

**RLST 3129/DIV 6749/REL 6749**  
**Race and Religion in America**  
**Vanderbilt University**  
**Professor Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh**

“Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.”  
-Chinua Achebe

**Course Description**

What does it mean to be “American?” Since their inception, America and American identities have been constituted through ever-evolving religious and racial imaginaries, conflicts, and lineages—forging ideological stances, symbols, and myths that rival traditional “religions.” Using a historical approach, this course explores the racial and religious imperatives encapsulated within concepts of “Americanness” and the racial and religious ideas that define the discursive, historical, and sociopolitical boundaries of American identities. In addition to examining how claims to American identities have altered the religiosity of historically-marginalized racial “Others,” we will also consider the ways racial concepts have resembled and drawn upon religious forms in their operations in America. Finally, we will discuss how peoples’ responses to concepts of race and religion challenge, nuance, and expand notions of America and the American.

**Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to:

- Explore the religious foundations of racial categories and ideas in the United States, as well as the role of racial ideas in sociopolitical definitions of religion in America.
- Introduce select methodological issues in the study of race and religion.
- Invite critical thought and questions regarding the how race functions religiously in America.
- Reflect upon the historical lineages of contemporary racial issues.

**Required Texts**

Print

Richard Alba, Albert J. Raboteau, and Josh DeWind, eds. *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*.

Patrick Allitt, *Major Problems in American Religious History*.

E-Texts

Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth A. McAlister, eds. *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*.

### **Contact Information and Office Hours**

Office hours will primarily be held on Mondays and by appointment. In order to ensure a mutually helpful meeting, please schedule an appointment with me at least **48 hours** prior to the desired appointment time. At different moments during the semester, I will hold additional office hours.

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### **A Word About Our Learning Community**

In order to accomplish the course objectives, the classroom must be a safe space for dialogue about important, and sometimes sensitive, topics. As we establish our learning community, it is imperative that we function with a communal ethic that promotes engagement from every participant and respects every tradition examined in the course. Although we will continue to add to the class covenant throughout the semester, it is helpful to keep the following 4 R's of classroom engagement in mind:

**Respect:** Respect the course by reading and coming to class prepared. Respect each religious culture by bracketing suspicion and suspending judgment. Respect your peers by listening to and engaging their ideas.

**Reflect:** Prior to coming to class, take time to reflect upon the central ideas and concerns of our interlocutors for the day. Take notes and construct questions to contribute to the learning community. During classroom discussion, reflect upon the statements and positions of your peers prior to responding. Strive to frame your comments and questions respectfully. Finally, reflect upon your individual learning needs at intervals throughout the semester. If at any point you feel that the learning space is not conducive to your needs, communicate with the instructor.

**Repeat:** When discussing sensitive topics, it is natural to respond viscerally to disagreeable statements in the readings or in class. The objective of scholarly spaces is not to banish disagreement, but rather, to create platforms for meaningful dialogue. When engaging an interlocutor, it is often helpful to first repeat his/her position to ensure that you have adequately grasped the components of the argument and to identify the seat of your disagreement prior to responding.

**Reply:** Finally, speak! Your voice is an important contribution to the learning space.

### **Course Requirements**

- 1) **Attendance and Participation** - The classroom is an interactive learning space and it is vital that you engage in class discussions and activities. Your individual contributions are essential to the overall success of the course. Therefore, attendance and participation are integral to your final grade. Given the online format of the course, attendance and

participation will be measured through completion of the reading assignments and engagement with the material via synchronous and asynchronous class discussions. If you are unable to participate in synchronous class discussions, then you will be required to offer a paragraph response to the weekly reading assignment submissions of at least four (4) classmates. Your final grade will include an assessment of your **attentiveness** in the course, demonstration of **engagement with the readings**, and **participation** in class discussions. Lateness of more than ten (10) minutes will count against your participation grade for the day.

