**Religion in the Colonial Americas**

“Popular history, and also the history taught in schools, is influenced by this Manichean tendency, which shuns half-tints and complexities; it is prone to reduce the river of human occurrences to conflicts, and the conflicts to duels—we and they, the good guys and the bad guys respectively, because the good must prevail, else the world would be subverted.”

Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved (1989)*

REL 6498-01

Dodd 207

T 2:00-4:45

John Corrigan

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OVERVIEW: In this course we will examine encounters arising from the migration of European and African religions to the Americas from the sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century. The historical context for investigating this inquiry will be meetings between Europeans, Africans, and American indigenes. The central themes are the contestation of space, shiftings of power, slavery, race, commerce, colonialism, and empire. We will observe the ways in which encounters frequently were imbued with suspicion, fear, and violence, and how religious tropes – and particularly the demon and heretic – were deployed by actors to conceptually organize the terms of the encounter. We will note the ways in which the colonial context transformed European and African religions, how religious overseers conceived and executed missionary enterprises, the relationship between religious ventures in the Americas and political/economic interests, and the consequences of colonialism for indigenous religions.

REQUIREMENTS: Members of the seminar in turn will present 20-minute critical summaries of readings. *Presenters may not read summaries to the class.* Presenters should sketch the author’s background, concisely summarize the arguments of the book or the narrative in the source, relate those to other arguments and sources, point out strengths and weaknesses of the reading, and offer leads for critical discussion by the entire class. Most classes will have at least two readings due. In addition, a paper of a maximum of 25-pages in length will be due at the end of the term. The paper will explore in detail, through thorough investigation of sources, some aspect of colonial religion in the Americas, and ideally should be of publishable quality after revision. All members of the seminar are urged to begin conceptualizing the paper in the first month of class. Class discussion will count heavily in evaluation of performance in the class. Accordingly, seminar members should come prepared to critically discuss and debate all items on the reading list.

READING: The reading is scheduled below.

CONSULTATION: The instructor is available for discussions about the course material most weekdays, with some exceptions. Please arrange an appointment after class or preferably by email. Meetings usually can be arranged within two or three days.

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**Schedule of assignments and class meeting topics**

**8/27 Introduction: colonialism, race, trade, and demons**

**9/3 The World of the Indies**

Juan de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, ed. Jane E. Mangan, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), vol 2., Book V; Book VI, chapters i-iii; Book VII

<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/ebookviewer/ebook/ZTAwMHhuYV9fNTA4MDI2X19BTg2?sid=126b5a33-b332-4140-918f-92e227a0ec32@sdc-v-sessmgr01&vid=0&format=EB&rid=2>

And at: <https://archive.org/stream/naturalmoralhist60acosrich/naturalmoralhist60acosrich_djvu.txt>

**9/10 Mexico**

*The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, translated from the Aztec into English by Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Andersen (Santa Fe: School of American Research and University of Utah, various years)

Book 1 (“The Gods”); Book 2 (“The Ceremonies”) chapters 1-22; Book 3 (“The Origin of the Gods”). Available online at Hathi Trust and in used paperback at Amazon, etc.

Miguel Leon-Portilla, *Bernardo de Sahagún: First Anthropologist*, trans. Mauricio J. Mixco (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002)

**9/17 Peru**

*The Huarochiri Manuscript: A Testament to Ancient and Colonial Andean Religion*, trans. from the Quechua by Frank Salomon and George L. Urioste (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), 1-153

Kenneth Mills, *Idolatry and its Enemies: Colonial Andean Religion and Extirpation, 1640-1750* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997)

**9/24 Brazil**

Laura de Mello e Souza, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross: Witchcraft, Slavery, and Popular Religion in Colonial Brazil*, trans. Diane G. Whitty (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003)

### James H. Sweet, [*Recreating Africa : Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770*](http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/viewarticle/render?data=dGJyMPPp44rp2%2fdV0%2bnjisfk5Ie46bNLrq6uSLKk63nn5Kx94um%2bUK2otEewpq9Rnqm4SLewrk2exss%2b8ujfhvHX4Yzn5eyB4rOyUbWntEu2rbI%2b6tfsf7vb7D7i2Lt73%2bquTbWornmk6t9%2fu7fMPt%2fku37x66xIsKixSq%2btslGk3O2K69fyVeTr6oTy2%2faM&vid=3&sid=d75f7acc-c1b8-4846-812e-0cc6b15e32a5@sessionmgr102). (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004).

**10/1 New France**

Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America, 1632-1650* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000)

*The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: TRAVELS AND EXPLORATIONS*

*OF THE JESUIT MISSIONARIES IN NEW FRANCE 1610—1791*, vol VII.

<http://moses.creighton.edu/kripke/jesuitrelations/relations_07.html>

**10/8 New Netherland**

George L. Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland: Dutch Origins and American Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973)

### Evan Haefeli, “On First Contact and Apotheosis: Manitou and Men in North America,” *Ethnohistory* 54 (2007), 407-443

**10/22 Caribbean**

Kristin Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012)

Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)

**10/15 Competing Religious Worlds**

Richard W. Pointer, *Encounters of the Spirit: Native Americans and European Colonial Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007)

Laura M. Chmielewski, *The Spice of Popery: Converging Christianities on an Early American Frontier* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011)

**10/29 Wealth**

Mark Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010)

Katherine Carte Engel, *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)

**11/5 Race**

Sylvester Johnson, *African American Religions, 1500-2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012)

**11/12 British Protestantism**

Douglas Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017)

**11/19 Native Americans and British Protestantism**

Linford Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012)

**11/26 - no class**

**12/3 Trajectories**

Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik R. Seeman, eds.,*The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2006), Part I, “Comparing Atlantics”