American Religious History
Haverford College
Religion 272
Mondays and Wednesdays 11:15am – 12:45pm
Spring 2019

Professor:
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Office Hours:
Wednesdays 4:00pm-5:00pm and by appointment

Course Overview:
This course begins from the premise that to understand American history and culture, one must grasp the pervasiveness of religion within the United States. This class will investigate the historically shifting roles of religion in American society and the prevalence of religious diversity throughout the country. The course will consider the functions of religion within settler colonialism, slavery, immigration, and assimilation, and explore how religion has shaped popular culture, the political system, and American identity. The class will also examine the role of religion within changing notions of gender, sexuality, and race.

Course Learning Goals—By the End of the Semester, Students Will Be Able To:
1. Develop an argument about the importance of studying religion in order to gain a robust understanding of American history and culture.
2. Analyze the complexities of assimilation in America and make an argument about the value and/or limitations of American assimilation.
3. Apply course readings to contemporary political issues and popular culture to make an argument about how current events have been shaped by America’s religious history.

Class Format:
This is a discussion class where our focus is on cultivating critical thinking skills through regular reading assignments, writing assignments, and in-class discussions. You should not expect the professor to lecture. Rather, you should be an active participant in all class discussions and activities. Class participation constitutes 22% of your semester grade.
Class Expectations:
1. Attend every class. If you have an emergency or religious holiday that requires you to miss class, notify me by email. You are allowed two absences over the course of the semester. After that, your participation grade lowers by 20 percent.

2. Complete the reading for every class and be prepared to discuss the reading. This is crucial if you expect to succeed in this course. You will have, on average, 70-90 pages of reading each week. Plan accordingly.

3. Be on time for class. Arriving late is distracting. You also need to stay for the entire class.

4. Cell phones must be put away and silenced prior to class.

5. Check your Haverford or Bryn Mawr email account every day.

I want every student to succeed in this class. To be successful, you must do the work outlined in the syllabus and take initiative if problems arise by notifying me ASAP.

Haverford Honor Code and Laptops in this Class:
Students in this class are bound by the Haverford Honor Code. The Honor Code extends not only to the written work you submit, but also to how you conduct yourself in class. In this class, unless otherwise requested, you are not to access the internet or apps during class time if you bring a laptop or tablet to class. Accessing the internet is distracting to other students and it is a disruption to our class. Students may use laptops and tablets, and connect to Moodle, to view readings as we discuss them in class. Students may also use such devises to take notes if they prefer them over pen and paper.

Accommodations:
Haverford is committed to providing equal access to students with a disability. If you have (or think you have) a learning difference or disability – including mental health, medical, or physical impairment, please contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) at hc-ads@haverford.edu. The Coordinator will confidentially discuss the process to establish reasonable accommodations.

Any student with an accommodation-based need should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Please bring the necessary documentation with you.

The First Amendment
noun
Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.
REQUIRED READINGS

Students need to purchase or borrow the following books:


*All other course readings are posted on Moodle or hyperlinked through the syllabus.
COURSE OUTLINE

W/Jan. 23  
Course Overview

M/Jan. 28  
Native American Religions and Colonial Encounters  
Read: Religion in American Life, pg. 21-30 and 92-108  
Read: William Penn, “Letter to the Indians,” from 1681

W/Jan. 30  
Colonial Religion  
Read: Religion in American, pg. 47-68 and 133-150  

M/Feb. 4  
Slavery and the Religious Experiences of Slaves  
Read: Frederick Douglass, Excerpt from Narrative Life of an American Slave, from 1845  
Read: Albert Raboteau, “Religion, Rebellion, and Docility,” from Slave Religion, pg. 289-318  
Due: Reading Summary of Raboteau from Group A

W/Feb. 6  
The Second Great Awakening, the Civil War, and a Country Divided  
Read: Religion in American Life, pg. 171-183 and 232-244  
Due: Reading Summary of 232-244 from Group B

M/Feb. 11  
Mormons and the Making of an American Religion  
Read: Religion in American Life, pg. 201-211  
Read: Carrie Miles, “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Earthly Experience of Celestial Marriage, Past and Present,” pg. 185-207  
Due: Reading Summary of Miles from Group A

W/Feb. 13  
Mormon Polygamy and the Federal Government’s Regulation of Sexual Morality  
Due: Reading Summary of Foster from Group B

M/Feb. 18  
SPECTACLE Lynching and Black Christianity  
Read: James Cone, The Cross and the Lynching Tree, pg. xiii-29 and 120-151  
Due: Reading Summary of xiii-29 from Group A

W/Feb. 20  
Immigrant Religions and Assimilation  
Read: Religion in American Life, pg. 213-230 and 247-260  
Due: Reading Summary of 247-260 from Group B

M/Feb. 25  
Native American Assimilation and Resistance  
Read: Tisa Wenger, We Have A Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom, pg. 1-16, 135-145, and 183-195  
Due: Reading Summary of Wenger from Groups A and B