- 2) Weekly Assignments: The purpose of the weekly assignments is to aid you with grasping the central concepts of the course and to facilitate discussion in class. It is imperative that you **complete all readings and assignments on time and come to class prepared for discussion**. Preparedness includes having a digital and/or printed copy of the assigned reading at synchronous meetings, as well as any additional assigned materials. Your responses should offer thoughtful reflection on the question and demonstrate your critical engagement with the readings. Each Thursday you will receive a weekly assignment to begin our discussion digitally. The weekly assignments are due by 9 a.m. on the Monday following the Thursday on which they are assigned. For instance, the assignment posted under Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> will be due by 9 a.m. on Monday September 7<sup>th</sup>. I will not accept late assignments, however I will drop the two lowest grades at the end of the semester. Thus, if you are experiencing difficulty completing an assignment on time, you may opt to use one of your two “drop” assignments. Your assignments will be graded based on the following:
  - a. Demonstration of Reading Knowledge: Your responses should demonstrate your knowledge of the central themes and/or main points of the prior week’s readings. For this component, you do not need to memorize dates and other minutia. However, you will need to offer evidence using events, ideas, and themes in the readings in order to successfully respond to the week’s prompt.
  - b. Clarity of Argument: Your responses should be presented clearly and concisely. For instance, for a Flipgrid response, you might choose to open with your “thesis”—or an articulation of your stance on the question—offer evidence of or justification for your stance—and conclude with a reiteration of your stance.
  - c. Grammar: Proofread!
  
- 3) Final Project: Documenting Race and Religion in America (Undergraduate and Master’s) One of the purposes of higher education is to form good citizens through critical engagement with diverse ideas and the cultivation of independent thought. Your final project will offer you the opportunity to craft an original article on a topic related to the intersections of race and religion in America. You may choose to create a project that addresses a historical period, region, group, political question, current event, or localized issue. As author, you can select the subject matter, locate the content to be included in the article, and develop the narrative arc. The project should include the following:
  - a. Research Topic/Question: A clearly defined, well-articulated topic that is appropriate for the scope of the project. For instance, you may choose to write an article on the religious implications of cultural biases around African-American women’s hair for young adult Black women at Vanderbilt. Remember, your

article must include original data to help to answer the proposed research question. Therefore, your research question should emerge out of your exploration of available sources. While a more localized question will require you to conduct surveys or interviews, if you choose to study a contemporary social, political, or religious issue, your original research may consist of pre-existing survey data, demographic trends, music lyrics, etc. **Your proposed question is due by September 28<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**

- b. **Annotated Primary Source Project** – The purpose of the primary source project is to train you in the discovery and analysis of primary sources. For the project, undergraduate students will locate five (5) primary and five (5) secondary sources and graduate students will identify ten (10) primary and ten (10) secondary sources that contextualize the topic in its time period and city, state, or region and help to respond to the proposed research question. Regarding the religio-cultural contextualization of your topic, you should think in terms of the microcosmic context (mosque, temple, congregation, city) and macrocosmic context (region, country, transnational networks). The primary sources should aid you in providing an ethno-historical account of your topic, and could consist of newspaper articles, aesthetic productions (art, music), city maps, and any other sources that help you to contextualize your topic. For each primary source, you should provide a description of the primary source and how it connects to your topic. Each description should be approximately 1 – 1 ½ double-spaced, 12-point font, typed pages. **The primary source project is the midterm is due by 11:59 p.m. on October 24th.**
- c. **Newspaper Article or Artistic Work** - A good piece of journalism provides a balance of “thick” description and accurate facts in a concise and engaging form. You will use your primary sources, along with appropriate secondary materials, to write a newspaper article of approximately 2,000 – 3,000 words (undergraduates) and 3,000-4,000 words (graduates) about your topic. The article should consist of three parts: a.) An engaging headline and introduction; b.) A historical, cultural, and religious contextualization of your topic; c.) A “thick” description of the microcosmic context and issues surrounding the topic; d.) An explanation of the significance of your movement to conversations about race and religion in the U.S. Words are not the only mode of thoughtful expression however. In lieu of an article, you may also opt to produce an artistic piece. Your piece will need to be accompanied by a 1,000-1,500 word explanation of: a.) Why you chose the medium; b.) A historical, cultural, and religious contextualization of your topic/subject; c.) An explanation of the significance of your movement to conversations about race and religion in the U.S. **The newspaper article or artistic work is the final and is due by December 9<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**
- d. **Editorial “Pitch”**: You will have **5 minutes** to “pitch” or present your project to the class, who will serve as the editorial board. The pitch should lay out your research topic/question, evidence (sources), contextual information, and conclusion. The presentation will be a component of your final project grade.

