

American Religious History to 1860

Fall 2006—Prof. Wills

Description

A study of significant movements, ideas, persons, and institutions in American religion to 1860, with attention to cultural context and historiographical methods.

Objectives

1. To master the outline of the history of religion in America to 1860.
2. To gain insight into the relationship of religion and American culture.
3. To understand the major theological movements of the period.
4. To discern the differences and similarities among the various denominations and movements of the period.
5. To gain familiarity with the historiography and to attain proficiency evaluating historical arguments.
6. To become familiar with the major historiographical approaches in American religious history.

Procedure

Each week students will come to the seminar prepared to discuss insightfully the assigned reading. Students will prepare an outline of the assigned reading before each session. Students are expected to know the basic facts of the topic under discussion each week, and will consult reference works or surveys as necessary to meet any deficiencies.

Requirements

1. Submit a 2-5 page outline of each week's reading at the end of each session. The outline will aim to arrive at a clear statement of the book's thesis and of the thesis and argument of each chapter.
2. Participate intelligently in the discussion of each week's reading. Students will seek to engage critically each book's thesis, its place in the historiography, as well as the substance of each chapter, examining the accuracy of the historical evidence, the principles of the selection of evidence, the use of evidence in the argument, the suitability of the evidence to the thesis of the chapter and book.
3. Submit a research paper of 20-25 pages. The paper will have a clear and cogent thesis, will be established by a thorough examination of the relevant primary sources, will be sensitive to the relevant historiography, will be well argued and well organized, and will be clearly expressed. Papers should conform to the guidelines in the *Southern Seminary Manual of Style*, third edition. Papers should be written with a view to submission for publication.

Grading

Outlines 30%

Class Discussion 30%

Research Paper 40%

Textbooks

- Marsden, George. *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Kuklick, Bruce. *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985. Out of Print.
- Turner, James. *Without God, without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.
- Noll, Mark. *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Sweeney, Douglas A. *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Johnson, Paul. *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.
- Genovese, Eugene, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Heyrman, Christine. *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt*. New York: Knopf, 1997; reprint, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Holifield, E. Brooks. *Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1978.
- Long, Kathryn. *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Reading Schedule

<i>Day</i>	<i>Assignment</i>
8/15	
8/22	Marsden
8/29	Kuklick
9/5	Turner
9/12	Noll, <i>America's God</i>
9/19	Sweeney
9/26	Johnson
10/3	Genovese
10/10	Heyrman
10/17	Holifield
10/24	Long
10/31	Student papers
11/7	Student papers
11/14	Student papers

Note for students with disabilities: In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor and the Garrett Fellow at the beginning of the course.