

Andrew Manis Course Syllabus

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

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Mercer Press
formerly of Averett College

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

This syllabus is designed for an introductory level course at Averett College, in Danville, Virginia. The College is situated in a small city of about 60,000, in southside Virginia. The school, with a student body of 1,400, is loosely affiliated with the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Students in this course, which fulfills a general education requirement in religious studies, are usually freshmen or sophomores, equally divided between those with some religious background and those with very little if any. Those who have some religious background are generally 75% Protestant and 25% Catholic. In three years, I have had one Muslim student, but none who was Jewish. Ordinarily my students, whatever their religious backgrounds, have little historical understanding of the development of religion in the Western world or in America particularly. Nor are they, in general, the brightest or most highly motivated students in Virginia.

My approach is to give a rough chronological survey of the developments of American religion. The one-semester course focuses on the interaction of religion and culture in America, from the colonial period to the present. Since most of the students do come from largely Protestant backgrounds, and since the semi-required nature of the course draws very few students with an intrinsic interest in the subject, I begin where they are, emphasizing the hegemony of Protestantism in America, but indicating the qualifications of that dominance over the course of American history. I do spend some time explaining the development of denominations and denominationalism in America, largely as a response to the students' ignorance of and curiosity about them. These interests, and the students' general lack of background information, lead me to choose the Marsden text (*Religion and American Culture*) as a relatively short narrative history which gives them an overview of the chronological developments in American religion. In addition, I have chosen Gaustad's *Documentary History* provide primary source readings to illustrate those developments and diverse voices. As a rule, this course will have an enrollment of 10-15 students, giving some opportunity for discussions in class, based on the readings, lectures, or video presentations.

Regarding course requirements, it has been necessary in the past to induce (read "coerce") students to take reading assignments seriously. I have to resorted to quizzes in the past, though it has not ordinarily improved the dedication of the reading or the quality of the discussion. This time around, I am trying the short discussion papers, which will improve the students' and critical reading and writing. For the first time,

in this syllabus, I have included discussion questions to guide the students' reading. Quizzes will focus on these questions.

In addition, because these "captive" students often complain of the "irrelevancy" of such a course, I yield to the "presentist" temptation and require them to collect evidences of the significance of religion in the contemporary, secular news media, and write a "semester essay" on the role of religion in contemporary America. Presentist concerns may be objectionable to some members of the historical profession, as indeed it should be if left uncontrolled. For introductory level students, however, particularly those with little innate intellectual curiosity and who often come into this course with a naive, instrumentalist view of education, there is a pressing need to convince them that the questions and issues raised herein are central to understanding their historical identity and not merely an irrelevant waste of time. Thus, I ask them to write a short, think-piece on the subject at the beginning of the course, when they can record their uninformed impressions of the subject. In the more formal semester essay, they are to analyze the topic once more, now informed by their textbook readings, lectures, and collected articles. The assignment is designed to generate a more contemporary interest in the subject, in the hope that the students will gradually discover the relevance of religion to American culture, past as well as present. The requirements also include three examinations, inclusive of the final.

I have scheduled five video presentations during this course, partly as a means of getting away from lectures and partly to enable the class to see and hear certain aspects of the religious experience of Americans. These video programs are from the Public Broadcasting Service, and can be ordered through the PBS catalogue. For reference these programs include the following:

1. "The Supreme Court's Holy Battles" (PBS Frontline) - deals with separation of church and state, both in the Constitutional period and in contemporary times.
2. "The Shakers: 'Hands to Work, Hearts to God'" (PBS, "The American Experience" series) - deals with the Shakers as an example of the new religious experiments in the new nation.
3. "Mary Baker Eddy" (PBS, "American Experience") - deals with new thought and new, indigenous denominations developed in America.
4. "Eyes on the Prize" (PBS, "Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years") - selections from two episodes, illustrating the role of religion in the civil rights campaigns of Montgomery and Birmingham.
5. "On Earth As It Is in Heaven" (PBS, Bill Moyers' "God and Politics" series) - deals with the Fundamentalist resurgence of the 1980s, with particular attention to perhaps its most extreme expression, the Christian Reconstruction movement.

II. Course Syllabus

REL 260: RELIGION IN AMERICA

Averett College
Danville, Virginia

Andrew Michael Manis
T-Th 9:30 a.m.

