

History 4790
American Religions
Fall Semester 2009

I. Contact Information

Hist 4790 Three Credit Hours
Location: BU C 210 and Library 1170
Time: T TH 10:45 – 12:05

Dr. Colleen McDannell, Sterling M. McMurrin Professor of Religious Studies
Office: 245 Irish Building
Contact me by phone 581-4748 not by email. Leave a message on my answer machine.

To access e-copies: www.CMcDannell.com then “Students” then “Secret Image”

II. Introduction and Background

Religion in America is a complex and vibrant phenomenon that influences every aspect of American life and culture. This advanced undergraduate course examines the major religious traditions of the United States and how they have shaped American society and culture. It assumes that religion, like all human expressions, changes over time. As this course fulfills the Diversity Requirement, it will pay particular attention how religions are shaped by--and in turn shape--categories of race, gender, and ethnicity. The course will include guest lectures, examples of sacred music, and representations of religions on film.

Although the course begins in the seventeenth century, it concentrates on the time after the Civil War. The first weeks focus on Protestantism, beginning with the history of the Protestant denominations and their role in creating national values. It then considers the establishment of a distinctive African American Christianity. By the mid-term we reach the early twentieth-century divisions between “modernists” and “fundamentalists,” the uses of religion in the struggles for civil rights in the sixties and seventies, and the rise of the conservative religious politics.

After the mid-term we switch gears and focus on Native American religious traditions, specifically the rituals and world view of the Kiowa. We then examine the place of immigration in American religious life through our study of Catholicism and Islam. The course concludes with the varieties of Muslim life in the United States—from the earliest Muslim slaves, through Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, to our post 9-11 world.

III. Objectives

To broaden and deepen our understanding of the history of religions in the United States

To understand how scholars study religion

To appreciate the diversity and unity of American society and culture

To develop communication and interpretive skills—both in written and verbal forms

IV. Course Texts and Films

Books Available in Bookstore

Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South*

Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

John Patrick Shanley, *Doubt*

In e-form at www.CMcDannell.com [click “students” then secret icon]

Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*

Ch. 3 “Bread and Mortar: The Presence of Roman Catholicism”

Colleen McDannell, ed. *The Religions of the United States in Practice*, vols. 1 and 2:

Michael J. McClymond, “English Hymnody in Early America,”

Paul Harvey, “African American Spirituals,” and “Freedom Songs and the Civil Rights Movement,”

Carolyn DeSwarte Gifford, “Temperance Songs and Hymns,”

Julie Ingersoll, “Contemporary Christian Worship Music”

Films (summaries at: <http://www.imdb.com/>)

Find them at: Streaming [see instructions on my website] OR on DVD at Knowledge Commons OR at Netflix

Group A (Pick any two)

With God on Our Side: George W. Bush and the Rise of the Religious Right

Jesus Camp BR1640 .J48 2006

For the Bible Tells Me So BS680.H67 F67 2007

Saved! PN1997.2 .S295 2004

Sister Aimee (American Experience) BX7990 I68 M323 2007

Group B

Malcolm X (Spike Lee Film) PN1997 .M25587 2000 **AND**

(Pick any two) *America At the Crossroads* (a recent PBS Series):

Muslim Americans E184.M88 M88 2007
The Mosque in Morgantown NA5212 .H8 2009
Homegrown: Islam in Prison HV9471 .H64 2007
Stand Up: Muslim American Comics Come of Age PS439 .S83 2007