You will be graded on how well you articulate: the aims of the newspaper article, your rationale for artifact decisions, and awareness of your audience. **The “pitch” will occur the last week of class.**

- 4) Précis (Ph.D. only): For each supplementary reading, you will complete a précis of approximately two (2) to three (3) pages. The précis will be submitted in accordance with a template provided by the professor. As illustrated in the example, all major references to the text should include in-text page numbers. Since the purpose of the précis is to facilitate our conversations during one-on-one meetings, footnotes and/or endnotes are unnecessary. The précis are due by **the last day of class.** As specified on the template, the précis must include the following components:
- Thesis of the work: This section should explore the author’s main point(s), as well as supporting points that are pertinent to the overall objective of the work. In addition to offering the points, you should also document the evidence that the author uses to support his/her argument(s).
  - Method/Methodology: **Though related, an author’s method and his/her methodology are not one in the same.** The following questions concern method: What type of evidence does the author marshal to support his/her thesis? Is it primarily historical? Anthropological? Sociological? To address methodology, you must ask: what assumptions, ideas, and principles govern his/her application of the method? For instance, though Albert Raboteau’s method is historical, methodologically he assumes that Christian Protestantism is the primary, traceable expression of religiosity among enslaved African-Americans; hence his emphasis upon sources from religious institutions.
  - Sources and Interlocutors: What sources is the author using to make his/her point, and who are his/her primary interlocutors? In this section, you might also take the opportunity to name other scholars with whom the author’s work converses, and explore the intersection of concepts and ideas. Think through the historiography of the subject(s) explored in the text and situate the work in light of similar texts.
  - Contribution: What is the primary contribution of the work to the author’s field? In what ways do ideas explored in the work contribute to your own field and/or work?
  - Axe to Grind: Is there a particular idea and/or scholar against which the author is writing?
  - Failures/Critiques: Are there any weaknesses in the author’s argument? What, if anything, does she/he fail to consider? What questions remain?
- 5) Final Project (Ph.D. only): In preparation for your comprehensive exams, your final project will consist of a detailed outline responding to a historiographical, methodological, and/or method question about race and religion in America. Your response should engage no less than fifteen (15) secondary sources. You are not limited to texts covered in class. The outline should include three parts:
- Proposed Question(s): Although you may choose to pose multiple questions, it is advisable that you propose no more than two (2) questions. Remember, the outline should be sufficient to offer a preliminary response to the question(s). The question proposal is due by **September 28<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**

- b. Ten (10) Annotations: Choose the ten (10) most significant and/or useful works for answering the proposed question, and write a one to two page précis exploring the main points of the work, its contribution to the field, and its pertinence to the question. This should be the second part of the outline, and arranged alphabetically. Unlike the above précis, this should be written in typical essay form.
- c. The third and final section should be the outline. The outline should be divided into two or three parts and integrate the remaining bibliographic works. Each section header should make clear the perceived connection between the question and the citations, and function almost like the prongs of a thesis. The final is due on **December 9<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**

**\* Style Note:** All assignments should be submitted using 12 point, Times New Roman font, and the Chicago footnote-bibliography citation style.

**Grading Policies**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage:</b>
Attendance/Participation	10%
Weekly Assignment	20%
Midterm	20%
Final Project	50%
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Total Possible Points/Percentage	100%

Grading Rubric: The grades you receive on assignments/projects will be based on the following scale and your overall grade will be weighted based on the percentage allotted for each component of the course.

93-100 A	83-86 B	73-76 C	60-66 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	0-59 F
87-89 B+	77-79 C+	67-69 D+	

Grade Changes: Unless in the event of an obvious error or oversight, grades on assignments are final. **Grades will not be discussed before, during, or after class.** If you would like to discuss a grade, please email me to schedule an appointment during my office hours.