Fall Semester, 1992

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Religion 260 is a reading/lecture/discussion course designed to introduce the student to the role of religion in history of the United States. Primary attention will be given to the historical development of religious ideas and institutions and their interaction with the development of American culture.

COURSE RATIONALE

The story of the development of American civilization would be incomplete without due attention to the role of religion. Religion and its relationship to American society has been and remains unique in Western culture, and national self-understanding cannot be fully attained without studying the place of religion in American life. The development of insight into the nature of religion and the character of the American nation is the purpose of this course.

COURSE TEXTS

- Gaustad, Edwin S., ed. *A Documentary History of Religion in America: To the Civil War*. Eerdmans, 1982.
- *A Documentary History of Religion in America: Since 1865*. Eerdmans, 1982.
- Marsden, George M. *Religion and American Culture*. Harcourt. Brace, Jovanovich, 1990.

Other Miscellaneous Readings as Assigned

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The student's final grade shall be determined by performance on the following assignments:

1. **EXAMINATIONS.** Three major examinations, including the final exam, will be given during the semester. These will include a mixture of objective and essay questions, covering lectures, readings, and class discussion. Each major exam will be worth 20%, for a combined total of 60% of the final grade.
2. **DISCUSSION PAPERS.** Each student will write five two-page (four page, handwritten) discussion papers on the readings for any particular class period, chosen according to the student's interest. Papers will consist of the following items: (1) summary of the issues raised by each reading; (2) indication of the authors' point of view (or argument); (3) interaction with the discussion question for the assigned readings; (4) at least two other questions suggested by the readings. Papers will be due at the beginning of the class period in question. The papers will cumulatively count for 20% of the final grade.
3. **SCRAPBOOK/SEMESTER ESSAY.** During the semester each student will collect news items from local and national periodicals which pertain to the role of religion in contemporary American life. The student should write at least a paragraph of his/her own thoughts and reflections on each individual item. At the end of the semester the student will write a 3-4 (typed) page essay summarizing his/her impressions of the role of religion in contemporary America in light of the items collected, lectures, and other readings during the semester. The scrapbook and semester essay will count 20% of the final grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept. 10 Course Introduction: Tools for the Study of Religion

Sept 15 Religion and the Native Americans

Reading: Gaustad I, 1-19 ("Native American Ceremonies & Myths");

Marsden, 1-10; Carol Devens, "Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaptation to European Colonization," *American Quarterly* 38 (1986): 461-480.

Question: What does it mean to describe religion as an "organizing principle" or a "worldview?" What would you describe as the common elements of a native American worldview?"

17 The Christian Traditions: Catholic & Protestant

Reading: Gaustad I 20-24 ("Expulsion of the Jews" & "Dividing the New World"); 26-33 (Loyola and Luther); 38-44 (Calvin, Edict of Nantes, Henry VIII); 46-54 (Edward VI, Mary I, Elizabeth I, Richard Hakluyt); Marsden, 12-16

Question: What major emphases of the Catholic and various Protestant faiths had developed in Europe by the end of the 17th century.)

Sept. 22 The New World: Establishment & Dissent

Reading: Gaustad I, 57-65 ("Europe in America," Ponce de Leon, Bartholomew de Las Casas,); 73-78 (Fr. Pierre Baird, Jean de Brebeuf); 97-98 (Church Establishment in VA); 101-107 (Wm Bradford, John Robinson/Wm Brewster, Jn Winthrop); 109-120 (Maryland, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania); Marsden, 16-24

Question: What major differences characterized religion in New England, the Middle Colonies, and the South?

24 The Great American Revivals

Reading: Marsden, 24-29; Gaustad I, 194-203 (G. Whitefield, T. Cutler, Harvard, Wm & Mary); 214-220 (J. Edwards); John B. Boles, "Evangelical Protestantism in the Old South: From Religious Dissent to Cultural Dominance," in C. R. Wilson, ed. *Religion in the South* (U. Press of Mississippi, 1985), pp. 13-34.

Question: Who were the leading figures in the colonial debate over revivalism (both pro and con) and their central religious ideas?

Sept. 29 Religion and the Revolution

Reading: Marsden, 29-40; Gaustad I, 225-229 (Intro. material); 240-250 (Philip Reading, Charles Inglis, T. B. Chandler, Anthony Benezet); 253-258 (Phyllis Wheatley, Isaac Backus, Samuel Sherwood)

Question: Considering both churchly and political matters, what were some of the different ways religion helped the colonists interpret the meaning of the American Revolution?

