

History 4790
American Religions
Fall Semester 2010

I. Contact Information

Hist 4790 Three Credit Hours
Location: OSH 102
Time: T TH 10:45 – 12:05

Dr. Colleen McDannell, Professor of History and 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 three major religious traditions in the United States and how they have shaped American society and culture. The course provides an introduction to the beliefs and rituals of Protestants, Native Americans, and Muslims. It assumes that religion, like all human expressions, changes over time. We will study how real people live out their beliefs and how their actions influence economics, family life, politics, and entertainment. In addition to in-class lectures and discussions, we will have guest lectures from adherents of these religious traditions.

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, sexual preference, and ethnicity. Hist 4790 also has a Humanities Designation and so you will be asked to take an analytical approach to religious history and to sharpen your communications skills through writing assignments and discussions.

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 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 the establishment of a vibrant immigrant Islam, to the challenges Muslims face in 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*

Geneive Abdo, *Mecca and MainStreet: Muslim Life in America after 9-11*

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

Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*

Ch. 1 “Original Manyess”

Texts on Chosen Nation, including John Winthrop’s “City on a Hill”

Films (All are available streamed on-line; see instructions on my website)

With God on Our Side: George W. Bush and the Rise of the Religious Right E902 .W58 2004

Sister Aimee (American Experience) BX7990 I68 M323 2007

Jesus Camp BR1640 .J48 2006

For the Bible Tells Me So BS680.H67 F67 2007

In the Light of Reverence E98.R3 I5 2001

Smoke Signals PN1997.S5495 1999

Malcolm X (Spike Lee Film) PN1997 .M25587 2000

New Muslim Cool

V. Scheduled Topics

	Tuesdays	Thursdays
Week 1 T24 TH26	Introduction Christian Origins	Protestant Beliefs and Rituals
Week 2 T 31 TH 2	Denominations and Protestant America	Revivalism and Frontier Protestantism
Week 3 T 7 TH 9	<u>Discussion:</u> Have Read: Raboteau, <i>Slave Religion</i>	African American Christianity through the Great Migration

Week 4 T14 TH16	<u>Guest Lecture:</u> Rev. France Davis Calvary Baptist Church	American Imperialism and Christian Civilization Have Read: Documents on “Chosen Nation”
Week 5 T21 TH23	Modernists and Fundamentalists Have Watched: <i>Sister Aimee</i>	Civil Rights Movements Have Watched: <i>For the Bible Tells Me So</i>
Week 6 T28 TH 30	<u>Guest Lecture:</u> Rev. Copeland D. Johnston Episcopal Church	Born Again Field Reports #1 Due
Week 7 T5 TH7	<u>Discussion:</u> Have Watched: <i>With God on our Side</i> and <i>Jesus Camp</i>	Mid Term Examination
Week 8 T12 TH14	Fall Break	No Class
Week 9 T19 TH21	Indian History and Plains Culture Field Reports #2 Due	Native American Worldview Have Read: Albanese, “Original Manyness”
Week 10 T26 TH28	Kiowa Rituals	<u>Discussion</u> Have Read: <i>The Way to Rainy Mountain</i>
Week 11 T3 TH5	We Shall Remain	<u>Guest Lecture:</u>
Week 12 T9 TH11	<u>Discussion:</u> Have Watched: <i>In the Light of Reverence</i>	Introduction to Muslims in America Have Watched: <i>Malcolm X</i>
Week 13 T16 TH18	Islamic Beliefs and Rituals Field Report #3 Due	Islamic Beliefs and Rituals part II
Week 14 T23 TH25	<u>Guest Lecture:</u> Imam Mohammed Shoaibuddin	Thanksgiving – No Class
Week 15 T30 TH2	Life After September 11	<u>Discussion:</u> Have Watched: <i>New Muslim Cool</i>
Week 16 T7 TH 9	<u>Guest Lecture:</u> Muslim Student Association	<u>Discussion:</u> Have Read: <i>Mecca and Main Street</i> Field Report #4 Due
Thurs 16 10:30-12:30	Final Examination	

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 write two analytical essays (of at least five pages) on religious communities studied in our course. Please attend a service which is not one you would typically attend (ie. if you are Muslim, go to a church). The essays will analyze a religious service that the student has attended (or in the case of Native Americans, the film *Smoke Signals*) in relationship to the lectures and course readings. Each essay should answer these two questions: What are they doing? Why are they doing that? The essays should demonstrate your mastery of the course materials, not what you knew before you came to class. For more elaborate instructions on the preparation of the reports, see “Field Reports” on my web page.

Field Reports are to be turned in on the appropriate due date as stated in the syllabus. Late reports are not accepted but since you only have to submit two out of four there is much flexibility. I am happy to comment on drafts if you set up an appointment with me beforehand.

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 be weighted toward the last half of the course but with essay questions that cover all the traditions we have studied.

Tests may include multiple choice, short answers, and an essay. They 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 and essays. Pay particular attention to the study questions given out to help with discussing the film and readings.

Students will be permitted a “cheat sheet” of two, 8 x 11 pages (ie. one page, both sides).

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.

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. By University policy plagiarism must be reported to the Dean of College in which you are majoring. If you do not know what constitutes such misconduct or plagiarism, 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.