

**Young Scholars Syllabus Project**  
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**Background Information:**

The syllabus found at the end of this document I will use for my Religion in the United States course in the Department of Religion at Trinity University. I have taught this introductory course four of my six semesters at Trinity for a total of nine sections. Each class has an average of thirty students with around five students who are religion majors as the overwhelming majority of students take the course to fulfill general education requirements. That written, a majority of the students self identify themselves as being actively religious with the majority affiliated with mainline protestant groups (13% Methodist, 10% Presbyterian, 7% Baptist) and the Roman Catholic Church (22%).

Trinity is a relatively small (2, 490 students) competitive private liberal arts school (1290 SAT average) with a predominantly white (less than twenty percent non white) middle/upper class population (some sixty percent of students need no financial to pay the \$30,000/year costs) from Texas (some seventy percent). Because of the presence of a Business school and Music major, Trinity students need 124 hours to graduate which means the average student is taking five courses a semester.

At Trinity, the Department of Religion would best characterized as a "service" department. That is, almost all of our courses are part of the common curriculum which is a list of course options divided into thematic areas that students are required to complete in order to graduate Trinity with a broad based liberal arts education. In addition, Trinity has a required First Year Seminar which all first year students must take. These small seminar classes are meant to serve as a means for students to acclimate themselves to the rigors of college life. The Department of Religion offers the most First Year Seminars on campus. (These seminars are not necessarily on Religion as there is leeway in designing these courses. I have taught a course on American Identity through Novel and Film)

There are pros and cons to this setup in which we are a service department. On the pro side we are relatively large department with seven full time members (Two "Asians ": one Chinese Popular Religion and one Hindu specialist-who is now branching into religion and science; one Islamist, one Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, one Ethics, one Philosophy/Theologian--she specializes on Christian theological responses to the Holocaust and offers courses on Gender and Religion and Contemporary Religion Thought, and myself with the title of "Borderlands Religion" and the requirement of teaching the Christian Tradition course. There is also a part time faculty member that teaches the New Testament and Letters of Paul. While we are a large department because of the demands of the common curriculum we cannot fully meet the demands of our majors, whose number has increased significantly over the last three years. Part of the problem is that in most of our classes, with the exception of a few select upper division courses, the overwhelming majority of our students are taking our courses to fulfill common curriculum requirements (we are often considered the lesser of evils) and majors can get squeezed out.. In addition, it also means that in our introductory courses we have a significant number of juniors and seniors, especially engineering and pre-med students, who are finally

getting around to finishing off the common curriculum. This can be problematic given our class sizes which are capped at thirty students for lower division courses and twenty students at the upper division (with some courses at ten and fifteen). By the same token, as a department we often cull our majors from those who are taking the courses to fulfill the common curriculum. In addition, since students need so many credit hours we get a fair number of interesting double majors. Among my advisees I have religion majors doubling with Physics, Biochemistry, Biology, Political Science, Psychology, and History. Only a small percentage of our majors, then, come to Trinity thinking they will major in Religion. Most of the students who do plan on majoring in Religion upon entering Trinity tend to drop out once they realize that are courses are within a liberal arts religious studies framework.

The Religion in the United States course at Trinity University, then, is an introductory common curriculum course with some thirty students of which at most five are declared or future majors. Generally the mix of students is about fifty percent upper class and fifty percent first and second year students. As the course has evolved over the last three years, I have addressed these parameters as best possible. In addition, the course serves as a gateway for courses that I offer on the Civil Rights Movement and on U.S. Latino Religious Practices.

