

Valarie Ziegler Course Syllabus

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

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

I. Syllabus Justification

American Religious History at Rhodes College is taught in the religious studies department under the rubric of a "Bible-related course." Under the terms of a lucrative grant from an Alabama foundation, all Rhodes students are required to take 4 religion courses: 2 in Bible, 2 in "Bible-related" topics. For these reasons, American Religious History functions as a church history/Christian theology course.

For me, American Religious History is the second half of a historical theology sequence. The first course is History of Christian Thought, in which my main goal is to convince students that there are (and have always been) a variety of Christian theological expressions. In the Bible Belt, that's not a thesis that students are inclined to accept. In American Religious History, I want to continue having students read theology (I think it's a good intellectual exercise) as well as to impress upon them the significance of social location for religious ideas and practices.

Because I work with students who are predominantly affluent white Southern cultural Christians, I hope to teach them to appreciate the social/political implications of "belonging to First Church." The best way I know to do that is to push them to study significant examples from their own history--the proslavery arguments, responses to the civil rights movement (I use Memphis Second Presbyterian Church as a case study)--as well as to learn something of the history of African Americans. I also try to pick Memphis/Rhodes examples when possible (such as the article on Benjamin Palmer, after whom our administration building is named; the reading on the presbytery trial of former college president Charles Diehl, who was accused of modernist heresies; an "Eyes on the Prize" film depicting the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis; a BBC production filmed in Memphis considering the conflict between the religion of the powerful and that of the powerless; class discussions of Elvis and of local Southern Baptist minister Nancy Hastings Sehested; and the article on AIDS and Memphis).

The longer I have taught this course, the more I have devoted attention to regional issues, mainly because students try to keep those concerns at a safe emotional distance. As a result, I now spend far less time than I originally did on topics outside mainstream Protestantism. That bucks the current trend toward multiculturalism--a trend that I support--but it seems to me that historical studies ought to make people more aware of their own place in history (no matter how much they resist). By choosing readings that

present students with problems in social ethics, at the same time that they pose questions of race, class, and gender, I am doing my best to challenge students to discover and evaluate the implications of their own social locations.

One of the goals of our department is to "make the strange familiar and the familiar strange." In classes like the History of Christian Thought, where students spend much of the semester in the fourth century, my emphasis is in making "strange" historical eras and debates seem comprehensible. In American Religious History, I have decided to focus on the "familiar" in ways that will prompt students to see anew forms of Christianity that they have heretofore taken for granted.

Other points: the course actually covers more topics than the reading list indicates (for example, nineteenth-century utopian movements). My classes never have more than 20 students, and I concentrate on discussion and analysis more than lecture, though I do provide students with significant information not covered by their reading. I also spend a great deal of time trying to teach them how to write. I used to take students on field trips, but through the years my zeal has flagged.

Finally: the issue of the text book. I've decided that students can read only so much material, and I would rather have them concentrate on primary sources and a variety of secondary articles rather than one secondary text. The Mathisen book is a nice collection of primary sources, but it is expensive. I am going to try, for next time, to xerox as much as I can from ancient texts, and put together a Kinko's packet that will bypass most copyright difficulties.

II. Course Syllabus

RELIGION 251. AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY
Fall, 1992
Rhodes College
Professor Valarie Ziegler

Welcome to American Religious History. Though no semester course could possibly cover all or even most of the relevant issues, this course will introduce you to a variety of Christian expressions that have found life in America. We will begin with a study of Native American and European antecedents and proceed to an analysis of selected developments in American Christianity from the colonial period to the present. Two of the themes that will guide our study will be theoretical. The first is a theological question: what did the various groups and individuals believe? We will also ask a sociological question: in what ways did contact with the larger culture affect beliefs, practices, and self-identities? To what extent did religionists seek to shape their culture, and to what extent were they reflections of it? In addition to those theoretical questions, we will give also give attention to two enduring issues of debate: the relationship of men and women and the relationship of European Americans and African Americans within various Christian groups.

