

H-728: “Religion in the United States, 1945 – Present”
Christian Theological Seminary
Fall, 2009

Contact Information

Instructor: Scott D. Seay, M.Div., Ph.D.
Office: Room 235
*Office Hours: Tue., 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.; 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.
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*Ordinarily, you do not need an appointment to see me during office hours. If I am not at my desk, Joyce Krauser, the faculty secretary, will know where I am in the building. If you prefer to make an appointment, please do so through her. Her office is Room 216, and her phone number is (317) 931-2350.

Course Description

In this advanced course students will explore major developments in the religious history of the United States since 1945, with emphasis on how the church has negotiated the increasing pluralism of American society. In addition to providing students with a broad survey of the last sixty years or religious history in the United States, they also will pursue several themes in depth: the church and the so-called “culture wars;” the limits of religious freedom; Christian faith and civil rights; cults and other forms of extremist religion; and the future of the post-Baby Boom church.

Learning Objectives

Objective	Measure
Trace out the most important trends in American religious history since 1945	Reading secondary sources; class lectures and discussions; final examination
Identify and explain the significance of key leaders, movements, and institutions that contribute to American religious life since 1945	Reading secondary sources; class lectures and discussions; historical research paper; final examination
Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the church’s response to the increasing pluralism of American society	Reading secondary sources; class lectures and discussions; impact essay

Explain how understanding trends in American religion since 1945 will impact the student's ministry	Class lectures and discussions; impact essay
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Course Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation (20%): Your regular attendance and lively participation in each dimension of this course is critical to its success. This means that you should:

- Read the assigned materials carefully and completely *before* class;
- Arrive on time for class and remain for the entire class session;
- Inform the instructor ahead of time if missing class is absolutely necessary;
- Remain attentive during all classroom activities;
- Listen closely and respond respectfully to the instructor and fellow students;
- Submit all work for the course on time as required by the due dates; and,
- Ask relevant questions during lectures and contribute to class discussions.

You should expect this portion of your grade to be reduced significantly if you miss or are regularly late to class, appear not to have completed the readings, or fail to contribute to the class discussion. Consistent with Seminary attendance policies, students who miss more than three class sessions – for whatever reason – will not receive credit for the course.

2. Historical essay (30%): You will be expected to write a 3,000-word historical research paper on some topic about which you have a passion and interest. In this paper, you are expected to engage in the process of historical reasoning, making use of both primary and secondary source material to describe and explain the significance of your topic. The paper is due no later than December 9, and may be turned in earlier.

3. Impact essay (30%): You will be expected to write a 3,000-word essay that describes how understanding the history of religion in the United States will impact your ministry, whatever that may be. In this reflection paper, you are expected to demonstrate a mastery of the course material and apply the insights that you have gained to your ministry context. I am happy to help at any stage of the process of writing this paper; just ask. The paper also is due no later than December 9, and may be turned in earlier. Students who are not studying for congregational ministry (e.g., students in the M.T.S. degree program) should consult with me about how to complete this writing requirement for the course.

Only under *extraordinary* circumstances will you be permitted to turn in a paper late. Ordinarily, late papers will be subject to significant penalties in terms of grade. I will be happy to help you with these papers at any stage of the writing process; just ask.

4. Final examination (20%): At the beginning of the course, I will distribute a timeline of important events in the history of religion in the United States since 1945. Throughout the semester, I urge you to research the items on the list, make sure that you understand what they are, and consider the importance of these items. Your final examination will consist of twenty (20) short-answer identification items drawn from this timeline. More instructions about the final examination will be given out during the semester.

If you have a certified learning disability or physical or emotional challenges, you are required to inform me within the first week of the course concerning any special accommodations that you require. All efforts, consistent with the overall learning objectives of the course will be made to meet these learning needs.

You are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty in all of your work for this course. Accordingly, no plagiarism, fabrication, or cheating of any kind will be tolerated. I will report all incidents of academic dishonesty to the Dean of the Seminary, who will follow the disciplinary procedures outlined in the academic catalog. In cases where it has been proven that you have plagiarized, fabricated, or cheated in any way, you will fail this course.