### **Highlights of Changes over the Last Three Years: A Brief Summary**

Since first teaching this course in Fall 2002, I have made many changes to the Religion and United States Course. The more significant changes are:

1) A change in framework from a historical narrative to one that is increasingly thematic. This shift occurred for two fundamental reasons. First, I found it frustrating and basically impossible to fit both the colonial and national periods into one semester. In my first semester I barely got Pentecostalism and found myself rushing through the twentieth century in about a week. As one trained as a historian, albeit my PhD is in Latin American History, I resisted moving away from a traditional historical narrative, but in the end it was necessary in order to have any depth and substantive examination of major themes. Second, I simply lost students, especially the common curriculum students, in my first semester by spending too much time in the colonial and nineteenth centuries. Students consistently wanted to know more about religion in the contemporary period. Hence, I shifted to a historical/thematic framework in which I would link, for example, the utopian impulses that come out of the 2nd Great Awakening with utopian cults of the mid to late 20th century. Another example is that I frame an examination of Native and African American religious experiences through the lens of the civil rights movement. In Fall 2005, I will also link 19th century conceptions and practices regarding medicine and religion with 20th century conceptions. While I still have misgivings, I find this approach the most fruitful.

2) A change in the meaning of Diversity. In my first year of teaching this course, I focused on issues of diversity a la Diane Eck and through lens of race and ethnicity. I had been teaching issues of race and ethnicity in history departments for a number of years and I was familiar with that literature. For a variety of reasons I shifted away from that initial concentration to one that focuses on the diversity of American born religions with a particular focus on varieties found within Christianity and its multicultural hues. In part the reasons for this change

lay in that it was easier to get students to think about diversity and understand the complexity of the religion in the U.S. if they could learn about the nuances in their own traditions. But the main reason for the shift was that I wanted students to leave the course understanding asymmetries of power; to understand that in the end while it is interesting to learn about Native American religious experiences and American Buddhist communities (which I do cover in the course), one must always be aware of how the Anglo Protestant religious model dominates the discourse.

3) Changes in Reading Assignments: I have made a number of changes in my required readings. My first rendition of this course required Peter Williams' America's Religions (often referred to as the "orange book"), David Hackett's reader Religion and American Culture, Malcolm X, Death Comes to the Archbishop, and a Scarlet Letter. I chose these books for a variety of reasons with a primary one involving my teaching strategy to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach. Secondly, I wanted students to read literature from a different angle. In terms of a central textbook, I wrestled with that one. Prior to teaching this course I never used a general textbook, but because of the breadth of the topic I decided to use a survey text. I chose Williams both for its comprehensive nature and historical narrative, and, frankly, for its price. While I liked the Hackett reader student response was mixed and I decided to eventually drop that reader and replace it with Colleen McDannell's Religions of the United States in Practice Vol 2. I chose this reader over Hackett because I wanted students to engage in the promise and in the limitations of reading primary source materials. I also wanted a reader that would force me into the contemporary period faster and the second volume does this. Finally, and most importantly, my scholarship and interest is in lived religious experiences and this reader allows me to explore this with my students. Of my initial three literary works only Malcolm X still survives. I think Malcolm X is a great book to use in class because it works on so many levels ranging from conversion themes to religion and social movements to religious movements on the margins of U.S. society, which is a common theme in my course. In addition, there is a wealth of internet and video source material (*This Far by Faith* and *Eyes on the Prize*) to broaden student understanding of Malcolm X. I replaced Death Comes to the Archbishop with Days of Obligation for about three semesters before dropping Days of Obligation. I dropped Death Comes to the Archbishop because students were more interested in talking about the funky New Mexican landscape than in the complexities of Catholic practice. I eventually dropped Days of Obligation because the reading did not inform much of my own discussion on Latino religiosity. I kept the book for several semester despite the lack of symmetry because it is so well written and because a distinct minority of students were completely moved by the book and commented it was the best book they ever read (the majority simply did not "get the book" ). In the Fall 2002, I will use instead Ella Cara Deloria's Waterlily at the suggestion of fellow Young Scholar Anne Willis. I think it will work better with the way I teach the Native American thematic unit. The final initial book I assigned Scarlet Letter was a disaster as most students merely remember the book as a form of torture from their High School English classes. I replaced that book with something completely different: The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down which is an anthropological study of the Hmong community in Modesto California. This captivating study does a good job demonstrating the porous and conflicting boundaries between religion and medicine which is an area of interest to my students as many are pre-meds. As with the other readings it allows students, in a provocative way, to explore the impact of religion on the daily lives of Americans.