Late work: Late assignments will be accepted only under communicated extenuating circumstances. If you predict that an assignment will be late, you should make arrangements with me **at least 48 hours prior to** the assignment deadline. Assignments that are submitted more than twenty-four (24) hours after the original due date, without any previous arrangement, will receive a zero (0) grade. I realize that we are all attending class under unusual circumstances, please make every effort to submit your assignments on time.

**Important Student Information**

Academic Integrity & Student Honor Code: Academic integrity is central to any intellectual exercise. Consequently, plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the presentation of another's ideas as your own. Academic dishonesty includes unauthorized collaboration on assignments and the inappropriate use of course materials. Any work that violates the Honor Code will result in a zero (0) grade and be reported to the Honor Council. You are expected to conduct yourself with academic integrity and honesty at all times.

Support & Disabilities: The Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services provides a variety of important and useful services for students who need additional assistance in the classroom. If you have a disability that affects your ability to fulfill select requirements in the course, please contact the Office to learn your options:

[www.vanderbilt.edu/ead](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/ead).

Counseling and Psychological Distress: The Vanderbilt University Psychological and Counseling Center is available to offer counseling and other forms of support to students experiencing psychological and/or emotional distress. To make an appointment, call: (615) 322-2571, or 2-2571 on campus.

### **Class Schedule**

**S** = Synchronous class, please join us on zoom.

**A** = Asynchronous, please read and complete the weekly assignment.

**G** = Assignment for Master's level students only.

**Ph.D.** = Reading assignment for Ph.D. level students only. Please read the text, in addition to the assigned undergraduate reading.

**August 25:** Introductions **S**

**August 27:** Assignment: Reflect upon the terms "race," "religion," and "America." What do these terms mean to you and how does your understanding of them inform your decision to take this course? Post a written, artistic, or representative response of no more than 100 words on the discussion board in Brightspace. **S**

Weekly Assignment: What defines an American? Is everyone who resides within the geographical borders of the nation-state American, must one be born on American soil, must one subscribe to certain values, or is the definition tied to certain manifestations of race and religion? Post a 1-minute response to Flipgrid.

### **I. What does it mean to be "American?": Theoretical and Methodological Considerations in the Study of Race and Religion**

**September 1:** Eric Foner, "Who is an American?" in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, 84-92; Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formations" in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States*, Fourth Edition, 13-22. **S**

**September 3:** Isabel Wilkerson, “America’s Enduring Caste System,” *New York Times Magazine*; (available online via the library); Jeff Guo, “The Real Reason the U.S. Became Less Racist Towards Asian Americans,” (Interview with Ellen Wu), *Washington Post*, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/29/the-real-reason-americans-stopped-spitting-on-asian-americans-and-started-praising-them/?utm\\_term=.48215f862103](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/29/the-real-reason-americans-stopped-spitting-on-asian-americans-and-started-praising-them/?utm_term=.48215f862103)

**A**

**G:** Aisha Belsio-De Jesús, “Confounded Identities: A Meditation on Race, Feminism, and Religious Studies in Times of White Supremacy,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 86, issue 2 (May 2018): 307-340.

**Ph.D.:** Evelyn B. Higginbotham, “African-American Women and the Metalanguage of Race,” *Signs* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 251-274.

Weekly Assignment: Type “Race in America” into your search engine. What types of media titles appear? Are there any recurring tropes and images? What and who is missing from these images and tropes? Why? Using the readings thus far, post a 1-minute meditation on the public messaging on race.

**September 8:** Kiyati Y. Joshi, “What Does Race Have to Do With Religion?” from *New Roots in America’s Sacred Ground: Religion, Race, and Ethnicity in Indian America*, 89-117. (available online via the library) **S**

**September 10:** “The Religious Roots of Today’s Partisan Divide” <https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/22/politics/religion-gap-republican-democratic-voters-polling/index.html>; “How Strong of a Role Does Religion Play in U.S. Politics?,” <https://theconversation.com/how-strong-a-role-does-religion-play-in-us-elections-133224>; “Protestantism’s Troubling History with White Supremacy in the U.S.,” <https://theconversation.com/protestantisms-troubling-history-with-white-supremacy-in-the-us-141438>.

