Introduction

The conquest of America, and the colonialism that followed, has what it means to be American. It is the foundational event, which has informed immigrant Americans about their relationship with the land as a “natural resource.” In sharp contrast, however, Native Americans or Indigenous peoples (both of these are descriptive terms of the original inhabitants of the Americas), have an understanding of land as Mother Earth or as a member of the extended family. In Immigrant and Indigenous contexts it is the meaning of land that defines religion.

Using the History of Religions, we will develop a definition of religion that is oriented to the material world. Rather than thinking of religion as “faith” or “belief,” we will seek a more inclusive way of understanding religion as an extension of material life. To help us we will read an Historian of Religions, Native American Theologian, a Linguist, and a popular historian. We will also read my book “The Urgency of Indigenous Religions.”

The “freedom of/from religion” in the United States is fundamental to US culture. But this has excluded the religions of Indigenous Peoples. Theirs has been a particularly traumatic in the American experience. By the end of this class you should be able to understand aspects of religion that are not usually considered religion by individual citizens. You will be able to address deep and important questions regarding fundamental aspects of the American identity such as the religious dimensions of land or money? Or how does phenomenon of conquest of the American continent in the past impinge on my religious understandings of the world today?
Required Texts:
Philip Arnold, *The Urgency of Indigenous Religions* (pdf on Blackboard)
Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red*
Charles H. Long, *Significations*
Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Tastes of Paradise*
Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*

Course Goals
The Department of Religion has articulated three goals that shape its teaching and its expectations of what students in its courses and programs may expect to gain from this study:

1. to understand better the nature and diversity of religious expressions in the contemporary world and in history, and their power in peoples' personal and collective lives;
2. to think more deeply and critically about religious experience and its modes of expression and forms of interpretation;
3. to recognize and appreciate the difficulties and possibilities in a disciplined study of religion; and to become aware of a diversity of approaches and methods within that study.

Statement Regarding Disability-Related Accommodations
Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, Office of Disability Services, see [http://disabilityservices.syr.edu](http://disabilityservices.syr.edu)

Academic Integrity Statement
The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see [http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/](http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/)

Class Courtesy
All students are expected to follow simple rules of academic courtesy with respect to fellow students and instructors. Please come to class on time to avoid disrupting the class. Once class begins, you must refrain from personal conversations. You must put away all non-course reading materials (e.g. newspapers). Turn off and put away all cell phones and MP3 players. **No laptops, smartphones or other electronic devices will be allowed in class.** Notes need to be taken with pen and paper. Please avoid premature preparations to leave class; your instructor will let you know when class is over. Eating is not allowed during class. You may be asked to leave the class for the day if you do not follow these rules.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>August</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 27         | Introduction to the DoCD [http://www.doctrineofdiscovery.org/index.htm](http://www.doctrineofdiscovery.org/index.htm)  
"An Indigenous Peoples’ Statement to the World" under “News Articles” tab. Deloria on Blackboard |
| **September** |                                             |                                                  |
| 1          | Labor Day—no class                          |                                                 |
| 3          | Doctrine of Christian Discovery              | Arnold, pgs. 198-216 (Blackboard)               |
| 8          | Columbian Legacy                            | Arnold, pgs. 216-227 (Blackboard)               |
| 10         | Columbus’ World                             | Arnold, pgs. 228-239 (Blackboard)               |
| **Handout Take-home Exam #1—Due to be posted on Blackboard 17 September** |                                             |
| 15         | What is Religion?                           | Definitions of Religion on Blackboard           |
|            |                                              | Long: Introduction                              |
| 17         | Primitive and Civilized                     | Long: Chapter 6                                 |
| 22         | Colonialism                                 | Long: Chapter 7                                 |
| 24         | Interpretations of Black Religion           | Long: Chapter 9                                 |
| 29         | Oppressive elements of religion             | Long: Chapter 11                                |
| **October** |                                             |                                                  |
| 1          | Discovery                                   | Todorov: pages 1-33                             |
| **Handout Take-Home Exam #2—Due to be posted on Blackboard 8 October** |                                             |
| 6          | Signs                                       | Todorov: pages 34-62                             |
| 8          | Conquest                                    | Todorov: pages 63-97                             |
| 13         | Cortez                                      | Todorov: pages 98-124                            |
| 15         | Love                                        | Todorov: pages 125-167                           |