W/Feb. 27  
Exam
M/March 4  
*Jewish Immigration and Assimilation: Gender, Class, and Anxieties about Citizenship*

**Read:** Riv-Ellen Prell, “Introduction” and “Ghetto Girls and Jewish Immigrant Desires” from *Fighting to Become Americans: Assimilation and the Trouble between Jewish Women and Jewish Men*, pg. 1-20 and 21-57

**Due:** Reading Summary of Prell from Group A

W/March 6  
*Japanese Americans, Religion, and Internment Camps*

**Read:** Anne Blankenship, “Introduction” and “The Attack on Pearl Harbor and Executive Order 9066” from *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration during WWII*

**Due:** Reading Summary of Blankenship from Group B

Mar. 12 & 14  
*Spring Break*

M/March 18  
*American Christianity against Soviet Communism*

**Read:** Kevin Kruse, “Pledging Allegiance,” from *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America*, pg. 95-125

**Read:** Anthea Butler, “Billy Graham and the Gospel of American Nationalistic Christianity,” from *Religion Dispatches*

**Due:** Reading Summary of Kruse from Group A

W/March 20  
*The Protestantism of America’s Public Schools*

**Read:** Kevin Michael Schultz, “‘Favoritism Cannot Be Tolerated’: Challenging Protestantism in America’s Public Schools and Promoting the Neutral State,” pg. 565-588

**Due:** Reading Summary of Schultz from Group B

M/March 25  
*Religion in the Civil Rights Movement*

**Read:** James Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, pg. 65-92

**Read:** Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham City Jail,” from 1963

**Due:** Reading Summary of Cone from Group A

W/March 27  
*Latino Catholicism and the Changing Landscape of America’s Largest Christian Denomination*

**Read:** Timothy Matovina, “Remapping American Catholicism” and “Transformation in America’s Largest Church,” from *Latino Catholicism*, pg. 1-41 and 245-250

**Due:** Reading Summary of Matovina from Group B

M/April 1  
*The Rise of the Religious Right*

**Read:** Seth Dowland, “Abortion,” from *Family Values & the Rise of the Christian Right* 109-128

**Read:** Tina Fetner, *How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism*, pg. xi-xv & 1-22

**Read:** Margery Eagan, “Race, Not Abortion, was the Founding Issue of the Religious Right,” from *the Boston Globe*

**Due:** Reading Summary of Dowland from Group A

W/April 3  
**Assimilation Paper Due**

M/April 8  
*American Jews and Upward Socioeconomic Mobility*

**Read:** Rachel Kranson, “Introduction” and “What Now Supports Jewish Liberalism? Upward Mobility and Jewish Political Identity,” from *Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America*

**Due:** Reading Summary of Kranson from Group B
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading Summaries (Due: Follow the syllabus according to Groups A, B, and C)
The purpose of the reading summaries is to make sure you understand the readings, to ensure that you can synthesize scholars’ writings in your own words, and to practice writing concisely and coherently.

Instructions: In one paragraph of about five-six sentences, summarize the main points of the reading in your own words. What would you say are the most important aspects from the reading, and how can you describe them in a way that presents a coherent, full, yet succinct picture of the reading? Put differently, if someone asked you to briefly describe the reading, what would you say? Make sure to consider if the reading contains an argument. If so, be sure to include the author’s argument in your summary. Do not quote from the reading. The paragraph should be entirely in your own words.

The Reading Summary paragraphs will be graded out of 5 points.
5=excellent understanding of the reading and/or argument(s) that sufficiently captures the author’s main points, well organized paragraph, well written with no grammar mistakes.
4=good understanding of the reading or argument(s), missing something of significance from the author’s main points, or some small writing, organizational, or grammar issues.
3=average or superficial-level understanding of the reading or argument(s), missing important points that are key to the reading, and/or more than a couple writing, organizational, or grammar issues.
1-2=poor understanding of the reading or argument(s), and/or several writing issues.

2. In-Class Exam (February 27)
The purpose of the exam is to give you an opportunity to display what you have learned about the topics studied. The exam is closed book and will include a range of questions from short answer to paragraph responses. The exam is out of 100 points.

3. Essay: Assimilation in America (Due: April 3)
The purpose of this essay is for you to reflect on one of the course’s main themes and to offer your own perspective after having studied religion in America for several weeks.

Instructions: Write a four-page essay where you argue if assimilation into American identity is a good thing for the citizens and groups of this country. Based on the course’s readings, on what grounds would you argue that assimilation is a good or bad thing? Or both? What are the conditions of assimilation? How has religion shaped American assimilation? What does it mean to assimilate? And, should the country continue to push for assimilation? You do not need to answer all of these questions. But you should be clear about what assimilation means to you analytically. What examples from American religious history allow you to make this argument about the benefits and/or dangers of assimilation? You need to have a clear thesis that you will defend by substantiating your analysis with references to at least 4 course readings. Your citations may follow MLA, APA, or the Chicago Manual of Style.