Weekly Assignment: Understanding religion as a set of cosmologies, theologies, philosophies, ethics, and/or rituals around which people “orient” themselves, is there an “American” religion or a religious orientation that defines the quintessential American? If so, what is it? Post a 200-300 word response to the discussion board on Brightspace.

## **II. “American” Origins: Conflicting Stories of Beginnings**

**September 15:** G. Keith Parker, “The Cherokee Creation Story,” in *Seven Cherokee Myths: Creation, Fire, the Primordial Parents, the Nature of Evil, the Family, Universal Suffering, and Communal Obligation*, pgs. 33-36. “The Choctaw Creation Legend” and “Creation of Three Races” in *A Listening Wind: Native Literature from the Southeast* (available online via the library); “Tecaughretanego Explains Why the Great Spirit Sometimes Permits Men to Go Hungry Before Feeding Them” and “John Heckwelder Describes the Delaware Indians’ View of Bear Spirits” in *Major Problems in American Religious History*, 35-38. “How the World Was



Created from a Drop of Milk,” in *The Origins of Life and Death: African Creation Myths* (available online via the library). **S**

**September 17:** Olaudah Equiano, Chapter 2, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, 57-69. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano1/equiano1.html>; “John Winthrop outlines his Plan for a Godly Settlement,” in *Major Problems in American Religious History*, 58-59; Pope Nicolas V, The bull *Romanus Pontifex*, 1-6. **A**

**G:** “Race and Religion on the Periphery: Disappointment and Missionization in the Spanish Floridas, 1566-1763,” in *Race, Nation, and Religion in America*. (available online via the library)

**Ph.D.** *When Jesus Came The Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*.

Weekly Assignment: Consider the differences between Native American, African, and European concepts of “religion” and cultural and/or human beginnings. How do cosmological and cultural differences—specifically, varied understandings of origins, the nature of humans’ interactions with one another, spirit(s), and the environment—shape how people encounter one another? Use a contemporary or historical example to substantiate your point. Post a 250-350 word response to Brightspace.

### **III. Atlantic Encounters: Conflict, Coin, and Christianity**

**September 22:** Primary Sources: “Castilian Law Incorporates Slaves and Others Before 1492,” “A Spanish Jurist Explains the Legitimacy of Conquest, 1510,” in *Major Problems in Atlantic History*, 27-31, 56-58; “The Indians Discover Columbus, 1492-1493,” “A Public Burning of Indian Chiefs Ordered by Cortés in Front of Montezuma, 1519,” and Aztec Account of the Spanish Massacre of Participants in a Religious Ceremonial,” in *This Country Was Ours: A Documentary History of the American Indian*. **A**

**September 24:** “A Portuguese Trader Describes a Kidnapping, c.1440s,” “Slave Raiding on the West African Coast, 1448,” “Willem Bosman, a Dutch Trader, Describes the Details of Bargaining for Slaves, 1701,” in *Major Problems in African-American History*; “Louis XIV Regulates Slavery in the Colonies, 1685” in *Major Problems in Atlantic History*, 205-207. **S**

**G:** Katharine Gerbner, “Protestant Supremacy,” from *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World*, 31-48.

**Ph.D.:** Katharine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World*.

Weekly Assignment: **RESEARCH QUESTION**

### **IV. Racial Mythmaking and the Rise of European Hegemony in the Americas**

**September 29:** “Cortés Marvels at a World of Wonders, 1518-1520,” “Two Spaniards Debate the Conquest and the Nature of Americans, 1547-1553,” in *Major Problems in Atlantic History*, 58-69; “Destruction of the Pequots, 1636,” in *This Country Was Ours: A Documentary History of the American Indian*; Thornton Stringfellow, excerpt from “A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery,” in *Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860*, 136-141, 165-167 (available online via the library). **S**

**October 1:** Jennifer L. Morgan, “‘Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder:’ Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology” in *Laboring Women*, 12-49. **A**

**G:** Thornton Stringfellow, excerpt from “A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery,” in *Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860*, 136-167 (available online via the library).

**Ph.D.:** Colin Kidd, *The Forging of the Races: Race and Scripture in the Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000* (available online via the library) **OR** Sylvester Johnson, *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God*.