Outlines for Final Projects due to be posted on Blackboard Saturday 18 October.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Todorov: pages 168-201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Imaginary Indians</td>
<td>Deloria, Jr.: Preface and Ch 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handout Take-Home Exam #3—Due to be posted on Blackboard 29 October</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Treaties</td>
<td>Deloria, Jr.: Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Terminating Indian lands</td>
<td>Deloria, Jr.: Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ambiguity of religion</td>
<td>Deloria, Jr.: Chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Coffee and Protestantism</td>
<td>Schivelbusch: Chapter 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chocolate and Tobacco</td>
<td>Schivelbusch: Chapter 3 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Industry and drinking</td>
<td>Schivelbusch: Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handout Take-Home Exam #3—Due to be posted on Blackboard 19 November</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ritual places</td>
<td>Schivelbusch: Chapter 6 &amp; 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Schivelbusch: Chapter 8</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Arnold, Epilogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 &amp; 26</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break—no classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
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Final Papers due to be posted on Blackboard by Monday 8 December 2014
Grading

Final grades will be based on 4 exams, the outline-presentation and final paper, and on attendance and class participation.

Take-home Exams: There are 4 take-home exams for this class. They will be essay format based on the reading and lecture for that section of the class. The dates for the exams are clearly marked on the syllabus. Each exam will be worth up to 15 points. Together they will comprise 60 points of your final grade.

Outline, Group Presentation and Final Paper: You will be responsible for developing an outline, participating in a group presentation and writing an individual paper. It can be on any aspect of the reading and your independent work. The date for posting an outline is marked on the syllabus. You will get up to 5 points for the outline. These are to be more than just a ‘bare-bones’ outline. They should be an explanation in narrative form of what you will be doing for the final project, how you are doing it and why it is important. As with the papers you will be required to respond to at least 2 other outlines a week after the posting date for which you will get another 5 points.

The group presentation of your project takes place during the last week of the semester. Your group of 5 to 6 people will have up to 15 minutes to present your project to the class. Groups will be selected by the instructors before the outline is due. Your group will receive up to 10 points for your presentation.

The individual final project is due to be posted on Blackboard on the day of our final exam. It is to be 1000 to 1500 words (4-6 pages long), 12 point, double-spaced. In addition to the narrative you may want to include photos, videos or other media in the project. You will receive up to 10 points for your final project. This paper is separate from the group project but may be based on the topic of your presentation. All totaled the final project outline, presentation, responses, and project itself is worth 30 points. I encourage you to contact me or the TA via email with ideas for the final project as soon as possible. We can make suggestions on how to do an effective final project. Good luck!

Written work will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1) **Clarity.** The viewpoints you present in your writing must be clearly conceived and well argued. Your writing style should be straight-forward, easy to read and should be clearly related to the issues you wish to address. Topic sentences at the beginning of each paragraph are helpful in establishing the issue and argument for the reader at the outset. (40%)

2) **Engagement with the material.** Entries are to be related to the reading material. They are not reviews of what has been stated in the book but are your critical analysis of the reading. Avoid direct quotes. Instead seriously take-up what you consider to be the ‘key’ issues for the study of religion in the reading. An analysis of the issues discussed in the course become clearer the closer your writing is to the texts used in class. (40%)

3) **Creativity.** The ‘work’ of Religious Studies, and perhaps the Humanities in general, is essentially creative. Interpretation of religious phenomena requires that you come to
some meaningful relationship with your object of study. This is one of the defining characteristics of creativity. You have a unique and important contribution to make to our collective understandings. There are no predetermined experts in the area of interpretation, only well refined and well argued positions. Your interpretations will be dealt with as importantly as you regard them yourself. (20%)

**Attendance and class participation:** Attendance is mandatory for this class. Lectures and reading will be intimately related but quite different. It is therefore in your own best interest to do the reading AND attend class, as both will reflect on your performance on discussion papers, responses and your final paper. You will have two unexcused absences. You will be given regular opportunities to participate in class either by asking questions, making comments, and interacting with other students in discussion in class or on Blackboard.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

- 4 Exams (15 points each) 60 points
- Outline and 2 responses 10 points
- Group Presentation 10 points
- Final paper/project 10 points
- **Attendance and class participation** 10 points
  Total 100 points

Final grades will be assessed as follows:

- A 94-100 points
- A- 91-93 points
- B+ 87-90 points
- B 84-86 points
- B- 81-83 points
- C+ 77-80 points
- C 74-76 points
- C- 71-73 points
- D 60-70 points
- F 59 points and below
Religion:
(Compiled by Ann Grodzins Gold)

1. Ludwig Feuerbach, 1841
   "... is man’s earliest and also indirect form of self-knowledge. ... 
   "... is the childlike condition of humanity ... 
   "... is the dreamlike condition of the human mind. But even in dreams we do not find ourselves 
in emptiness or in heaven, but on earth, in the realm of reality."