REQUIREMENTS

Your first requirement is to do the readings and to bring a copy of the assignment with you to class. This course is not a lecture class, but a seminar affording you the opportunity to interact with one another, as well as with historic texts. We will concentrate on developing reading skills that enhance your ability to delineate and critique theological and historical arguments. Class participation will count ten per cent of your final grade.

In addition to your assigned readings, I urge you as well to attend carefully to one of the survey texts on reserve in the library. These books will give you a clearer sense of the larger cultural context underlying our assigned readings. Particularly since a number of our readings deal with issues of regional and local

interest to Memphis, it is important for you to consult one of the survey texts. You may choose among: Peter Williams, *America's Religions: Traditions and Cultures*; Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*; and Winthrop Hudson and John Corrigan, *Religion in America*.

There will be a midterm and a final exam. Each will count 25% of your final grade. Both will contain an essay section and a section requiring identification of quotations from the assigned readings.

One research paper (8-10 pages) worth 40% of your final grade will also be required.

The papers may discuss any aspect of American religious history; but they must involve significant work in primary sources as well as demonstrate a mastery of the relevant secondary literature. Since the paper is a major research project, we'll do a number of checks along the way to ensure that you are making satisfactory progress:

(1) On Tuesday, September 22, you will turn in a typed paper topic. Paper topics are due at the beginning of class; late topics will be penalized two points (per day), to be deducted from the final project grade. There is no grade for the topic itself.

(2) On Tuesday, October 6, you will turn in a short typed paper that will:

(a) state the thesis of your paper

(b) give a detailed outline demonstrating how you will argue your thesis

(c) include a complete bibliography of secondary and primary sources

This paper is due at the beginning of class; late papers will be penalized two points (per day), to be deducted from the final project grade.

Note: this short paper will not be graded; its purpose is to ensure that your thesis, methodology, and bibliography are appropriate. If your short paper is not satisfactory, you may rewrite it up to two times. The first rewrite is due on October 15; the second on October 27. Late papers will be penalized two points (per day), to be deducted from the final project grade. If you are unable to present a satisfactory short paper, you will not be permitted to submit a term paper. The official period for class withdrawals ends on October 30.

(3) On Thursday, November 17, you will turn in a draft of your paper. You should keep a copy of this draft for yourself as well. The draft is due at the beginning of class; late papers will be penalized two points (per day), to be deducted from the final project grade. I will not read that draft, but after you turn it in, I will ask you to read Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*. With Strunk and White in mind, you will revise your paper.

(4) The final draft is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, December 1. Late papers will be penalized two points per day. When I grade your paper, I will evaluate it for the following:

- style: is the paper written in coherent, active-voice English? Do the sentences make sense, or are they confusing and wordy? Does the paper make proper use of paragraphs? Is the writing grammatically correct? Is the spelling correct? Strunk and White should help you with these issues.
- form: does the paper argue a thesis?
- scholarship: is the paper well researched? Does it know and cite the appropriate primary and secondary sources? Does it use proper form for the footnotes and the bibliography?

ATTENDANCE

Everyone is allowed three cuts. After that, you lose two points off your final grade for each absence. Being late for class (coming in after I close the door, but before 15 minutes has expired) counts as half an absence. Leaving early counts for half an absence. You are free to use your cuts for any reason--you don't need to ask permission. If you are on an athletic team that will be out of town during class meetings, you may need to use your cuts for those purposes. No one is entitled to extra cuts because of participation in extracurricular activities.

REQUIRED TEXTS

John M. Mulder and John F. Wilson, *Religion in American History: Interpretive Essays* (Prentice-Hall, 1978).

Randall Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory* (Oxford: 1989).

Nancy Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness* (Abingdon, 1984).

Betty A. Deberg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Fortress Press: 1990).

Levi Miller, *Ben's Wayne* (Good Books: 1989).

