



**Religion and Protest (HI-655)**  
**Winter/Spring 2006**

From the Church of England dissenters in the 1620s to the Waco separatists of the 1990s, religion has been a locus of dissent and counterculture in the United States. This course will examine that creative (and destructive) potential in American religions, with special focus on the abolitionist reformers of the 19th century, the temperance activists of the early 20th century, and the religious counterculturalists of the 1960s (advocating against the Vietnam War, for civil rights and gay rights, and so forth).

**Meeting Day, Time and Dates:**

Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., beginning February 1

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[Course Syllabus](#)

From the Church of England dissenters in the 1620s to the Waco separatists of the 1990s, religion has been a locus of dissent and counterculture in the United States. Commitment to a religious faith or community is frequently used to express dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs in the world—to *protest* against it. Today the world is filled with sin, or idolatry, or greed—but tomorrow, or someday in the future, if we follow the correct religious path, we shall be delivered to a better state of affairs. This course will examine those creative (and destructive) hopes in American religion, looking at peace activists, abolitionists, temperance proponents, and the religious counterculturalists of the 1960s (advocating against the Vietnam War, for civil rights and gay rights, and so forth). The course will culminate with a close look at debates about Intelligent Design in school curricula today.

There will be two short papers (about five pages each) and a final examination.

**Weekly Schedule** (specific page numbers to be assigned in class):

1 Feb: Introduction, Protestantism as Protest  
John Winthrop, "City on a Hill" (in class)

8 Feb: Pacifism  
Reading due: selections from Lynd, *Nonviolence in America*

15 Feb: Religion and Reform  
Reading due: Abzug, *Cosmos Crubling*, Part I

22 Feb: Religion and Reform  
Reading due: Abzug, *Cosmos Crubling*, Part II

1 March: Abolition and the Civil War; Preaching as Protest  
**First paper due.** Viewing due, online Beecher Lectures by Harry S. Stout, available at [www.yale.edu/divinity/video/convo2005/stout01.htm](http://www.yale.edu/divinity/video/convo2005/stout01.htm)  
[www.yale.edu/divinity/video/convo2005/stout02.htm](http://www.yale.edu/divinity/video/convo2005/stout02.htm)

In class: re-read "City on a Hill," read "Gettysburg Address"

8 March: Pentecostalism as Protest

Reading due: from *Heaven Below*; in-class viewing, *Holy Ghost People*, directed by Peter Adair

15 March: Fundamentalism as Protest

Reading due: *Inherit the Wind*; in-class viewing of the film

22 March: Religion and Civil Rights

Reading due: from Chappell, *A Stone of Hope*

29 March: Religion and Black Power; Ethnicity and Nationalism

**Second paper due.** Reading due: from *Malcolm X Speaks* (those who have not read the *Autobiography* must)

5 April: Religion and the Sixties: Gay Rights, Women's Rights, Jewish and Catholic Separatism

Reading due: from Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's...*

19 April: "Cults" and Protest

Reading due: from Tabor, *Why Waco?*

26 April: Religion and the Protest Against Modernism Today

Reading due: Intelligent Design handout; in-class documentary, *Born Again*

3 May: **Final examination**

### **Required Books:**

Robert Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling*

**ISBN:** 0195045688

David L. Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*

**ISBN:** 080782819X

Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, *Inherit the Wind*

**ISBN:** 0345466276

Staughton Lynd, *Nonviolence in America*,

**ISBN :** 1570750106

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

**ISBN:** 0345350685—required for those who have not read it before

*Malcolm X Speaks*

**ISBN:** 0802132138

Mark Oppenheimer, *Knocking on Heaven's Door*,

**ISBN:** 0300100248

James D. Tabor, *Why Waco?*

**ISBN:** 0520208994

Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture*

**ISBN:** 0674011287

**Recommended Books:**

David Garrow, *Bearing the Cross*

Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*

Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of a Nation*

**Grading**

The grade will be 20 percent class participation, 20 percent the first paper, 20 percent the second paper, and 40 percent the final examination.

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