one compare and contrast religion in the American Revolution as opposed to the Civil War? What impact did immigration have on American religion? Reverse the question--what impact did America have on the religion that immigrants brought with them? Is Sandeen's assessment of fundamentalism accurate? How does one go from fundamentalist to evangelical?

TEXT CONSIDERATIONS

I prefer a general, narrative text like Edwin Scott Gaustad's *A Religious History of America* as the primary text because it succinctly covers the broad scope of American religious development. I like Robert Wuthnow's *The Struggle for America's Soul* to close the course out because it offers, I think, a clear overview of where many mainline religious groups find themselves today. Finally, I like Turabian because I will require a paper in this class and I have yet to find a book that is more helpful in writing term papers.

II. Introductory Course Syllabus

AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY ***H 2120 - FALL, 1997***

INSTRUCTOR: KEITH HARPER
OFFICE: 310 STEALEY HALL
PHONE: 556-3101, ext. 266 (OFFICE)
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday/Thursday 8:30-10:00, or by appointment

TEXTS

- Edwin Scott Gaustad, *A Religious History of America*
- Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals and Secularism*
- Kate C. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 5th edition (suggested)
- Reserved Readings in library

Texts will be available in the SEBTS Bookstore

COURSE DESCRIPTION

American Religious History (H 2120) will trace the development of American religion from the Colonial period to the present. We will not ignore important minority traditions such as Catholicism, or Judaism, but our focus will be on Protestants, especially evangelicals. Our operative assumption is that the religious groups and sub-groups that created American religious history have engaged in an ongoing search for order, stability, and legitimacy. This course is worth two semester hours of credit (see SEBTS catalog, p. 54).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To identify and understand the major themes of U. S. religious history from the Colonial Era to the present
2. To become familiar with significant personalities, institutions, and events in U. S. religious history

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Each student is expected to attend ALL lectures. If for some reason you cannot attend a class session, please be advised that you are responsible for the material covered that day.
2. Each student is responsible for taking his or her own notes from the lecture.
3. Each student is responsible for completing all reading assignments prior to the class for which they are assigned. Any reading assignment will be considered "fair game" for the exams including the readings on reserve in the library.
4. All M.Div. students will take the mid-term and final exams. Th.M. students are exempt from the final, but must take the mid-term.
5. Each student will prepare a significant paper (15+ pages) on some aspect of American religious history. These topics will be chosen in consultation with the professor. Additionally, students will prepare a brief (5-10 minutes) oral presentation and summation of their projects. We will schedule these presentations at the end of the semester.
6. Th.M. students will read and review three books on American religious history topics in addition to the above requirements. Students have the option of either writing three individual reviews or one comparative review.
7. Please be advised that late assignments will be penalized one letter grade.

GRADING SCALE

Your grade for this course will be based on the following formula:

Grade Scale:Final Grade: (M.Div. Students)

A = 90-100 Mid-term exam=25%
B = 80-89 Paper- first draft=15%
C = 70-79 final draft/presentation=30%
D = 60-69 Final exam=30%
F = 59 AND BELOW 100%

Final Grade: (graduate)

Mid-term exam=25%
Reviews (3 @ 10%)=30%
Paper- first draft=15%
- final draft/presentation=30%
100%

Final notes about the exams:

1. When taking an exam BE SURE to use a dark colored pen.
2. Make up exams will be given at the end of the semester on the Monday of Final Exams week.

Final notes about the class:

- I don't like tape recorders because they tend to give students amnesia. Consider these scenarios:
 - A) I forgot to keep the tapes in a place where I could find them.
 - B) I taped the lectures but forgot to re-listen to them.
 - C) I forgot to listen in class while I taped the lectures.

Do you see a pattern? Trust me on this one--there is no substitute for paying close attention in class and taking good notes.

- I absolutely WILL NOT discuss grades over the telephone, SO DON'T ASK!
- I do not give extra credit work. It behooves you, therefore, to do a good job at all times!