Oct. 1 The First Disestablishment

Video: "The Supreme Court's Holy Battles"

Reading: Marsden: 40-46; Gaustad I: 259-270 (T. Jefferson, J. Madison, I. Backus)

Question: What factors made the new American nation religiously a "new order for the ages?"

Oct. 6 FIRST EXAMINATION

8 New Nation, New Experiments, New Worlds

Video: "The Shakers: 'Hands to Work; Hearts to God'"

Reading: Marsden, 47-86; Gaustad I, 313-316 (Intro. material); 336-342 (C. Finney, R. W. Emerson); 345-360 (J. H. Noyes, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young); 369-378 (F. W. Evans); Joel W. Martin, "Before and Beyond the Sioux Ghost Dance," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59 (Winter, 1991): 677-701.

Question: What were the most important alternate ways of being religious (or new religious groups) in 19th-century America? How were they related to mainstream American culture?

Oct. 13 The Emergence of the Black Church

Reading: Marsden, 67-69; Gaustad I, 300-303 (Richard Allen); 467-477 (Henry Bibb, D. A. Payne, F. Douglass, Sojourner Truth); Dwight N. Hopkins, "Slave Theology and the 'Invisible Institution,'" in Hopkins/G. Cummings, *Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue: Black Theology in the Slave Narratives* (Orbis, 1991), pp. 1-45.

Question: What were the main features and distinctive ideas of African American religion? How did these reflect the experience of slavery?

15 Religion and the Civil War

Reading: Marsden, 7-10; 86-93; Gaustad I, 518-525 (A. Lincoln); David Chesebrough, "God Ordained This War", (U. of South Carolina, 1992), pp. 83-103; 221-238; 279-294.

Question: How were religious and political issues interwoven during the Civil War Period?

Oct. 20 American Religion & The New Industrial World

Reading: Marsden, 95-122; Gaustad II, 98-109 (Intro., Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, John L. Spalding); 117-122 (Cardinal Gibbons, Walter Rauschenbusch, Pope Leo XIII)

Question: What questions were confronted by American religious leaders and institutions as a result of industrialization?

22 New Ideas, New Religious Groups

Reading: Marsden, 122-151, Gaustad I, 413-417 (Intro.); 429-433 (Isaac Leeser, Isaac Mayer Wise); 438-445; (Ambrose Marechal, Orestes Brownson); 459-466 (Samuel Morse, "Maria Monk," Know-Nothings)

Question: What factors created tension between the religious main stream and these new ideas and ethnic groups?

Oct. 27 Religious Outsiders and Protestors

Reading: Marsden, 152-166; Gaustad II, 203-208 (Intro.); 237-239 (H. P. Blavatsky); 243-247 (Mary Baker Eddy); 292-305 (Charles T. Russell, Aimee Semple McPherson, Dispensationalism, Pentecostalism)

Question: What were the major religious issues that stimulated the growth of these protest groups?

29 Religious Women's Movements

Video: "Mary Baker Eddy"

Reading: Gaustad II, 61-71 (Antoinette B. Blackwell, Frances Willard, Elizabeth C. Stanton)

Question: What were some of the religious arguments for and against the emancipation of women in the late 19th-early 20th centuries?

Nov. 3 Religious Movements: Ecumenism and Peace

Reading: Marsden, 167-176; Gaustad II, 135-148 (John Spalding, Lymon Abbott, John Ireland, N. D. Hillis, John Haynes Holmes, Rabbi Stephen Wiser, H. E. Fosdick, Catholic Bishops, Robert Speer); 190-191 (Federal Council of Churches); 456-462 (National Council of Churches, Consultation on Church Union)

Question: In what ways did the optimism (progressivism) of this period shape these movements?

Nov. 5 Responses to Modernity: Protestant Liberalism

Reading: Marsden, 167-177; Gaustad II, 356-374 ("Literature and Religion: The Bible")

Question: How did Protestant Liberals receive the changes of the new era? Why did they respond in this way?