4)Changes in Pedagogy: I suppose the biggest changes over the last several years involve technology. Initially, I used absolutely no technology and then like a kid in a candy store I used too much technology. The principal problem with my use of technology was that I would place lecture outlines which were word documents with a number of embedded web links on the projection screen and then lecture at a pace only a hyped speed freak New Yorker could appreciate (which I am). At present, I lecture off these same notes, which students can access on blackboard at their leisure, but only project the outline on limited basis in class in order to get at the links. It is those web links, and I use hundreds of them, that has become another text for my students. Almost all of my students use blackboard and use the links embedded in my outlines to explore issues on their own. In terms of classroom management I still use a variety of discussion formats with the most used method the simple splitting of the class into groups of five and six to discuss particular issues or develop a particular argument and tying everything together a la Oprah style with the class as a whole.

### **Exams and Assignments:**

In general I have become a fanatic about balance so 50% of the work is done in class in blue book exams and 50% is written work done outside of class. I also try to diversify the assignments with both academic and experiential projects, not that these are mutually exclusive assignments.

On the experiential side there are the family history and site visit projects. I assign early in the semester a family history project for four primary reasons. First, I want students to better understand their own perspectives and biases and in turn, I hope, this new understanding makes them more perceptive scholars. Second, students often do not appreciate the diversity within their own experiences until they dig a bit and that helps them understand the diversity discussed in class. Third, I can reference back to this project when we are examining the limits and promise of using primary documents. Fourth, it gives me the opportunity to learn about my students. In general students enjoy this assignments and while I still would like more analytical content, the project serves its function.

Another successful experiential project is the site visit which requires students to attend a religious service other than their own. In addition, students must investigate that religious group via the web before visiting and must also answer questions regarding social and political issues of their selected group. Here I am simply taking advantage of the fact that Trinity is the middle of one of the most religiously diverse cities in the country. Over time, the Site visit has been modified on several occasions in order to illicit a more substantive discussion from the project. I added a research component in which I ask students to answer specific question regarding the group they are visiting. I spend one class having students discuss their findings so that we can see commonalities and differences across and within religious groups. I am still have trouble getting some students to write interesting analytical narrative accounts of their visit, but for the moment I am not too worried about this as the project serves its purpose of getting students exposed to differing religious experiences.

In terms of content assignments students have two in class exams and two short essay assignments. My in class exams are standard identification and essay exams. The critical essay

questions have changed over the years from standard book review assignments to more critical thinking essays. I have included the questions I used in the past below.

### **Family History Assignment**

The family history assignment consists of you investigating the religious affiliations (or lack thereof) of your family going back to at least your grandparents. You should include as many aunts/uncles/cousins as possible. There are two parts to this assignment. First, present your findings either by drawing a diagram or simply listing family members and their affiliation(s). Second, write a short reflective essay on your findings. How does your family history inform one about you. Some questions to consider asking family members: Why did/did not family members join a particular religious group? For how long have they been members? What is the nature of their participation? Have they ever gone to a different group? Some questions to consider when writing your reflective essay. Was there a general pattern? Were there any surprises? Can you draw any conclusions about the role of religion in your family? Why do you think the religious history of your family is the way it is? What impact, if any, does your religious family history have on your own religious worldview?

Your essay should be two to three pages, double spaced, 10-12ft, one inch margins. You may write more if you wish. This project is more for your benefit and it may be an essay you wish to look back on in your "later" years.