An Important Note about Grades

You should know that I am stridently opposed to all forms of grade inflation. If you complete the basic requirements of the course satisfactorily, you can expect to receive an average final grade (C-range). If you fail to meet the basic requirements in some way, you can expect your final grade to be lower than that (D-range). Because it is not an entitlement, an above average grade (B-range) must be earned by consistent effort and solid performance on all assigned work in the course. An exceptional grade (A-range) is just that: an exception to the rule. You will earn an exceptional grade only if you consistently perform above and beyond in all aspects of the course. I invite students who wish to earn above average or exceptional grades to consult with me about strategies for doing so.

This is the grading scale that I will use in this course:

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

Required Textbooks

The following books, in whole or in part, are required reading for this course:

- Patrick Allitt, *Religion in America Since 1945: A History* (Columbia, 2003)
- Peter Irons, *God on Trial: Landmark Cases from America's Religious Battlefields* (Penguin, 2007)

- David Chidester, *Salvation and Suicide: Jim Jones, the People's Temple, and Jonestown* (Indiana, 2003)
- Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America* (Basic Books, 2006)
- Robert Wuthnow, *After the Baby Boomers: How Tenty- and Thirty-Somethings are Shaping the Future of American Religion* (Princeton, 2007)
- R. Drew Smith, ed. *A New Day Begun: African American Churches and the Civic Culture in Post-Civil Rights America* (Duke, 2003)
- H-728 Classpack

The textbooks may be purchased in the Seminary bookstore and copies of all required readings have been placed on reserve in the Seminary library for the duration of the semester. The instructor will provide the Classpack to each student free of charge.

Course Schedule

Date	Readings	Topics
Sep 2		No Class
Sep 9	Allitt, ch. 1 Ockenga, "Convocation Address" (1947) Day, "Our Brothers, the Communists" (1949) Niebuhr, "The Innocent Nation" (1952)	No Class
Sep 16	Allitt, ch. 2 Herberg, excerpts from <i>Protestant, Catholic, Jew</i> (1955) Church League of America, "A Manual for Survival" (1961) Fullbright, "The Arrogance of Power" (1966)	Cold War American Religion
Sep 23	Allitt, ch. 3 SNCC, "Statement of Purpose" (1960) King, excerpts from "Letter from a Birmingham City Jail" (1963) Malcolm X, excerpts from the <i>Autobiography</i> (1965)	Religion and the Civil Rights Movement
Sep 30	Smith, Part I, Part II, <u>or</u> Part III	The On-going Challenge of Racial Justice
Oct 7	Allitt, chs. 4-5 Kennedy, "Address" (1960) Heschel, "The Moral Outrage of Vietnam" (1967) Cone, "The White Church and Black Power" (1970)	Shaking the Foundations I

Oct 14	Allitt, ch. 6 Grant, "Black Theology and the Black Woman" (1980) Daly, excerpts from <i>Gyn/Ecology</i> (1983) Lorde, "An Open Letter to Mary Daly" (1979)	Shaking the Foundations II
Oct 21	Chidester, chs 1-3	No Class
Oct 28	Chidester, chs. 4-5 Thrash, excerpts from <i>The Onliest One Alive</i> (1995)	Jonestown: A Case Study in Religious Extremism
Nov 4	Allitt, ch. 7 Balmer, chs. 1-2 "Abortion and the Court" (1973) Sider, "A Statement of Intent" (1981) Reed, excerpts from <i>Active Faith</i> (1996)	Neo-Evangelicalism and the Religious Right I
Nov 11	Balmer, chs. 3-5, and the conclusion	Critiquing the Religious Right
Nov 18	Graham, excerpts from <i>Just as I Am</i> (1997) Cleage, "Let's Not Waste the Holy Spirit" (1972) Racial Reconciliation Manifesto (1994) Miller, "The Re-Invented Church: Styles and Strategies" (1999)	Movements of Revitalization
Nov 25	Allitt, chs. 9-10 Lindsey, excerpts from <i>The Late Great Planet Earth</i> (1970) USCCB, excerpts from "The Challenge of Peace" (1983) Barkun, "Reflections After Waco" (1993) Farrakhan, "Challenge to Black Men" (1995)	A New World Order?
Dec 2	Irons, chs 1-2, and <u>three</u> other chapters	The Supreme Court and Religious Freedom
Dec 9	Allitte, chs. 11-12 Wuthnow, chs.1-2, 5-6, and 8-11	The Future of Religion in the United States
Dec 18	Final examination due by 5:00 p.m.	