

Global Christianities *Reli 3442*

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Course Description:

What exactly is the Christian tradition? Can we even say that one exists? This class aims to challenge how students view Christianity by taking a tour of the varieties of world Christianity that exist in the twentieth and twenty-first century, and by sampling a wide variety of methods in how one studies the field of Christianity. These will include historical, sociographical, ethnohistorical, anthropological, theoretical, and gender studies methods, all of which challenge traditional (meaning mainly those steeped in the field of church history) scholars of religion to expand their understandings of Christianity in the modern period. This class is not a historical overview of Christianity and its variety of theologies, but rather it focuses on how Christianity in the modern period has become entangled with politics, race, sexuality, healing, issues of gender, revolution and religious strife (among other things.) This course focuses on content, methodology, and also seeks to situate each case study within current world events. In each section of this class we will consider case studies from all over the world including the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia and the Middle East in order to both understand some of the main themes that trouble the study of modern Christianity along with the methods by which it is understood and studied.

Course Texts

In God's Image: The Metaculture of Fijian Christianity by Matt Tomlinson, University of California Press, 2009

City of God: Christian Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala by Kevin O'Neil University of California Press, 2009

Catholic Vietnam: A Church from Empire to Nation by Charles Keith University of California Press 2012

Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China, Yale University Press, 2010

God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right by Daniel K Williams, Oxford University press, 2010

Religion and AIDS in Africa by Jenny Trinitapoli and Alexander Weiner, Oxford University Press, 2012

A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy by Nathaniel Davis, Westview Press, 2003

The Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Columbia by Elizabeth

Brusco, University of Texas Press, 2nd Ed 2010

Christian Vs Muslim in Modern Egypt: A Century-Long Struggle for Coptic Equality, by S.S. Hasan, Oxford University Press, 2003

Native Americans and the Christian Right: The Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances by Andrea Smith, Duke University Press, 2008 (Excerpts- You don't need to buy the book)

Participation:

This course will be run exclusively as a discussion seminar so your participation is crucial. Students are expected to come to class prepared and to thoughtfully engage the reading assignments for each day. Students who do not participate regularly will not get full participation credit for the course.

Discussion Leaders:

Each student will lead the discussion of the day's reading or movie, once during the semester. In order to facilitate the discussion you will prepare a reading guide (about a one-page handout) and email that reading guide (via T-learn) to the entire class. Send it at least 48 hours before class (so for a Monday class, it needs to be emailed on Saturday night, for Wednesday class, Monday night) although it is preferable that you send it sooner than 48 hours (so students can have the guide as they do the reading.) Then, on the day of the discussion, you will be responsible for leading the discussion, and for keeping it going. (By asking encouraging questions, challenging your classmates (politely) and shaping the discussion.) Try to vary a bit from the reading guide (so it doesn't seem like you are just going through the reading guide in its entirety) and ask off-the cuff questions.

Guidelines for the Reading Guide:

The reading guide should have four main components: 1) Thought-provoking critical analysis questions about the work itself. 2) Questions for discussion that focus specifically on the book's particular methods in approaching the study of modern Christianity 3) "Big" Questions that link the book to bigger issues/themes in the study of Christianity, 4) links to at least three to five current event articles from reputable popular sources (and by this I mean the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, stay away from blogs and random Internet pages that you find on Google Search) that address some aspects of the themes of the book that we are studying. (For some of these works it will be very easy—Think the recent presidential election when we consider American politics and religion, the imprisonment of the punk band Pussy Riot in Russia for "offending" Russian Orthodoxy, the issue of AIDS in Africa or religious strife in the Middle East.)

Theory and Method Critique Paper (7-8 pages)

You will choose one book that you have read for this paper and critique the particular theory/method that the author used in writing the book. The method will depend on the book that you pick, but as you structure your critique think carefully about how the use of this theory/method enhanced/did not enhance the study. How did using this particular theory/method shape the author's understanding of Christianity? How did it shape yours? Where are the flaws in the method? In what aspect would you like to push or challenge the author? This paper is not a book review or book report—I want you to seriously consider the implications of the theory/method that the author chose.

Short Analysis Paper (7-8 pages) You will write a short (5-6 page) paper inspired by one (or two) of the “big question” questions that your classmates present during discussion. You need to choose one (or two) of these questions and address it/refute it/analyze it in some way, all while only using the source that is related to the “big question” that is asked. A week before the paper is due you need to email me and tell me what question you will be addressing. This paper is meant to be a directed critical analysis of one of the books or articles that we are reading this semester.

Current Events Paper (5-6 pages)

The majority of the books that we are reading this semester relate to major current events that are taking place right now in the world. For this paper you get to choose one of the books, and situate it and how it relates to current events in modern world Christianity. For this paper you will need to do some research. You need to find 3-6 articles from reputable journalistic sources (meaning, well-established media—see above on the reading guide. You may include well known bloggers or internet media but that needs to be beyond the 3-6 articles) that address some of the themes that you want to talk about---then analyze how the book handles these themes and how they apply to our own modern moment and media interpretation of Christianity.