RECOMMENDED TEXT

Strunk and White, *Elements of Style*

COURSE OUTLINE

Thursday, August 27

Introduction to course

Tuesday, September 1

FILM: *Black Robe*

HANDOUT: Henry Warner Bowden, "Northeastern Missions, French Indians," in *American Indians and Christian Missions: Studies in Cultural Conflict* (University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 59-95.

Thursday, September 3

BALMER, "A Word About Words," ix-xii; "Prologue," pp. 3-11; and "Episcopal Indians," pp. 171-187.

HANDOUT: Carol Devens, "Separate Confrontations: Gender as a Factor in Indian Adaption to European Colonization in New France," *American Quarterly* 38, 3 (1986): 461-480.

Tuesday, September 8

MULDER/WILSON: Chapter 2 (Alan Simpson, "The Covenanted Community," pp. 17-28).

MATHISEN: John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," pp. 9-19.

HANDOUT: Lyle Koehler, "The Case of the American Jezebels: Anne Hutchinson and Female Agitation During the Years of the Antinomian Turmoil, 1636-1640," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser., 31 (1974): 55-78.

Thursday, September 10

MULDER/WILSON: 3 (Edmund S. Morgan, "The Halfway Covenant," pp. 29-44); 4 (Robert G. Pope, "The Myth of Declension," pp. 45-56).

Tuesday, September 15

MATHISEN: Jonathan Edwards, "Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival," pp. 27-36; Charles Chauncy, "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England," pp. 36-41; "The Testimony of Harvard College Against George Whitefield," pp. 42-48.

Thursday, September 17

MULDER/WILSON: 11 (Sidney E. Mead, "American Protestantism During the Revolutionary Epoch," pp. 162-180).

MATHISEN: Timothy Dwight, "Attack on Infidelity," pp. 65-77; Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," pp. 386-394.

HANDOUTS: --The Declaration of Independence

--Thomas Paine, "Christianity a Rational Religion," in Smith, Handy, and Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation* pp. 407-410.

Tuesday, September 22

HARDESTY, pp. 26-85.

BALMER: "Campaign Journal," pp. 109-137.

PAPER TOPICS DUE

Thursday, September 24

MULDER/WILSON: 17 (Vincent Harding, "Religion and Resistance Among Antebellum Negroes, 1800-1860," pp. 270-287).

HANDOUTS: --David Walker, selections from "Walker's Appeal"

--James Cone, "The Meaning of God in the Black Spirituals," in Metz and Schillebeeckz, *God as Father?* (T & T Clark, Seabury Press: 1981), pp. 57-60.

Tuesday, September 29

MIDTERM EXAM

Thursday, October 1 (1850),

HANDOUT: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Divinity School Address," in *Nature: Addresses and Lectures* pp. 115-46.

FILM: "I Don't Want to Be Remembered as a Chair"

Tuesday, October 6

HARDESTY: pp. 86-127.

BALMER: "Camp Meeting," pp. 188-207.

HANDOUT: "Seneca Falls Declaration of Rights"

SHORT PAPER DUE

Thursday, October 8

MATHISEN: James H. Hammond, "Letters on Slavery," pp. 98-101; James H. Thornwell, "Address on Slavery," pp. 102-108; Charles G. Finney, "The Church Must Take the Right Ground," pp. 109-118.

HANDOUTS: --Daniel Payne, "Protestation of American Slavery," *Journal of Negro History* 52 (1967): 59-64.

--Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July" in Alice Moore Dunbar, ed., *Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence*, 1914, pp. 41-48.

Tuesday, October 13

MATHISEN, --Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address," pp. 168-170.

HANDOUTS: --Richard T. Hughes, "A Civic Theology for the South: The Case of Benjamin Palmer," *Journal of Church and State* 25, 3 (Autumn, 1983), 447-467.

--Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood* (University of Georgia: 1980), pp. 18-36.

--Julia Ward Howe, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"

Thursday, October 15

MULDER/WILSON: 19 (Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., "A Critical Period in American Religion, 1875-1900," pp. 302-317); 20 (Herbert G. Gutman, "Protestantism and the American Labor Movement: The Christian Spirit in the Gilded Age," pp. 316-341).