COURSE CALENDAR AND A PREVIEW OF UPCOMING ATTRACTIONS

H 2120 - FALL, 1997

August

21 Course Introduction/Overview - Gaustad, Chs. 1-4

28 Gaustad, Chs. 5-8

Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity" in *Errand Into the Wilderness*, pp. 48-98

September

4 Gaustad, Chs. 9-11

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Jon Butler, "Witchcraft, Astrology and Popular Religion" in *American Historical Review* #84 (1979), pp. 317-346

11 Gaustad, Ch. 12

John Murrin, "No Awakening, No Revolution?" in *Reviews in American History* June, 1983, pp. 161-171

Stephen Botein, "Religious Dimensions of the Early American State" in *Beyond*

Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity, edited by Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein and Edward C. Carter II

18 Gaustad, Chs. 13-14

Don Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Principle" in *American Quarterly* 21 (1969), pp. 23-43

25 Gaustad, Ch. 15

Nathan Hatch, "The Democratization of Christianity and the Character of American Politics"

Daniel Walker Howe, "Religion and Politics in the Antebellum North"

*Both essays are in *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to 1980*, edited by Mark A. Noll, pp. 92-145

REVIEW #1 DUE

October

2 Mid-term Exam

16 Gaustad, Chs. 16-17

E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Church: A Nation Within a Nation"

Herbert G. Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement: The Christian Spirit in the Gilded Age"

*Both essays are in *Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays*, edited by John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson, pp. 288-299 and 318-341, respectively

23 Gaustad, Chs. 18-20

Ernest Sandeen, "Toward a Historical Interpretation of the Origins of Fundamentalism" in *Church History* March, 1967, pp. 66-83

LeRoy Moore, Jr., "Another Look at Fundamentalism: A Response to Ernest R. Sandeen" in *Church History* April, 1968, pp. 195-202

30 Gaustad, Chs. 21-24

George Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis" in *The Evangelicals*, edited by John D. Woodbridge and David F. Wells, pp. 122-142

Roger Finke, "The Illusion of Shifting Demands: Supply-Side Interpretations of American Religious History" in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, edited by Thomas A. Tweed, pp. 108-126

REVIEW #2 DUE

November

6 Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America's Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals and Secularism*, Chs. 1-3

David Wells, *No Place For Truth or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?*, pp. 1-100

FIRST DRAFT OF PAPERS DUE

13 Wuthnow, Chs. 4-Epilogue

20 In class paper presentations

REVIEW #3 OR COMPARATIVE REVIEW DUE

December

4 In class paper presentations

FINAL DRAFT OF PAPERS DUE

FINAL EXAM -- SEE SCHEDULE

Supplemental Bibliography

This list is by no means exhaustive but it should furnish you with resources for further study.

General Works

- Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*
- Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*
- Martin Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*
- Winthrop Hudson and John Corrigan, *Religion in America*

Colonial Era

- Perry Miller, *The New England Mind (2 Vol.) - From Colony to Province and the Seventeenth Century*

- Neil Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence - Indians, Europeans and The Making of New England, 1500-1643*
- Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*
- Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*
- Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*
- David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement - Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*
- Jonathan Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith - Christianizing the American People*

Early National Era

- Nathan Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and The Millennium in Revolutionary New England*
- Edwin S. Gaustad, *Faith of Our Fathers: Religion in the New Nation*
- Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800*
- Leonard W. Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and The First Amendment*

Nineteenth Century America

- R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and The Making of Americans*
- Robert Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*
- Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints*
- William G. McGloughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*
- John B. Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the Bible Belt*
- Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost*
- _____, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America*
- Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*
- C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War*
- H. Sheldon Smith, *In His Image, But ...: Racism in Southern Religion, 1870-1910*
- Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: the "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*
- Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: the Story of Churches of Christ in America*
- Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900*
- Charles R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*
- Joe Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: the American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890*

- Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War*
- Henry F. May, *Protestant Churches and Industrial America*

Twentieth Century

- George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925*
- Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin and the Great Depression*
- William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism*
- Ronald Numbers, *The Creationists: the Evolution of Scientific Creationism*
- Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War 2*
- J. T. Addison, *War, Peace, and the Christian Mind*
- Robert S. Michaelson, *Piety in the Public School*
- Sam Hill and Dennis Owen, *The New Religious Political Right in America*
- William Martin, *With God on Our Side: the Rise of the Religious Right in America*
- Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion*