Northern Seminary  
CH407-OL History of American Religion – Online  
September 22 – December 6, 2014  
Professor: Rev. Dr. Antonia Lucic Gonzalez  
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Students are expected to log in Moodle before the first day of classes. To access the online forum, go to www.seminary.edu and click on Moodle (under Current Students). All registered students will be enrolled in Moodle by the instructor the week before the term begins.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course covers the historical, theological, spiritual, cultural and institutional developments which have characterized religious experience in the United States from the Colonial period to the present.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**
1. Students will learn to think critically about the key theological ideas, major movements and influential personalities that shaped the Church in America. They will acquire the ability to analyze theological arguments, and coherently articulate the meaning of the Christian faith in the context of its historical development in North America. They will understand how global historical and theological developments influenced the plethora of Christian expressions in America. By closely examining the religious and cultural experiences of different racial and ethnic groups in America through the past centuries, students will gain greater understanding and appreciation of the way the triune God works on creating and sustaining the Kingdom among them.

2. Students will develop knowledge and understanding of church history as a discipline which uses methods of historical research, inquiry, and critical evaluation. Students will gain awareness of key original source documents in each century that will be covered, and increase their skills of critically examining and interacting with these historical sources.

3. By encountering this significant body of historical and theological data, students will acquire a broader perspective on their own faith. They will be able to evaluate their own beliefs and practices in the light of the presented historical background and theological developments.

4. Students will have an opportunity to grow in character and gain wisdom for ministry by bringing their faith into conversation with that of Christians in the centuries past. As they assess the theologies/practices they encounter in the course, they will be challenged to develop and defend their own expressions of Christian doctrine and spirituality. Special attention will be given to relevant hermeneutical issues as we focus on biblical interpretation of important themes through history. Learning about the past will enable students to evaluate contemporary trends in doctrinal and ethical issues (such as racial and social issues, “culture wars”, gender themes). Consequently, students will be equipped to address current doctrinal, ethical and cultural disputes in an informed well argued manner.

**SIGNIFICANCE FOR LIFE AND MINISTRY:** The last two course objectives address the significance of the course for life and ministry. The course seeks to lead students to a deeper understanding of their own ecclesiastical traditions and beliefs, as well as to an informed
appreciation for the diversity of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church to which they belong. While our learning and discussions will be primarily historical and theological in nature, a lot of effort and intentionality will be put into integration of academic material and practical application, for the benefit of students’ ministry and personal spirituality.

REQUIRED READING, VIEWING AND LISTENING

Textbooks:


ATLA Full Text Articles:


Online Reading:

Video Resources:
*The Puritans and the Founding of the New England Colonies.*

*Rise of Slave Trade; Black History in Colonial America.*

Interview with Mark Noll and George Marsden, *America’s Christian Roots.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8FlpoEikHw

Interview with Mark Noll, *On the Scandal of the Evangelical Mind.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQviXav11BA
Billy Graham, *Easter in Birmingham.*
http://www.billygraham.org/videoarchive.asp (under Sermons)

Billy Graham sermons:
*What’s Wrong With the World*, (1958),
*God and the Color of Man’s Skin* (1965),
http://www.billygraham.org/videoarchive.asp (under Sermons)

**Audio Resources:**

http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=770213541

National Public Radio, ‘*Letter from Birmingham Jail*’ 50 Years Later.
http://www.npr.org/2013/04/16/177468615/letter-from-birmingham-jail-50-years-later

National Public Radio, *Interview with James Cone on Black Theology of Liberation.*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. **Readings:** Students are expected to prepare for each session by reading, listening, and viewing the assigned materials on time as indicated in the course schedule.

2. **Online Discussion:** Students are required to participate regularly in the online forums. The course expectation is **three substantive** posts per student per week (additional posts and interactions are welcome but not obligatory). The posts constitute 30% of the grade and are judged by quality, not quantity of words. A substantial post is a paragraph or two amounting to somewhere between **300 and 400 words**, and not exceeding 600 words. Students cannot be absent from more than two discussion sessions and expect to pass. Absence from one and/or two discussion sessions will be subject to a penalty in grade. Students will also be penalized for posting late, after a discussion session has ended.

3. **Exams:** Students will take two exams consisting of multiple choice, true-false, and short answer questions, based on their reading. Each week, a Study Review will be posted helping the students know what items to focus on. You must read and review the readings in advance, since the exams are time-restricted. You may not use course materials.

4. **Paper:** Students will write one 8-10 page paper on a topic of their choosing. Paper should be double-spaced with one-inch margins, using 12-point Times font. Students must follow the style guidelines found in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (8th ed.; University of Chicago Press, 2013). Please contact the professor early in the course if you have questions about what is expected. For very specific guidance on writing papers, see *Paper Instructions*, and *Sample Papers*.

**Late Assignments Policy:** All assignments must be completed on time. Assignments completed late will be accepted only on permission of the instructor and are subject to a penalty in grade.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE
The course will follow a set schedule during the week, progressing from Session A to Session B. The discussion forums will begin at 5:00pm on Sundays and Wednesdays until 10:00pm two days later. The students will take the quiz between 6:00am Friday and 9:00pm Saturday, on the two weeks exams are given, Week 5 and Week 10. Out of twenty discussion sessions altogether, four will be off so that students would have a chance to work on their paper (they will still be expected to complete the reading for every session).