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**Site Visit Guidelines:** (liberally borrowed from Professor Annie Moore of San Diego State University,)

### **Religion in the United States: Web Site Assignment**

**You are required to examine and investigate a religious group other than your own. Keeping in mind your own comfort zones, I strongly encourage that you attend a group that is well outside your religious experience. It is simply easier to write a narrative when the differences are most marked. This project consists of three components. The first is to investigate the group you are studying via the internet. You should look for websites that give you both official and unofficial information regarding your group. You will be required to write a brief analysis on which site you thought was the best. This research should help you better understand the group you will visit. Using information you garner from the web site, the second component requires that you determine specific positions/practices of you group. You can get answers to these questions via official church web sites. In writing out your answers you can "cut and paste" from the websites, but be sure to reference the site either at the bottom of the page or right after the answer. If you have trouble getting the answers than contact the group itself here in San Antonio. The third and final component is to write a short 3-4 page narrative account of your visit. (You may write more if you so wish). Use the guidelines and questions in the McGuire handout to help guide you. By no means do you have to answer all these questions, but by the time someone is done reading your essay they should know the basic elements of the religious service and what you thought about the experience. The better essays will interweave these elements of narrative description and response.**

**Be sure to contact the group before visiting to make sure you can visit and to ascertain if there are any requirements in regards to dress code, when you may enter, etc. You should use the form below. Warning: going to a service on Trinity campus is not acceptable and will result in 0 point grade.**

### **Web Site Evaluation Guide**

The following checklist should serve as a guide for you to evaluate a web site. You may want to duplicate it for note-taking purposes.

**Web site name :**

**URL :**

**Scope and Purpose :** What is the web site about?

**Audience :** For whom is it written?

**Authority :** Who wrote the article or developed the site?

**Accuracy :** Well-written? Spelling or grammar errors?

**Objectivity :** Facts, opinions, propaganda? Point of view? Bias?

**Currency :** How current is the information provided? Updated recently?

**Accessibility :** Easy to use? User restrictions? Reliability? Links work?

**Overall :** Does this site meet my needs?

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Finding and Evaluating Sources**

Find three sites on the religion you are studying for San Antonio Field project. Make sure these are sites that you can actually use in your research, not just the first three that pop into view.

Complete the spaces below:

**A. Give the URLs for the three sites found:** (Please write legibly so I can follow your trail!)

1)

2)

3)

**B. What is the top site in your opinion?** (You can just mark it above with a circle or an X.)

**C.** In the space below explain why this is the top site. Look at the list of criteria and be able to say why this site is better than the others.







### Report on Site Visit:

Make sure you call ahead to find out worship service times, appropriate attire, or any other information that might be helpful. People will be friendly, but you don't want to walk into a service too late (or too early). **Remember attending a service at Trinity University Chapel is not acceptable! You will get a zero.**

Your report should consist of the following:

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the church you visited \_\_\_\_\_

Address of church \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date you visited \_\_\_\_\_

After you write this information, which I need for my records, please write a 3-4 page narrative account of your experience (If you wish to write more you are welcome to). Describe what you observed, what happened during the service, expectations, surprises, or anything else that tells me what the experience was like. Where was the congregation? Who is in the congregation? Young or old, families or singles? How were people dressed? What is the service like? (formal, informal, lots of music, prayerful, etc.) Does a bulletin direct you to hymns and readings, or does everyone seem to know the order of worship? What was the nature of the interaction amongst the participants? Your essay should also deal directly with the information you learned from your web research. What aspects of the service reinforced what you learned? What, if anything, seem to contradict the information presented on the web sites? How did your visit nuance your understanding of the religion you chose to investigate?

The assignment should be typed, double-spaced, 10-12-point type preferably. Feel free to go over the limit if you feel inspired.

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### Take Home Essay Assignment #1

Focusing primarily on your reading of *Autobiography of Malcolm X* but also incorporating other on readings, lectures, and videos you must answer one of the questions below in a 3 to 5 page essay (double spaced, 10-12ft). Your essay should present a critical analysis that is well documented. Please note that all references and quotes must be cited. You may use any of the number of accepted citation methods (Chicago or MLA ), just remain consistent. (If you are unfamiliar with either of these systems consult any standard grammar book or see me in my office). Late papers will be dropped a half a grade for each day. It will be your responsibility to

make sure you get the essay to me in class or before. (Given the size of the class, I cannot accept email papers).

