

PHILLIPS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER

The following syllabus is the teaching and learning guide for the last time this course was taught. It will give you a good idea of the descriptions of the course, how it was taught, the reading, the papers and other assignments, the intended outcomes, and the workload. By examining this syllabus and others, you will be able to form an impression of what graduate theological education at Phillips Theological Seminary requires of students.

Due to periodic curriculum revisions, course names and/or numbers may be different on this syllabus than what the name and/or number of the current offered course may be.

This syllabus is provided for your information only. The faculty reserves the right to revise the curriculum, and each professor reserves the right to decide how best to meet the learning goals of the curriculum. Therefore, the following syllabus is an historical artifact rather than a promise of how the course will be taught in the future, or that the course will be taught again.

By Phillips Theological Seminary copyright policy, the syllabus is the intellectual property of the individual faculty member, with usage rights granted to PTS. Please contact the copyright owner if you seek to use the syllabus, for other than your personal enrichment.

Phillips Theological Seminary

Christianity in the United States

HC 650 – Spring 2014

John M. Imbler

918/610-8303

john.imbler@ptstulsa.edu

Purpose: This course is designed to introduce various events, movements, and peoples of Christianity in the United States from the pre-colonial period to the present and will recognize the presence of non-Christian religions.

Goals: To help students explore historical, theological, and social contexts for their ministries by: 1) Identifying themes, theologies, and personalities impacting religious life in the U.S.; 2) Engaging in historical critique as one means of viewing the current religious landscape; 3) Providing a framework by which contemporary church life and work can be assessed.

The course purpose and goals correlate with departmental goals in Historical Studies: ...help students gain a broad perspective on the various, often radically different, expressions of Christianity from its early beginnings to the present and to encourage students to gain an understanding of and appreciation for other major contemporary religions....students should be able to critique contemporary thought and practice by examining historical contexts and tracing storylines; articulate a substantive understanding of the theology, polity, and ecclesiology of their own denominations in order to personally appropriate and publicly interpret that denomination's features and values; and explore the general concepts of ecumenical and interfaith engagements through historical developments, theological understandings, and cooperative activities.

Methodology: The course is laid out thematically with some attention to chronology. Readings, lectures, and discussions are based on selected themes. Class sessions will not necessarily review each assigned reading, but all readings serve to under gird and expand the lectures and discussions. Media will also be used as a teaching aid, and guests may be invited on special topics.

Expectations: It is expected that students will keep up with the reading and writing assignments. Participation is important for effective learning. Not making contributions to the discussions detracts from your ability to learn and adversely affects the vitality and continuity of the class. Missing more than 20% of the course is cause for a failing grade. Refer to the Student Handbook. The spring withdrawal deadline is **March 21**.

Papers must adhere to PTS standards of form and style. Gender-biased language must not be used when referring to persons and to God. Citations from historical texts should retain the original language of the writers even though any current interpretation or analysis you prepare must be free of gender bias and stereotypes.

Requests for incompletes will be granted only in the most extreme circumstances. The seminary deadline for an incomplete request is **May 9**.

General Information: Library research is recommended for the completion of assignments and the final exam. The selected bibliography in Evans' *Histories of*

American Christianity is an excellent reference, and most books can be found in the PTS library. Additional books not listed in Evans have been placed on 7 day reserve.

It is my intention to return written work with comments and a grade within two weeks of the due date, except for late papers. If at any time you need an assessment of your course work, please let me know. Submit written work and content questions to me in person or by email.

The Disability Accommodation is printed in Moodlerooms if you need assistance with that.

Please note that Wikipedia is not an acceptable research tool.

Assignments and Grading:

1. For those taking this class as their denominational polity requirement, first build a denominational bibliography of at least 3 books then write a paper using selections from that bibliography to respond to points *a* through *d* below. Official denominational websites are acceptable.

For those taking this as an elective history course write a paper on a denomination or significant religious movement living in North America which is not of your own denominational or religious family. The topic must be pre-approved by the instructor.

The paper is to be 6-8 typed pages, double-spaced in 11 or 12 pt. font, with footnote or endnote citations according to PTS standards. Specific information to be contained in the paper are: *a*) Era of establishment and family of origin, *b*) Theological perspectives or doctrines, *c*) Major personalities, and *d*) Rites or practices. *Please follow this format closely*

Accounts for 25% of the final grade.

2. A research paper of 4-6 typed pages, double-spaced in 11 or 12 pt. font, on a topic of your choosing. This may reflect your personal interest, guide to your ministry, or both. Be sure it relates to Christianity in the U.S. but can be in the scope of religion, politics, social justice, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, or other related field. Please confer with me on the topic.

Accounts for 25% of the final grade.

3. Written take-home examination over the entirety of the course.

Accounts for 30% of the final grade.

4. Attendance and informed discussions.

Accounts for 20% of the final grade.

Required Texts:

Berkus, Catherine A. and W. Clark Gilpin, eds. *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2011 ISBN 078-0-8078-7213-0 - \$24.00

Evans, Christopher H. *Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction*. Baylor University Press, 2013 ISBN 978-1-60258-545-4 - \$44.95

Edward J. Blum and Paul Harvey. *The Color of Christ*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012 ISBN 978-0-8978-3572-2 - \$32.50

Keller, Rosemary Skinner and Rosemary Radford Reuther, eds., *In Our Own Voices: Four Centuries of America Women's Religious Writings*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1995 ISBN 0-664-22285-4 - \$37.23

The Constitution of the United States of America can be downloaded at no cost

Evangelical Manifesto from www.evangelicalmanifesto.com can be downloaded at no cost

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life from <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports> Check Data Tables for information. Printable version – 19 pages; U.S. Religious Landscape Survey – Affiliations, Maps, Portraits, Comparisons and Report 1 and Report 2. These can be downloaded at no cost

Schedule:

Reading Assignments: First weekend – February 20-22

Keller and Reuther – Introduction and Chapters 4, 8, and 9

Blum and Harvey – Parts I and II

Berkus and Gilpin – Pages 29-75, 102-118, 153-213, 307-326

Evans – Parts I and II

Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution

Feb 20 Orientation, Overview of Historical Methodology, and
Introduction to Christianity in the U.S.

Feb 21 *Religion in a Colonial Context*
First Americans, Expansion of the Land, the Puritan Ideal
Civil Religion and the New Republic; the Bill of Rights

Feb 22 *The New Nation*
Revivalism and Holiness Movements, Apocalypticism,
Millennialism, Evangelicalism, and Variant Groups
The Black Experience in North America

Reading Assignments: Second weekend – April 3-5

Keller and Reuther – Chapters 1, 5, 6, 7, and 10

Blum and Harvey –Part III

Berkus and Gilpin – Pages 76-101, 119-154, 214-241, 259-305, 327-346, 466-508

Evans – Parts III, IV, and V

Apr 3 *Years of Midpassage*
Immigrant Populations and Other Religious Influences
Denominations, Sects, and Religious Bodies
Education and Intellectualism

Apr 4 *Modern America*
Industrialization and the Power of the Gospels
Ecumenism and Interfaith Engagements
Women and Era Theologies

Apr 5 *Postmodernity*
U.S. Cultures and Religious Attributes
Non-Christian Religions in the U.S.

Denominational paper due: March 14

Research paper due: April 3

Final Exam due: May 9