Session A: Sun 5:00pm – Tue 10:00pm
Session B: Wed 5:00pm – Fri 10:00pm

Week 1
A. Historical Background
Video: *The Puritans and the Founding of the New England Colonies*, 8 minutes
= 53 pages

B. Historical Background:
Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 1-24 (24pp)
Video: *Rise of Slave Trade; Black History in Colonial America*, 11 minutes
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. I:
- *Anne Hutchinson*, 96-98 (2p)
- *African and Indian Diversity*, 149-159 (10 pp)
= 63 pages

Week 2
A. Historical Background
= 50 pages

B. Historical Background:
Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 56-116 (60 pp)
= 60 pages

Week 3
A. Historical Background:
Video: Interview with Mark Noll and George Marsden, *America’s Christian Roots*, 27 minutes
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. I:
- *Passion and Intellect*, 160-190 (30 pp)
Audio: Jonathan Edwards, Sermon: *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, 40 minutes
= 47 pages
B. **Historical Background:**

**Primary Documents:**
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. I:
- Revivalism, 319-325 (6pp)
= 41 pages

Week 4

A. **Historical Background:**
Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 156-196 (40pp)
= 66 pages

B. **Historical Background:**
= 56 pages

Week 5

A. **Historical Background:**
Nordbeck, “The American churches and slavery: a case study in unity and disunity,” 75-84 (9pp)

**Primary Documents:**
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. I:
- Black Religion and Slavery, 471-488 (17pp)
= 56 pages

B. **Primary Documents:**
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. I:
- Schism over Slavery, 489-500 (11 pp)
- Debate over Slavery, 517-543 (26pp)
- The Civil War as a Religious Event, 544-563 (19pp)
= 56 pages

Week 6

A. **Historical Background:**

**Primary Documents:**
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. I:
- Women’s Rights and Indian Rights, 501-513 (12pp)
- After the War, 578-596 (18pp)
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. II:
Women’s Work?, 35-46 (11pp)
= 53 pages

B. **Historical Background:**
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. II:
- *Science and Religion*, 322-352 (30pp)
= 55 pages

Week 7
A. Historical Background:
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol II:
- *Studying and Reading the Bible*, 353-372 (19pp)
- *Modernism/Fundamentalism*, 401-406 (5pp)
= 58 pages

B. Historical Background:
= 51 pages

Week 8
A. Historical Background:
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. II:
- *Love and Justice: Redeeming the City, Redeeming the Factory, and Redeeming the Land*, 93-124 (29pp)
- *Neo-Orthodoxy*, 419-422 (3pp)
= 40 pages

B. Historical Background
= 58 pages

Week 9
A. Historical Background
Audio: National Public Radio, ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail’ 50 Years Later, 8 minutes
Audio: National Public Radio, *Interview with James Cone on Black Theology of Liberation*, 10 minutes
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. II:
- *Civil Rights and the Churches*, 490-498 (8pp)
- M. L. King Jr., *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, (8pp)
= 45 pages
B. Historical Background:
Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 197-234 (37pp)
= 37 pages

Week 10
A. Historical Background:
Video: Interview with Mark Noll, *On the Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 45 minutes
Video: Billy Graham, *Easter in Birmingham*, 4 minutes
Primary Documents:
Gaustad and Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, vol. II:
- Billy Graham, 559-563 (4pp)
Billy Graham sermons:
Video 1: *What’s Wrong with the World*, (1958), 38 minutes, OR
Video 2: *God and the Color of Man’s Skin*, (1965), 36 minutes, OR
Video 3: *Born Again*, (1979), 30 minutes
= 17 pages

B. Historical Background:
Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America*, 235-284 (49pp)
= 49 pages

COURSE EVALUATION
*Master students:*
30% Class Participation (Quality of Online Posts)
35% Paper
35% Exams

GRADING SCALE
A = 100-94 A- = 93-90
B+ = 89-87 B = 86-83
B- = 82-80 C+ = 79-77
C = 76-73 C- = 72-70
D+ = 69-67 D = 66-63
D- = 62-60 F = 59 and below

POLICIES FOR ALL MASTERS CLASSES
NOTE: All communications from the seminary will go to your seminary email account.
Contact ithelpdesk@seminary.edu if you need help forwarding your seminary email address to your personal email address.

As a seminary community we hold integrity/hospitality as core values. Individuals are able to do their best work and thinking when their peers are fully present and engaged. We expect each person to both participate in class and carefully listen to others with the belief that everyone’s contribution is
equally important. Therefore, the following policies have been established in order to provide clarity in regard to attendance expectations and relationships in the classroom.

**Diploma/Certificate Student Course Requirements**
The amount of work required of Diploma/Certificate students will be at the discretion of the professor. Students will be responsible for contacting the professor about what assignments are required.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is the act of passing off as one’s own the words or ideas of someone else without providing proper acknowledgement or documentation. See the “Academic Honesty Policy” in the Seminary Catalog for more information on plagiarism and how to avoid it.

**Electronic Format**
Unless otherwise specified by the professor, all work submitted electronically must be in a Word document format (.doc, .docx).

**Course Evaluation in Moodle**
Students must complete an online course evaluation using the seminary Moodle system at [http://moodle.seminary.edu](http://moodle.seminary.edu) in order to receive a final grade for the course. The evaluation will be open for one week starting the last day of the term. If you need assistance connecting to Moodle or accessing the evaluation, please send an email to moodlehelp@seminary.edu.