1) In a critical, well documented, analytical essay detail the most significant factors that influenced Malcolm Little to become Malcolm X and then subsequently to become El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. Your essay should include a discussion on how these changes in religious beliefs and affiliations impacted Malcolm's ministry and social agenda.

2) In an argumentative, well documented, essay discuss whether you think the Nation of Islam from its inception in 1931 and through the 1960s should be considered primarily a religious movement or primarily a socio-political movement.

3) Unlike other American religious groups such as the Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, and the Jehovah Witnesses, the Nation of Islam has not grown significantly in recent years. In a critical, well documented, essay discuss why you think the Nation of Islam is no longer as successful in recruiting members as in the 1950s and early 1960s. Your essay should include a discussion as to the reasons behind the initial success of the Nation of Islam.

## **Take Home Essay Assignment #2**

Based on your reading of The Spirit Catches You, lectures, and other course readings answer one of the questions below in a 3 to 4 page essay (double spaced, 10-12ft). Please note that all references and quotes must be cited. You may use any of the number of accepted citation methods (Chicago or MLA ), just remain consistent. (If you are unfamiliar with either of these systems consult any standard grammar book or see me in my office). Late papers will be dropped a half a grade for each day. It will be your responsibility to make sure you get the essay to me in class.

1) In The Spirit Catches You, Bill Selvidge argues that the "child's welfare is more important than the parent's belief." (Fadiman, 277). In a critical argumentative essay agree or disagree with Selvidge's position. Your essay must include case examples from The Spirit Catches You, and should incorporate an example from at least one of the following sources: "Navajo Healing", "The Way of the Shaman", "Prayer Power", Church of Christ, Scientists, and Latino Pentecostals ( or any other groups discussed during the course).

2) After years of justifying your decision to become a Religion Major to friends and family you graduate Trinity University and go searching for a job. In short order you are hired "community relations" consultant at a major research hospital just outside Modesto, California for over \$100,000 a year. You have been hired, in part, to train the medical staff to better understand the complex relationship between religion and medicine. Focusing primarily on the large Hmong population but also including other groups, write an essay that will inform Hospital policy on how religious beliefs and practices influence people's perception of illness and healing. Your essay should provide some preliminary ideas as to how the hospital might best address the cultural gaps between standard modern medicine and the religious beliefs and practices of the

groups you discuss. Your essay must include case examples from The Spirit Catches You, and should incorporate an example from at least one of the following sources: "Navajo Healing", "The Way of the Shaman", "Prayer Power", Church of Christ, Scientists, and Latino Pentecostals ( or any other groups discussed during the course).

## Religion in the United States

(Syllabus/Lecture Notes may also be consulted on Blackboard)

Religion 1360, Section 1  
Classroom: Chapman 110  
Meeting Time: 11:20-12:35  
Fall 2005

Professor Luis E. Murillo  
Office: Chapman 250E (Tel: 999-8105)  
Email: LMurillo@trinity.edu  
Office Hrs: T, Th, 1-3pm. For other times,  
please feel free to set up an appointment.

### Course Description

A defining and relatively unique characteristic of the United States of America is the multiplicity of religious groups and beliefs that have flourished within its boundaries. This introductory course examines both the diversity of traditions and the diversity within traditions of numerous religious groups, including Native American, Catholic, Jewish, Protestant, Buddhist, Muslim, Mormon, and more. While lectures will cover the historical background of these groups from 1500 CE and on, we will concentrate on the last one hundred years of the American experience. An objective of this course is to familiarize ourselves with these traditions and the central beliefs of these traditions. That said, the primary goal of this course is to begin to critically analyze the impact of these traditions upon American culture in general, and, when possible, upon San Antonio. In order to best understand the impact of religion upon the American experience, this course concerns itself more with the practice of religion than the beliefs/theology of a particular religious tradition. In addition, the course is organized both thematically and historically around a series of case studies. We will focus on particular themes within a historical framework within each thematic subset.