2. Karl Marx, 1844
   "... is the sigh of the oppressed creature. ... 
   "... is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not 
revolve around himself. 
   "... the fantastic realization of the human essence because the human essence has 
no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore ... the fight against the other 
world, of which religion is the spiritual aroma.

3. Eward Tylor, 1871
   "... [is] the belief in Spiritual Beings."

4. Vivekananda, c. 1893
   "... is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man."

5. Emile Durkheim, c. 1915
   "... is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to 
say, things set apart and forbidden--beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral 
community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."

6. Sigmund Freud, 1927
   "Religious ideas are teachings and assertions about facts and conditions of external 
(or internal) reality which tell one something one has not discovered for oneself and which 
lay claim to one’s belief. Since they give us information about what is most important and 
interesting to us in life, they are particularly highly prized. ... 
   We must ask where the inner force of those doctrines lies and to what it is that they 
owe their efficacy, independent as it is of recognition by reason. 
   ... religious beliefs ... are illusions, fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most 
urgent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength lies in the strength of those wishes."

7. Alfred North Whitehead, c. 1927
   "... is what the individual does with his own solitariness; and if you were never 
solitary, you were never religious."
8. Bronislaw Malinowski, 1931
"... is not born out of speculation or reflection, still less out of illusion or misapprehension, but rather out of the real tragedies of human life, out of the conflict between human plans and realities. ... Every important crisis of human life implies a strong emotional upheaval, mental conflict and possible disintegration. ... Religious belief consists in the traditional standardization of the positive side in the mental conflict and therefore satisfies a definite individual need ... On the other hand, religious belief and ritual, by making the critical acts and the social contracts of human life public, traditionally standardized, and subject to supernatural sanctions, strengthen the bonds of human cohesion.

9. Carl Jung, 1938
"... appears to me to be a peculiar attitude of the human mind, ... that is, a careful consideration and observation of certain dynamic factors, understood to be 'powers,' spirits, demons, gods, laws, ideas, ideals or whatever name man has given to such factors as he has found in his world powerful, dangerous or helpful enough to be taken into careful consideration, or grand, beautiful and meaningful enough to be devoutly adored and loved. ... 'Religion,' it might be said, is the term that designates the attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been altered by the experience of the numinosum."

10. Mohandas Gandhi, c. 1940
"... is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself. ... Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil."

11. Robert Lowie, 1952
"... is verily a universal feature of human culture, not because all societies foster a belief in spirits, but because all recognize in some form or other awe-inspiring, extraordinary manifestations of reality. ... those cultural phenomena ... which center about or are somehow connect with the sense of mystery or weirdness."

12. Paul Tillich, 1963
"... is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary and which itself contains the answer to the question of the meaning of our life. Therefore this concern is unconditionally serious and shows a willingness to sacrifice any finite concern which is in conflict with it. The predominant religious name for the content of such a concern is God -- a god or gods.

13. Clifford Geertz, 1966
"... is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."
14. Peter Berger, 1967
"...is the audacious attempt to conceive of the entire universe as being humanly significant.

15. Frederick Streng, 1969
"... is ... a means of ultimate transformation. This definition focuses on the dynamic process of change in religious life, a change from a disharmonious, illusory, evil, or destructive state of existence to ultimate harmony, enlightenment, purity, or creative power."

16. Daniel Bell, 1980 [summarized by Mary Douglas]
[offers] "... a set of coherent answers to the universal existential problems of mankind. Its answers may be codified into a creed and celebrated with rites, and these may be established in institutions. The general effect of religion is to create coherence in experience and emotional bonds between those who adhere to the credal form."

"... will mean orientation--orientation in the ultimate sense, that is, how one comes to terms with the ultimate significance of one’s place in the world. ... The religion of any people is more than a structure of thought; it is experience, expression, motivations, intentions, behaviors, styles, and rhythms."

18. Cornell West, 1994
[means] "... ligare, to bind; religare, to rebind in the midst of deep crisis, in the midst of scars and bruises and wounds and heartaches and heartbreaks and sadness and sorrow. We can also begin anthropologically and look at religion from a more basic level: we frivolous, two legged, linguistically conscious creatures, born between urine and feces, we must weave some webs of meaning and significance as we face inevitable and inescapable extinction. We are not here that long. In order to make this short sojourn meaningful, of some significance, we must come up with some sense of a story, a narrative, a ritual in a community, some bonds of affection, some networks of support, some cords or ties of empathy and sympathy and compassion."