Peer Review

You will turn in a complete rough draft of the short paper to me via email the day before the in-class peer review. What I mean by rough draft is a complete paper with an intro, examples and body paragraphs and a conclusion. It can be messy, or a bit disorganized, or grammatically incorrect, but the point is that you need a draft. Outlines, notes, and half-done rough drafts will not count and you will get 5 points knocked off your final points for the paper and a zero for your part in the peer evaluation if you turn in an incomplete rough draft.

You will then receive a copy of a paper of a classmate. You will fill out the peer review form for that paper BEFORE class, and come to class ready to go over it with your classmate. Then in class you will work as a pair and go over each other’s paper. You will talk out your suggestions and the areas that you think need improvement and you will brainstorm ideas as to how to help each other’s papers together as a pair. You will address not only writing and grammar issues but also ideas and analysis. You will do this for both papers.

On the day the paper is due you will also turn in an electronic review of the peer review (I will be creating a form for this)—you will rate how helpful the peer review was, what changes you incorporated in your paper (or why you did not incorporate the changes) and what grade you give your peer reviewer. I will then take this into account for the final grade for the peer reviewer. The reason for this is to make you really take the peer review process seriously and to have you incorporate the needed changes into your paper.

Final Project

You will write a research paper on a specific form of modern Christianity, or a specific issue facing modern Christianity in a particular region of the world. This will be a pure research paper, 12-15 pages in length with an extensive bibliography. You will choose your own topic and let me know what you are writing on by spring break. Paper must use footnotes or endnotes (Chicago Style) and have at least 6-10 additional scholarly sources (beyond any of the books you may use this semester. Scholarly sources means academic monographs or peer-reviewed articles, not New York Times Articles) (30% of your final grade) A full rough draft of the paper is due for peer-review in the last week of classes. If you fail to turn in this rough draft, you will lose 10 points off the final paper grade.

Late Work/Attendance Policy/Honor Code:

You have **three** absences for the semester. The only absences that I excuse are for those on sports teams, religious observance, or deaths in the family. Illness, oversleeping, broken down-car, missing class to go on vacation, etc., count toward the three absences that you get for the semester. If you miss class more than three times, I will lower your **Participation** grade by one full grade. I do accept late work, but will lower the final grade by one whole letter grade for each day that it is late (even so, remember, it is better to turn something in late rather than not at all.) Exams, however, cannot be late for any reason and will not be accepted if late. I do give extensions in the case of extraordinary circumstances, but I expect that you will ask for the extension either in person (come to my office) or by phone (call my office.) Do not email asking for an extension unless it is under extreme circumstances (like a relative died over the weekend and you need to leave immediately.) You are also bound by Trinity's Honor Code in this class.

Cell Phones/Laptops/Food

You may eat in class as long as you pick up after yourself. Neither the janitor nor I are your maid, so don't leave any trash behind. Cell phones must be off and put away. k. You may bring laptops to type notes if you want, but during active discussion they must be closed and put away. It is only fair that if your classmates are working hard to run a discussion and get a decent grade, that you give them your full and undivided attention.

Office Hours

If you need to see me please email me to schedule an appointment for office hours.

Assignments:

Participation (15%)

Discussion Leader (5%)

Peer Reviews (10% total)

Method paper (10 %)

Analysis Paper (10%)

Current Events Paper (10%)

Final Project (30%)

Schedule

Introduction to the Class

No class MLK Day

Christianity and Politics—The US Edition

Read: *God's Own Party* Intro- 6

Read: 7-11

“Troubling” the Narrative: The Christian Right and Native Americans

Read: Introduction, Chapters 2 and 3 from *Native Americans and the Christian Right*

Gender, Power and Latin American Pentecostalism

Read: Intro-Chap. 4 *The Reformation of Machismo*

Read: Chapter 5-Conclusion

Religious Conflict in the Middle East

Read: Intro, Parts 1 & II *Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt*

Read: Part III & IV

Read: Part V-VII

Peer-Review Day- Short Analysis Paper

Healing, Epidemics and Religion in Africa and Beyond

Read: Intro, Part 1& 2 *Religion and AIDS in Africa*

Short Analysis Paper Due

Part 3 & 4 and Conclusion

Healing in African Pentecostalism & Blessed Bodies (articles on Tlearn)

Colonialism and Catholicism in Southeast Asia

Read: Intro, Chap 1-3 *Catholic Vietnam*

Read: Chap. 4 & 5

Spring Break

Read: Chapter 6 & 7 and Epilogue

Peer-Review Day

Communism and the Re-Birth of Russian Orthodoxy

Read: Intro, Chap 1-5 *A Long Walk to Church*

Theory and Method Paper Due

Read: Chap 6-11

Read: Chap 12-15

Indigenous Chinese Christianity and Political Implications

Read: Intro, Chap 1-3 *Redeemed By Fire*

Read: Chap. 4-6

Read: Chap 7-9 & Afterword

Current Events Paper Due

Pentecostalism and Citizen Activism in Latin America

Read: Intro, Chap 1-3 *City of God*

Read: Chap 4-6, Conclusion

Indigenous Cultures and New Formations of Identity in the South Pacific

Read: Part 1 *In God's Image*

Read: Part 2

Read: Part 3

Rough Draft of Final Paper Due—Peer Review Day

Final Paper Due During Final Exam period (Date TBA)