### Course Required Texts

- 1)Deloria, Ella Cara. *Waterlily*.
- 2)Fadiman, Anne. *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*.
- 3)McDannell, Colleen. *Religions of the United States in Practice*.
- 4)Williams, Peter. *America's Religions*.
- 5)X, Malcolm. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*.

Your required texts are listed above. The texts assigned will give you an opportunity to critically think about the impact of religion from a variety of perspectives. Peter Williams' *America's Religions* serves as the central textbook and should be used also as a reference text. The readings assigned from these texts will give you background and context to the lectures. If you have questions about groups discussed in class or want basic information on the many groups not discussed in class the Williams text is an excellent starting point. Your reader is Colleen McDannell's *Religions of the United States in Practice* is a collection of 32 short primary documents, each introduced by a scholar, which afford one a variety of insights. This collection of essays will also allow us to begin to critically analyze how primary texts are used and what we can and cannot learn from them. In addition, you will read three books that offer powerful examples of how religion permeates and influences individuals and the society they live in. First, you will read a powerful novel written by the Native American ethnologist Ella Cara Deloria which offers insights into early nineteenth Dakota culture from a feminine perspective.

Anne Fadiman's *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* is an anthropological look at widely differing conceptions of religion and of medicine between the "modern" U.S. medical community and the "traditional" Hmong community in California. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* vividly describes how social conditions can shape religious orientation and how religious orientation in turn can shape social agendas. These readings are "sofa" readings. That is, you should be engaged reading these books, taking a few notes now and then as you read along, but not preoccupied with facts and data.

## **Course Requirements: Assignments and Grades**

- 25% Mid-Term Examination
- 25% Final Examination
- 30% Two-three to four page critical essays on readings
- 10% Religion in San Antonio Field and Web Project
- 5% Family Religious History
- 5% Class Participation

The Midterm and Final Examination will be in class blue book exams with essay and definition/identification questions. During the semester you will be given three essay question assignments of which you must write on two. You will be given a choice of questions one week before the essay is due. For the Religion in San Antonio and Web Project you will be required to research a local religious group based in San Antonio, one that is other than your own, via the Internet, attend a service of that group, and produce a final project on your selected group. In addition, that final project will include answering a series of question and a short narrative introspective essay of your experience. The Family Religious History is a straightforward assignment in which you trace your family's religious affiliations for at least three generation back and write a short one to two page reflective essay. There will be handouts with more details on all assignments. As with all documents related to this class, these handouts may also be consulted on Blackboard

## **Honor Code**

All students are covered by a policy that prohibits dishonesty in academic work. The Academic Integrity Policy (AIP) covers all students who entered Trinity before the fall of 2004. The Academic Honor Code covers all those who entered the fall of 2004 or later.

The Integrity Policy and the Code share many features: each asserts that the academic community is based on honesty and trust; each contains the same violations; each provides for a procedure to determine if a violation has occurred and what the punishment will be; each provides for an appeal process.

The main difference is that the faculty implements the AIP while the Code is implemented by the Academic Honor Council. Under the Integrity Policy, the faculty member determines whether a violation has occurred as well as the punishment for the violation (if any) within certain guidelines. Under the Code, a faculty member will (or a student may) report an

alleged violation to the Academic Honor Council. It is the task of the Council to investigate, adjudicate, and assign a punishment within certain guidelines if a violation has been verified. Students who are under the Honor Code are required to pledge all written work that is submitted for a grade: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work" and their signature. The pledge may be abbreviated "pledged" with a signature.