Nov. 10 SECOND EXAMINATION

12 Responses to Modernity: Fundamentalism

Reading: Marsden, 177-187; Gaustad II, 347-355 (Scopes Trial); 395-397 (J. Gresham Machen)

Question: How did Protestant Fundamentalists receive the changes of the new era? Why did they respond in this way?

Nov. 17 Responses to Modernity: Neo-Orthodoxy

Reading: Marsden, 194-206; Gaustad II, 412-419 (H. R. Niebuhr, Paul Tillich)

Question: How would you characterize Neo-Orthodoxy's response to modernity? To the other Protestant responses?

19 Responses to Modernity: Religious Outsiders

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Reading: Marsden, 187-193; 219-229; Gaustad II, 385-394 (John Ireland, Bernard J. McQuaid, Pius X), ; 400-411 (Reform and Conservative Judaism) ; 468-480 ("Vatican II?"); Louis Schmier, "We Were All Part of a Lost Generation!: Jewish Religious Life in a Rural Southern Town, 1900-1940" in C. R. Wilson, Cultural Perspectives on the American South (1991), pp. 45-65.

Question: How would you compare the theological and personal expressions of Catholic and Jewish adjustments to life in modern America.

Thanksgiving Holidays: Nov. 23-27

Dec. 1 African American Religion & the American Dilemma

Reading: Marsden, 207-215; 230-236; M. L. King, Jr., "Letter From Birmingham Jail," Gaustad II, 498-501 ("Black Manifesto")

Question: How would you compare Martin Luther King's response to civil rights to that of the "Black Manifesto?"

Video: "Eyes on the Prize" (excerpts, Montgomery to Birmingham movements.)

3 Waking Up to Pluralism: Religion Since the Sixties

Reading: Marsden, 237-257; Gaustad II, 85-91 (World Parliament of Religions); 502-507 ("A Catholic President"); 525-537 (Intro., "The Way of Zen," Jonestown); Richard Wentz, "Traditions Ancient, Asian, and Arabesque," in Religion in the New World, pp. 329-350.

Question: What factors led to increased religious pluralism and/or increased perception of it in the post World-War II period?

Dec. 8 Fragmentation and Conservative Resurgence

Video: "God and Politics: 'On Earth As It is in Heaven' ("Christian Reconstructionism")

Reading: Marsden, 257-272; Gaustad II, 537-544 (Margot Adler, D. E. Harrell, "Electronic Fundamentalism"); 566-572 (Engle v. Vitale); Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Radical Turn in Theology and Ethics: Why It Occurred in the 1960s," in John Mulder/John Wilson, Religion in American History, pp. 445-454.

Question: How is this more recent conservative resurgence similar and different from conservative response to modernity in the early 20th century?

10 Religion in America: Outlook & Prospects

SCRAPBOOK/ESSAY DUE

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

1. The grading scale for this course will be as follows: A=100-90, B= 89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60, F=59 and below. This scale will be in effect for all assignments as well as the final grade.

2. All assignments will be evaluated in terms of spelling, grammar, and writing style, as well as content. Spelling and grammatical errors will be looked upon with extreme disfavor and will be penalized at a rate of one point per error. [NO KIDDING!] Outside assignments are due at class time on the above designated dates. Assignments turned in later than class time on the due date will be penalized 5 points. Beyond this, lateness will be penalized 10 points per day.
3. Make-up Work. Make-up examinations are strongly discouraged although they will be allowed in extreme instances. Requests for make-up exams should be negotiated in advance of the scheduled exam. In absolutely no instance will a student be granted more than one make-up exam during a semester.
4. Extra Credit Work. Additional projects by individual students will NOT be allowed. If students work conscientiously on the assignments listed in the syllabus, she or he will have no need for extra work. Occasional exceptions to this policy will be allowed for certain campus or community events that the entire class may participate.
5. PLAGIARISM is defined as "submitting as one's own work a paper which is in any part taken from another person's writing without proper acknowledgment." This is the most serious offense possible in the academic community. Guilty students will receive an "F" for the course and will be reported to the dean.
6. Attendance and Lateness Inattention to punctual attendance will affect your class participation, not to mention the professor's mood. The roll will be taken periodically and no student who misses more than 10 class periods will pass the course.
7. My office number is 309 Frith Hall and my office phone number is 791-5770. My door, figuratively at least, is always open to you for conversations about the course and other matters. My door is literally open to you by appointment or during the following office hours:

MWF: 10:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

T-Th: 11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.