V. Scheduled Topics

	Tuesdays	Thursdays
Week 1 T25 TH27	Introduction	Christian Origins
Week 2 T 1 TH 3	Protestant Beliefs and Rituals Read: McClymond, “English Hymnody” <u>Listen:</u> Early American Hymns	Denominations and Protestant America
Week 3 T 8 TH 10	Revivalism and Frontier Protestantism <u>Listen:</u> Revival Hymns	<u>Discussion:</u> <i>Slave Religion</i> and Paul Harvey, “African American Spirituals” <u>Listen:</u> Spirituals
Week 4 T15 TH17	African American Christianity through the Great Migration <u>Listen:</u> Gospel Music	American Imperialism and Christian Civilization <u>Listen:</u> Temperance Hymns <u>Read:</u> Gifford, “Temperance Songs”
Week 5 T22 TH24	Modernists and Fundamentalists	Civil Rights Movements <u>Read:</u> Paul Harvey, “Freedom Songs” <u>Listen:</u> Freedom Songs
Week 6 T29 TH 1	<i>Guest Lecture:</i> Rev. France Davis Calvary Baptist Church	<u>Discussion:</u> Born Again Christians any two films from Group A
Week 7 T6 TH8	<u>Field Reports #1 or #2</u>	<u>Mid Term Examination</u>
Week 8 T13 TH15	Fall Break	No Class
Week 9 T20 TH22	Indian History and Plains Culture	Native American Worldview
Week 10 T27 TH29	Kiowa Rituals	<u>Discussion:</u> <i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i> <u>Listen:</u> Kiowa Hymns
Week 11 T3 TH5	Catholic Immigrants in Urban America	Catholic Beliefs and Rituals <u>Read:</u> Albanese, “Bread and Mortar”
Week 12 T10 TH12	<u>Discussion:</u> <i>Doubt</i>	Vatican II and Contemporary Catholics
Week 13 T17 TH19	<i>Guest Lecture:</i>	<u>Field Report #3</u>
Week 14 T24 TH26	Introduction to Muslims in America	Thanksgiving – No Class
Week 15 T1 TH3	Islamic Beliefs and Rituals <u>Listen:</u> Muslim Call to Prayer	<u>Discussion:</u> <i>Malcolm X</i> and any <u>two</u> films from the “America at the

		Crossroads” series (Group B)
Week 16 T8 TH 10	<i>Guest Lecture:</i> Muslim Student Association	<u>Field Report #4</u>
Weds 16 10:30-12:30	<u>Final Examination</u>	

VI. Assignments

Participation and Attendance 100 points

In order to deepen your understanding of the books, music, and films students will periodically write an *in-class* response to the assigned materials. This “warm up” will occur on those days marked discussion. Students must be present in class for this assignment, there is no make-up. A set of questions will be distributed for each of the books to help facilitate our conversation on those days.

It is expected that students will attend every class with the assignments completed. If you miss more than one class, please check with me as it will influence your grade. Students who desire good or exceptional grades will actively answer questions and join in class discussions. They will be engaged with the course but not dominate the conversation.

Field Reports (two reports, 100 points each) 200 points

Students will attend two religious services of communities which are not their own. Their observations of these services will be discussed in relationship to the lectures and course readings. More elaborate instructions on the preparation of the reports will be handed out later, but the field reports should be at least five pages long.

Examinations (two exams of 100 points each) 200 points

A test of approximately an hour will be given the seventh week of the term that will evaluate your understanding of the lectures, guest presentation, readings, and classroom discussions. A second test will be given during the final examination period and will cover the last half of the course, since the mid-term.

Tests will include multiple choice, short answers, and an essay. Tests will examine your retention of information (objective specifics of who, what, and where), comparative difference (how is group “x” different from group “y”), historical influence (what is the impact of social change on religion), and religious change (what is different/same in 1906 from 1968). You will be asked the important “why” and “how” questions in the form of short responses. A longer essay will ask you to explore larger themes that will demonstrate your mastery of the reading/viewing materials

Students will be permitted a “cheat sheet” of two pages

VII. Evaluation Grading Scale:

A	93-100	C+	77-79	D-	60-62
A-	90-92	C	73-76	E<	60
B+	87-89	C-	70-72		
B	83-86	D+	67-69		
B-	80-82	D	63-66		

Students who are concerned about achieving a certain grade, who would like help with their writing, or who are not sure if they “are on the right track” should come talk with me during my office hours. You may give me a DRAFT of your essays before the due date and I will read the draft, give it a tentative grade, and make suggestions. Students will not be able to re-write the essays after the due dates but may write addition essays to improve their grades.

VII Classroom Policies

It is expected that students will attend all classes, having read the assigned reading and prepared for careful listening and discussion. Class will begin and end on time, so please do not be late for class. Turn off your cell phones and do not engage in any electronic distraction. Cheating or plagiarism will result in failing the assignment and the class. If you do not know what constitutes such misconduct, check with me and read the Student Code.

Likewise, if you have any problems speaking up in class, arriving on time, or watching movies that deal with adult situations, please tell me within the first week of class. If you don’t talk with me immediately, I will assume that all students can meet these basic expectations.

ADA Statement

University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Student/Faculty Responsibilities:

All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and

know they are responsible for content. According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the faculty responsibility to enforce responsible classroom behaviors, and I will do so, beginning with verbal warnings and progressing to dismissal from class and a failing grade. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavior Committee.