### **Things You Should Know**

While this is primarily a lecture class, there will be significant time set aside for discussions. Hence, attendance is essential. Your active and engaged participation is critical to the success of the course. You must be considerate and respectful of others in the class as we discuss a number of controversial topics. You should be aware that I may ask you direct questions in class based on the readings assigned for that week. Thus, it behooves you to come prepared. If you do not know the answers, do not fret--at least at first. We all have our bad weeks, as will you soon see in my lectures from week to week, and I expect for one or two classes you will not be fully prepared. That said, if you consistently come to class unprepared it will impact your grade. Keep in mind that five percent of your grade is tied to participation. That may not seem like much, but I take participation seriously and if you miss a significant number of classes, more than two without explanation, and/or come to class and never participate you will get a zero. To put that in perspective one can easily go from a "A" to a "B". For those of you who are uncomfortable speaking in large groups or even in the smaller groups that we will break up into please see me early on in the semester so that we can work on comfortable compromise.

You should also know that I am available for questions, comments and discussions in my office. Please take advantage of office hours to answer any questions we do not get to in class. If office hours are not convenient then make an appointment with me as I am on campus most days. In general, it is better to make an appointment rather than just show up as I have tendency to wander around the hallways. My office is also open to you if you have other questions or concerns that do not directly relate to the class. I have a rather broad background in the humanities and business so I may be able to help you in other areas

You are forewarned that I expect all assignments to be completed and handed in on or before the required dates. Late papers and assignments will be docked a half a grade a day--including weekends. If you are having problems or there are extenuating circumstances it is your responsibility to contact me before the assignment is due.

You should also be aware that I tend to lecture at a rather rapid pace, a problem with its roots in my New York upbringing. You should not hesitate to interrupt me, politely of course, if I am going too fast. My New York upbringing also means that my lectures may be laced, at times, with some sarcasm. To be sure that there are no misunderstandings, do not hesitate to question me at those times you may be confused by my presentation. Also, I use humor a lot in class and have what many consider a "laid back" teaching style--influenced no doubt from my twelve years of living in San Diego, California. I believe a relaxed atmosphere is most conducive to learning and especially important in opening channels of communication on the many controversial issues we will discuss. That said, I take my work, and more importantly, your work most seriously. I expect the highest quality of critical analysis from you.

Finally, and most important, this should be a challenging and enjoyable academic endeavor, if you become overwhelmed or become morose concerning the course please do not hesitate to see me.

## **Course Outline**

Please note that reading assignments, exams, and other written assignments dates are subject to change. Most often those changes will be due to current events that directly impact the course and demand attention. I will let you know by email at least a week in advance of any changes that impact graded work. For most weeks the lecture outlines and relevant web links will be available on Blackboard. In addition, video and computer assignments may also be added to the schedule.

### **Week One: Orientation, Introduction**

08/25: Overview of Religion in America. Terms and Categories, Defining Religion and Talking Hegemony  
*Movie Clip: "Bruce Almighty"*

### **Week Two: Colonial Foundations and Revolution: The Making of a Protestant America from Puritans to Methodists. A Providential People? Declaration of Independence a Religious Document?**

08/30: *America's Religions (AR)*, pp. 1-10, 76-102, 135-148 skim read  
09/01: *AR*, pp. 175-199 skim read. Begin *Waterlily*  
*Movie Clip: "Last of the Mohicans"*

### **Week Three: Freedom of Religion, Separation of Church/State, then and now. A comparative examination with Latin America. The Native American Exception**

09/06: *AR*, pp.11-23, Continue *Waterlily*  
09/08: Finish *Waterlily: Discussion of Waterlily*  
**Family History Due**  
*Movie Clip: "Last of the Mohicans" continued*

### **Week Four: Native Americans Persistence and Change from the Dawes Act to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act**

09/13: McDannell Reader 16: "An Apache Initiation Feast"  
09/15: McDannell Reader 19: "Navajo Healing Ceremonies"  
*Documentary: Spirit of Crazy Horse*  
**Critical Essay Option #1 Due**

### **Week Five: Protestant America Diversified from Within. Awakenings and Utopian Impulses: From Shakers to Mormons**

09/20: *AR*, pp. 181-190, 220-243, 389-397.  
09/22: McDannell Reader 6: "Mormon Fast and Testimony Meeting; McDannell Reader 23 Later Day Saint Word of Wisdom"  
*Movie Clip: "Witness"*