Weekly Assignment: Thinking about the week’s readings, what kinds of myths, symbols, and rituals grounded racial myths? Do such ideas and practices make race more “real” or are the realities of race grounded in the historical experiences of the people who are “raced”? Post a 200-300 word essay and/or artistic response to Brightspace.

## **V. Slavery and the Founding of the American Caste System**

**October 6:** Charles Ball, excerpt from *Fifty Years in Chains, or The Life of an American Slave*, 1-49. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/ball/ball.html>.

**October 8:** “Maryland Indian Reproval of the English for Attempting to Impose Their Customs on the Indians, 1635,” “Delaware Indians’ Rebuke to Missionaries on Slavery, ca. 1820,” “The Delawares’ Account of Their Own History from the Coming of the White Man Until Their Removal from Indiana, 1820,” in *This Country Was Ours: A Documentary History of the American Indian*; “Frederick Douglass Compares Southern Slaveowners’ Religion with that of Jesus,” “Angelina Grimke Uses the Bible to Justify Abolishing Slavery” in *Major Problems in American Religious History*, 178-183. **A**

**G:** Daniel B. Lee, “A Great Racial Commission: Religion and the Construction of White America,” in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, 85-110.

**Ph.D.:** Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic*

Weekly Assignment: Based on your experiences of media, education, and other discursive outlets, what is the dominant narrative concerning American slavery? What racial and/or religious myths do the accounts create, nuance, or build upon? Record a 2 minute response in Flipgrid.

## VI. This Land is My Land: War, Rebellion, and Other Battles for Cultural Supremacy

**October 13:** Thomas Gray, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, The Leader of the Late Insurrection in South Hampton, VA*. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/turner/turner.html>.

**October 15:** “Chaplain Gregg Describes the Union Army,” “William Bennett Describes the Revivals That Swept the Confederate Army (1861-1865), 1877,” “Thomas Wentworth Higginson Witnesses the Religious Life of Black Soldiers, 1864,” “George Barton Remembers a Pious Irish-American Nun Nursing the Wounded at Shiloh, 1863,” “Bishop Quintard of Tennessee Ministers to Two Condemned Deserters (1863), 1905,” “Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, 1863, and Second Inaugural Address,” in *Major Problems in American Religious History*. “A Freedom Song from the Civil War Era,” in *Major Problems in African-American History*.

**G:** Edward J. Blum, “Race, Religion, and the Fracturing of the White Republic,” and “The Last and Greatest Battle of Freedom: Race and American Nation after the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln,” from *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism 1865-1898*, 1-50.

**Ph.D.:** Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism 1865-1898*.

Weekly Assignment: Review at least three Civil War monuments in the United States. What is the “moral” of the tale of the Civil War in popular discourse? Putting the narrative of the Civil War in conversation with the account of Nat Turner, in what ways, if any, is violence memorialized differently when perpetrated by different actors? Post a 2 minute response to Flipgrid.

## VII. More Than Christianity: Myths of the American Religious Landscape

**October 20:** Omar Ibn Said, *Autobiography of Omar Ibn Said, Slave in North Carolina, 1831*, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/omarsaid/omarsaid.html>.

**October 22:** “Benjamin Roth Warns His Emigrant Son Solomon about Moral and Religious Dangers in America, 1854,” “Abraham Cahan Shows How American Business Life and Religious Pluralism Shattered a Russian Jewish Immigrant’s Traditional Faith, 1916,” “Anzia Yezierska Confronts an Orthodox Jewish Father Over Changing Patterns of Religion and Women’s Work, 1925,” “Jacob Sonderling, Immigrant Rabbi, Observes American Jewish Life, c. 1930,” “Mordecai Kaplan Defends Jews’ Life in Two Civilizations, 1948,” “William Herberg Analyzes Religion and Assimilation, 1955,” in *Major Problems in American Religious History*.

**G:** Arnold Eisen, “Choosing Chosenness in America: The Changing Faces of Judaism,” in *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, 224-245.

**Ph.D:** Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth Century America*

Weekly Assignment: Considering the first-person accounts from this week, do racialized histories of the United States obfuscate religious narratives? Does inclusion of more diverse visions of early America change the meanings of “American?” If so, how? If not, what work does the inclusion and/or reorientation perform for understandings of national identity?

