

REL 600/Graduate Seminar: **American Religions: Innovation and Immigration**

Spring 2017

Tuesdays: 3:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Hall of Languages, Room 504.

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 12 noon to 2 p.m.; Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Purpose and Process: Focusing on the the 19th century, a period of great change in American spiritual expression, the course is designed to examine the fruits of religious freedom in a period in which innovation and immigration re-shaped religious practice, presence and often belief in the United States. To understand the era, we will read, discuss and write analytically, using primary and secondary sources that introduce and comment upon religious ideas. The goal is to gain a view, both broad and particular, of how religious ideas were adapted to life in the new republic—and how the ferment of that era is critical to understanding religion in America today.

Invitation: Students may bring their own interests within the subject area, to share and discuss.

Requirements: In addition to regular attendance, participation in discussions and keeping current with the readings, you will be expected to write a short paper a week,* responding to themes you discern in the material assigned. I may give you a question on which to focus or ask you to discuss a theme you choose. Papers should run about 500 words, citing references to material used. Twice during the semester, each of you will be asked to present an essay intended to stimulate and lead discussion. [*You may choose one week during the semester in which not to write a paper.]

Readings: They will be placed on Blackboard or otherwise made available.

Disability and Academic Integrity: Essential material related to both these areas will be distributed to you on the course's first day.

Your instructor has taught at Syracuse University, in the Religion Department and the Newspaper and Online Journalism Department (Newhouse) since January 2004. He was a visiting fellow and scholar in residence at Princeton University's Center for the Study of Religion, 2001-03, and, prior to that, national religion correspondent for *The New York Times*. He is the author of two books, Beyond Tolerance (Viking, 2008) and Lincoln's Bishop (HarperCollins, 2014).

The readings listed below are subject to change.

1. 1/17: **Introduction to course/ preliminary discussion: looking back from today**

The Pew Forum, short readings on religious demographics

John Winthrop, "*A Modell of Christian Charity*"

[Lecture/discussion subject: Our Puritan problem]

Jonathan Edwards, "*A Divine and Supernatural Light*;"

Rodney Stark, The Churching of America, 1776-2005. [selected chapter, tba]

2. 1/24: **Religion and Revolution**

The Rev. Charles Woodmason, The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of Revolution

[Lecture/discussion subject: Disestablishment]

James Madison, "*A Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments*."

[Thomas Jefferson: personal faith]

Gordon S. Wood, The Empire of Liberty, Chapter 16.

3. 1/31: **Feminism and religious innovation on the New York frontier**

Paul B. Moyer, The Universal Publick Friend, Chapter 4.

Stephen Stein, The Shakers, pp.18-32; 66-76.

Whitney Cross, The Burned Over District, pp. 3-13; 138-172.

4. 2/7: **The Great Revivals**

[Revivalism: East and West]

Devereux Jarrett, "*The Nature of Love to Christ*"

Peter Cartwright, Autobiography [selected reading, tba]

Jon Butler, Awash in a Sea of Faith, Chapter 9.

Nathan Hatch: The Democratization of American Christianity [selected reading, tba]

[Unitarianism and Universalism]

William Ellery Channing, "*Likeness to God*"

5. 2/14: **Evangelicalism and Social Reform**

Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War against Slavery, ch. 6.

[Charles G. Finney/ Lane Seminary/ Oberlin College]

Henry Mayer, All On Fire, Chapter 11

Daniel Walker Howe, What Hath God Wrought? Chapters 5 and 12.

6. 2/21: **African American Christianity**

[Richard Allen and the African Methodist Episcopal Church]

Absalom Jones, "*A Thanksgiving Sermon*"

The Rev. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "*Denmark Vesey*," *The Atlantic*, June 1861

[Nat Turner]

Albert Raboteau, Slave Religion: "The Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South

7. 2/28: **Transcendentalism**

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "*The Divinity School Address*"

Henry David Thoreau, "*Walking*"

[Women's Rights Convention, Seneca Falls]

Lucretia Mott, "*Uses and Abuses of the Bible*"

8. 3/7: **The Mormons**

Joseph Smith Jr., "*The King Follett Sermon*"

Roger Launius and John Hallwas, Kingdom on the Mississippi, selected chapter
[The Fox Sisters and Spiritualism]

3/14: **Syracuse University Spring Break**

9. 3/21: **"Irrepressible Conflict"**

[John Brown in Kansas, New York and Virginia]

[Theodore Parker]

Christine Leigh Heyrman, Southern Cross [reading tba]

10. 3/28: **Lincoln, Civil War and Religion**

Abraham Lincoln, "*Handbill Replying to Charges of Infidelity*"

"*Lyceum Address*"

"*House Divided Speech*"

Allen Guelzo, Abraham Lincoln, Redeemer President

Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering [reading tba]

11. 4/4: **Lincoln, part II**

Abraham Lincoln, "*Meditation on the Divine Will*"
"*Gettysburg Address*"
"*Second Inaugural Address*"

12. 4/11: **Esotericism and New Thought**

[Madame Helena Blavatsky and Henry Steele Olcott]
Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit*, reading tba
Leigh Schmidt, *Restless Souls*, reading tba

13. 4/18: **Demographic change; re-vising Asia**

[High tide of immigration]
[Roman Catholics and Jews]
[Parliament of the World's Religions]
Swami Vivekananda, "*The Chicago Addresses*"
Anagarika Dharmapala, "*Speeches*"

14. 4/25: **Pentecostalism: Toward the New Century**

[Azusa Street revival]
[Into the Appalachians]
Aimee Semple MacPherson, "*The Baptism of the Holy Spirit*"
[An American export]

15. 5/2: **Concluding discussion**