**Week Six: Utopian Impulses of the 20th Century: Positive Thinking and Jonestown**

09/27: AR, pp. 487-503. McDannell Reader 20: "The Power of Positive Thinking; McDannell Reader 21: Shamanism in the New Age", Begin *Malcolm X*

09/29: *Continue Reading Malcolm X*

**Week Seven: An American Dream or Nightmare? African American experiences: Black Churches and the Nation of Islam**

10/04: AR, pp.23-28, 190-199, 216-220, 440-448, *Continue Malcolm X*

10/06: McDannell Reader 1: "Lucy Smith and Pentecostal Worship in Chicago, McDannell Reader 8 "Freedom Songs and the Civil Rights Movement, *Finish Malcolm X*

*Documentary Clips from "Eyes on the Prize" and "This Far by Faith"*

**Critical Essay Option #2 Due**

**Week Eight: Midterm**

10/11: McDannell Reader 25: "Martin Luther King Jr., and the Making of an American Myth". Catch Up and Midterm Review

10/13: **Midterm**

**Week Nine: Protestant America Challenged: Catholic Experiences**

10/18: AR, 55-76 skim, 292-302, 414-431.

10/20: McDannell Reader 4: "Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, McDannell Reader 14: "Reconciling Patriotism and Catholic Devotion  
*Film Clip: "On the Waterfront"*

**Week Ten: Protestant America Challenged: Jewish Experiences. Contemporary Religion: Practice and Politics in San Antonio**

10/25: AR, 29-47 skim, 308-314, 403-414. McDannell Reader 5: "The Homemade Passover Haggadah, McDannell Reader 22: "Jewish Mourning Practices.

10/27: Discussion of Site Analysis: Political and Religious Issues

*Begin: The Spirit Catches You*

**Site Analysis Due**

*Film Clip: The Chosen One*

**Week Eleven: Protestant America Challenged from Within: Pentecostalism**

11/01: AR, pp.269-282, McDannell Reader 1: "Lucy Smith and Pentecostal Worship in Chicago; McDannell Reader 18: "Tongues and Healing at the Azusa Street Revival

11/03: *Continue The Spirit Catches You*

*Film Clip: "The Apostle"*

**Week Twelve: The "Other" Racial Group: Asian American Religious Experiences; and The "American Ethnic Group" U.S. Latino Traditions: Change and**

### **Persistence**

- 11/08: **AR**, pp.457-477, McDannell Reading 10: "Buddhist Chanting in Soka Gakkai International"; McDannell Reading 17: "Taking or Receiving the Buddhist Precepts"  
11/10: **AR**. 431-440. McDannell Reader 27 "Charismatic Renewal among Latino Catholics; McDannell Reader 34 "Battling Spiritism and the Need for Catholic Orthodoxy

### **Week Thirteen: Religion and Medicine: Healing Across Faiths**

- 11/15: **AR**. 328-337 McDannell Reader review readings 18-23.  
11/17: Discussion: Parental Beliefs versus a Child's Welfare  
*Finish: The Spirit Catches You*  
**Critical Essay Option #3 Due**

### **Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving**

- 11/22: No Class- Professor at AAR Meeting--Please note readings for Week 15  
11/24: **Thanksgiving Holiday**

### **Week Fifteen: Religion and "Popular Culture" From Mainline to the Fringe**

- 11/29: McDannell Reader 15 "Sex and Submission in the Spirit"; McDannell Reader 26 "Spiritual Warfare in the Fiction of Frank Peretti; McDannell Reader 24 "Early Christian Radio and Religious Nostalgia"  
12/01: McDannell Reader 12 "Teaching Morality in Race Movies; McDannell Reader 7 Hanukkah Songs of the 1950s; McDannell Reader 30 "Millions Now Living Will Never Die; McDannell Reader 33; "The Wit and Wisdom of *The Door*

### **Week Sixteen:**

- 12/06: **Catch Up and Class Review**

**Final: December 12, 2pm in Chapman 110**