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BALMER: "Mississippi Missions," pp. 138-154.

REWRITE (IF NECESSARY) OF SHORT-PAPER DUE

FALL BREAK

Thursday, October 22

MATHISEN: Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth," pp. 207-215; William Lawrence, "The Relation of Wealth to Morals," pp. 216-222; Russell H. Conwell, "Acres of Diamonds," pp. 222-226; Washington Gladden, "Applied Christianity," pp. 227-238; Richard T. Ely, "Social Aspects of Christianity," pp. 239-250.

Tuesday, October 27

MULDER/WILSON: 25 (Ernest R. Sandeen, "The Origins of Fundamentalism," pp. 415-430) MATHISEN: Charles Hodge, "What is Darwinism?" pp. 183-193; Henry Ward Beecher, "Evolution and Religion," pp. 200-206.

SECOND SHORT PAPER REWRITE (IF NECESSARY) DUE

Thursday, October 29

HANDOUT: Horace Bushnell, selections from "A Preliminary Dissertation on Language, "God In Christ (Brown and Parsons, 1849)

Tuesday, November 3

BALMER: "Dallas Orthodoxy," pp. 31-47; "Bible Bazaar," 155-170.

HANDOUT: "The Official Report of the Hearing of the Charges Preferred by Eleven Presbyterian Ministers Against President Charles E. Diehl." (Memphis, 1931)

Thursday, November 5

Betty Deberg, *Ungodly Women: Women and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism*

Tuesday, November 10

MULDER/WILSON: 18 (E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Church: A Nation Within a Nation," pp. 288-301)

HANDOUTS: --James H. Cone, "Black Theology in American Religion," *Theology Today* XL III, 1 (April, 1986): 6-21

--Reinhold Niebuhr, "Moralists and Politics"

Thursday, November 12

HANDOUTS: --Martin Luther King, Jr., selections from "Letter From a Birmingham Jail"

--Haywood N. Hill, "This I Believe," *Presbyterian Survey* 5, 7 (July, 1961): 8-9.

--"Selma: Parable of the Old South," *Christianity Today* IX, 12 (1965): 47-48.

--Documents from Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis

Tuesday, November 17

Levi Miller, Ben's Wayne

FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER DUE

Thursday, November 19

BALMER, "Adirondack Fundamentalism," pp. 92-108.

HANDOUTS:--"Black Power Statement, July 31, 1966," and "Black Theology Statement, April 16, 1963," in Wilmore and Cone, *Black Theology: A Documentary History, 1966-1979* (Orbis: 1979), pp. 23-30.

--"Black Theology Statement, June 13, 1969," in Milton C. Sernett, ed., *Afro American Religious History: A Documentary History* (Duke: 1985), pp. 474-76.

--Mary Daly, "Exodus Sermon," in Clark and Richardson, *Women and Religion* (Harper & Row, 1977), pp.265-271.

Tuesday, November 24

FILM: *Eyes on the Prize II* (1989): "The Promised Land" (1967-68)

Tuesday, December 1

FILM: BBC and Mass Media, *Sword and Spirit Series* (1989): "The Last Shall Be First"

FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER DUE

Thursday, December 3

HANDOUTS:-R. Stephen Powers, "AIDS and the Martyrs of Memphis: An Alternative to Fear," *Military Chaplains' Review* (Spring, 1968):127-139.

--Valarie Ziegler, "Love Me Tender: Incarnational Theology and Elvis." *Modern Churchman* 30/2 (1988): 24-27.; plus Elvis memorabilia from the tenth and fifteenth International Tribute Week anniversaries of his [presumed] death.

--Valarie Ziegler, "Obey Your Leaders: The Disenfranchisement of Women and the Laity in the Southern Baptist Convention." *The Cumberland Seminarian*. (Spring, 1989): 24-27; and other documents from the 1987 Memphis debate over the installation of Nancy Hastings Sehested at Prescott Memorial Baptist Church.

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Tuesday, December 8

Concluding reflections