The essay will be graded out of 100 points. 90-100=astute analysis, clear thesis, well organized, strong connection to at least four course readings, and well written. 80-89=sufficient connection to course reading(s), decent/mostly above-average analysis, moderately clear thesis, mostly well organized, and/or some grammar mistakes. 70-79=Insufficient connection to course readings, average analysis, unclear thesis, some structural issues, and some grammar mistakes. 69 and below=subpar analysis, organization, or weak connection to course readings, and multiple grammar mistakes.

4. Final Paper: Religion in America Public High Schools (Due: May 1)
The purpose of this paper is for you to reflect on our course topics and make an argument about the relevance of studying American religious history in American public high schools.

Instructions:
For this paper, imagine you have been tasked by a school board to write a four page paper explaining why the study of American religious history is important for American public high school students. What about the study of religion is important and why should it be incorporated into the curriculum? What educational advantages are there to providing students with a robust study of American religious history? What will students misunderstand about American history and culture if they do not study religion?

Write a four page essay where you make an argument about the relevance of studying American religious history in American public school. Make sure this paper contains a thesis. Then, use a minimum of four readings from the semester to illustrate your argument about the importance of studying religion in order to understand American culture and history adequately.
The Religion in American Public High Schools paper is out of 100 points. 90-100=astute analysis, clear thesis, well organized, strong connection to at least four course readings, and well written. 80-89=sufficient connection to course readings, decent/mostly above-average analysis, moderately clear thesis, mostly well organized, and/or some grammar mistakes. 70-79=Insufficient connection to course readings, average/superficial analysis, unclear thesis, some structural issues, and some grammar mistakes. 69 and below=subpar analysis, organization, or weak connection to course readings, and multiple grammar mistakes.

6. Participation Grade
Your participation grade is out of 100 points and is based on the following factors:
- Volunteering to answer questions posed by the professor and other students.
- Actively engaging in class discussions.
- Regular attendance.
- Arriving to class on time.
- Paying attention to whomever is speaking in class (other students and professor).
- Participating in class activities (small group discussions and exercises, writing reflections, etc.).
- Paying attention to video clips shown during class.

GRADING

Your semester course grade is out of 450 points:
1) Reading Summaries: 5 points each (x10) = 50 points (12% of semester grade)
2) Exam = 100 points (22%)
3) Essay: Assimilation Paper = 100 points (22%)
4) Final Essay: Religion in American Public High Schools = 100 points (22%)
5) Participation = 100 points (22%)

You will be graded on how you think, not on what you think. You are not expected to agree with the professor, fellow students, or the arguments in the assigned readings. You will be graded on how well you express your thoughts and positions, and how closely you read the assigned texts.

Please note: All assignments are graded, in part, on the quality of your writing. Your writing needs to be clear, well-organized, and free of spelling and grammatical mistakes with accurate and adequate citations.

Letter grade distribution for semester grade:

A = 94 – 100  B = 84 – 86  C = 74 – 76  D = 64 – 66
A- = 90 – 93  B- = 80 – 83  C- = 70 – 73  D- = 60 – 63
B+ = 87 – 89  C+ = 77 – 79  D+ = 67 – 69  F = 59 and lower

Incompletes: An incomplete semester grade (I) may not be given unless a contract is signed by both the student and the professor specifying the conditions necessary for completing the course. This means that if you stop submitting work, your grade will reflect the missed assignments. Please note that I rarely give out “I” grades, except in exceptional circumstances where the student has communicated well in advance the reasons for petitioning for an incomplete grade.
PROFESSOR KRUTZSCH’S TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE

1) Write a Reading Summary for EVERY reading in this course even though you will not hand most of them in for a grade. Writing a short paragraph summary after each reading will better prepare you for class discussions (and your participation grade), and they will be excellent resources as you prepare for the exam and both papers. It is my #1 tip for a reason!

2) Be okay to say something incorrect or not agreed on by all in the class. In order to participate in the course at a high level, we all have to be okay getting things wrong sometimes. Everyone benefits when someone says something not fully accurate because it gives us an opportunity to welcome other thoughts and to better flesh out ideas. Remember, you should actively participate in every class, not every other class, and not only for the thirty minutes of class. Actively participate for all ninety minutes of every class.

3) Write your two major papers early and set up an appointment with me so I can look over your thesis and some of the essay. Then you will have time to revise before you hand it in for a grade.

4) Come meet with me if things come up that you think I should know, or if you would like to discuss other things that will help improve your learning experience. And, visit me so I get to know more about you, your goals, and experiences as a student.

A Note on Course Topics Related to Various Forms of Violence: This course, at times, engages with topics like racial-based violence, which can be troubling. We explore these topics because of their prevalence, so that the response to them is not to ignore the magnitude of the problem. Course topics are outlined in the syllabus. If you know that reading about a particular topic could be traumatic for you, please notify me. My ultimate goal is for us to have productive discussions about important topics in our society, and for you to feel that you are in a safe environment to learn.

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