### **VIII. The Battle for the Soul of Christianity**

**October 27:** Rosa, an Immigrant, Contrasts Her Italian Catholicism with the American Version, c. 1890,” “Clara Grillo Recalls Protestant –Catholic Tensions in Cleveland, c. 1920,” in *Major Problems in American Religious History*. “Whither the Flock?: The Catholic Church and the Success of Mexicans in America,” in *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, 71-98.

**October 29:** James B. Bennett, “Catholics, Creoles, and the Redefinition of Race in New Orleans,” in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, 183-208.

**G:** Derek Chang, “‘Marked in Body, Mind, and Spirit:’ Home Missionaries and the Remaking of Race and Nation,” in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, 133-156.

**Ph.D.:** Jennifer Graber, *The Gods of Indian Country: Religion and the Struggle for the American West* **OR** Matthew J. Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration*.

Weekly Assignment: Recalling the Khyati Joshi’s argument naming Christianity as the religion of the dominant caste and a prerequisite to caste privilege in the U.S., have members of the subordinate racial caste wielded Christianity to gain access to privileged statuses? Thinking about Latinx, Creole, and other Catholics, has their Christianity afforded them more caste privilege or made them more racially/culturally conspicuous?

### **IX. Mediating Race through Religion**

**November 3:** Listen: Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zLQLUpNGsc>

**November 5:** Jane Naomi Iwamura, “Critical Faith: Japanese Americans and the Birth of a New Civil Religion,” in *Immigration and Religion in America*,

**G:** Danielle Brune Sigler, “Beyond the Binary: Revisiting Father Divine, Daddy Grace, and Their Ministries,” in *Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas*, 209-230.

**Ph.D.:** Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration*.

Weekly Assignment: Examining news stories, YouTube, and other outlets, how have racialized religious groups (such as the Nation of Islam), racialized religions (such as Hinduism), or religious stereotypes of racial groups shaped notions of race and religion in America? Thinking

about the week's readings in tandem with one group of your choice, what themes, if any, recur in the American media's encounter with these groups? Does coverage reify or create U.S. racial and/or religious stereotypes? Write a 250-350 word response.

### **X. Speaking the Language of the Dominant Caste: Theological Challenges to White Supremacy**

**November 10:** James Cone, "God in Black Theology" in *A Black Theology of Liberation*, pgs. 55-81 **OR** Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "Mujerista Theology: A Challenge to Traditional Theology," in *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twentieth Century*, 59-85.

**November 12:** Vine Deloria, "Tribal Cultures and Contemporary American Religions" in *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*, pgs. 237-257.

**G:** Louis S. Warren, "Wage Work in the Sacred Circle: The Ghost Dance as Modern Religion," *Western Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (July 2015): 141-168.

**Ph.D.:** James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twentieth Century*, **OR** Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*.

Weekly Assignment: Considering Audre Lorde's famous essay arguing that "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," how effective are theological challenges to White supremacy? Do they aid or hinder racial justice? How so or why not?

### **XI. Religion and Politics/The Politics of Religion: America at the Crossroads**

**November 17:** Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail—April 16, 1963," in *African-American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, 519-535 "National Conference of Black Churchmen Demands Equal Power, 1966," "Christianity Today Criticizes Black Americans' Intimidation of White Churches, 1969," "Moises Sandoval Describes the Hispanic Catholic Response to the Civil Rights Movement, 1990," in *Major Problems in American Religious History*. Cesar A. Chavez, "The Mexican-American and the Church," (1968) in *The Columbia Documentary History of Religion in America Since 1945*.

**November 19:** Moustafa Bayoumi, "Rasha" in *How Does it Feel to Be A Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America*, pgs. 15-44.

**G:** Ann Chih Lin, "Muslim, Arab, and American: The Adaptation of Muslim Arab Immigrants to American Society," in *Immigration and Religion in America: Comparative and Historical Perspectives*, 277-296.

**Ph.D.:** Complete Precis

### **XII. Back to the Future: Contemporary Interrogations of Race and Religion in America**

**December 1: PRESENTATIONS**

**December 3: PRESENTATIONS/LAST DAY OF CLASS**