



Oberlin College, Fall 2020 / StudiOC--Peter B Lewis Gateway 209

srabin@oberlin.edu / Office Hours: by appointment (sign up at tinyurl.com/profrabin)

The relationship between “religion” and “America” has long been subject to political, religious, and scholarly debate. This course will enter into this discussion, exploring diverse activities, attitudes, and communities understood to be religious and their varied relationships to the material and political conditions of what is now the United States. Topics will include the religious roots of – and religious reactions to – colonialism, imperialism, racism, capitalism, foreign policy, and the Internet age.

Learning Goals:

- to gain familiarity with multiple American religious traditions
- to expand your capacity to reflect rigorously about religion in historical context
- to learn how to read and analyze primary and secondary sources
- to strengthen abilities in writing and communication

Fall 2020 Note:

We are learning in an unprecedented situation, which is going to require flexibility and patience from all of us. I will do my best to facilitate a deep and meaningful learning experience, without ignoring the changes and/or stresses that accompany an ongoing global pandemic. I commit to open and honest communication and invite your input as we navigate this together.

Active Engagement (10%)

This grade assesses your preparedness and engagement, which can be demonstrated by commenting in class, asking thoughtful questions, and/or attending virtual office hours. Completing in-class activities is necessary to earn a high grade, but completing in-class activities alone will not merit an A. This is not an attendance grade, although being present is a necessary precondition of engagement.

On Discussions:

- In a liberal arts course, discussion is one of the main – and best – techniques for learning.
- Everyone is invited to contribute to discussions. When you do so, you should use respectful language and informed arguments that are based on reliable sources. Avoid generalizations

and stereotypes, unsupported claims, and logical fallacies. Racist language and abusive terms will not be tolerated.

-It is also crucial that you make space for other voices to be heard. When your classmates are speaking, you should listen carefully, assume good intentions, and respond – especially if you disagree – by engaging with the substance of their argument.

-You will get the most out of this class if you see it as an opportunity to learn and grow. This means approaching discussions with a spirit of openness to the – sometimes difficult – process of understanding new ideas, receiving feedback, and developing as a thinker.

-During class, please avoid texting, checking your cellphone, or doing other activities that distract you, me, and/or your classmates from our shared pursuit of learning.

On Written Assignments:

-Written assignments should be in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced with standard margins and using Chicago citation style. They should be submitted via Blackboard by 5pm on the day an assignment is due, as Microsoft Word or PDF files.

-You can submit an optional draft 3 days before each deadline to receive feedback.

-You will be allotted two no-questions-asked 48-hour extensions on assignments.

-You must adhere to the honor code in all class assignments (more info at: <http://oberlin.edu/studentpolicies/honorcode>). This means submitting your own original work and including clear citations of all sources. If you have questions about this, please contact me!

Disability Accommodations:

Student should notify the Office of Disability Resources and their instructor of any disability-related needs. More information at: <http://oberlin.edu/disability-resources>.

Reading Assignments (30%)

Actively engaging the assigned readings is a key component of this class. During weeks 2 through 12, there will be a short weekly assignment related to one or more of the class readings. Each assignment will be worth 3% of your final grade. They will be graded Good (3), Room for Improvement (2), Incomplete (1), or No Submission (0). The prompt for the week will be emailed by 5pm ET on Sundays. You can take off one week without it affecting your grade.

Primary Source Analysis Paper (10%)

In 500-750 words, offer an analysis of Thomas Jefferson's *A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom* (Griffith, 150-152). You should answer the question: does Jefferson's Bill represent an extension of or a break from the history of religion and colonialism in the Americas? Due October 2.

Slavery/Racism Paper (20%)

Choose two primary sources assigned in weeks two through seven. In 750-1000 words, compare and contrast these sources, answering the question, what has been the relationship between religion and slavery and/or racism in the United States? You should explain the commonalities and differences across your sources, attending to their times/places/authors/genres/perspectives. Due October 30.

Final Paper (30%)

For the final paper, you will create a digital mini-exhibit in Google Sites, which will be linked to our class site (<https://sites.google.com/oberlin.edu/relg283>). Your exhibit will make an argument about a topic related to religion in America, emerging from the analysis of primary sources.

- You will submit a one-page proposal, including a summary of one primary source you intend to use, a description of your proposed topic, and bibliographic citations for three secondary sources related to your topic (5%). Due November 20.
- The final exhibit will feature three primary sources, including three 250-500-word captions and a 750-1000-word introductory essay (25%). You can choose whether to make it public or not. Due December 14 at 11am.

Extra Credit

You can gain extra credit by adding a post to our class website (each assignment will add ½ a point to your final grade). There are two options, each of which you can do once:

-Event Note: Attend a Zoom event related to the themes of our course and write a 100-250-word reflection. What event did you attend, what did you learn, and how does it relate to our course? I will alert the class to relevant events, but you can run additional ideas by me.

-News Note: Identify a reliable news article relevant to the themes of our course (from August 15, 2020 or later) and write a 100-250-word reflection. What does the article say and how does it relate to our course?

Required Reader:

R. Marie Griffith, *American Religions: A Documentary History*

Schedule and Readings (Subject to Revision):

➔ Online library resource

• *American Religions*

■ Posted in Blackboard

Week 1	
Tu Sep 1	
Th Sep 3	➔ Daniel K. Richter, "Prologue: Early America as Indian Country," <i>Facing East from Indian Country</i> , 2-10 ■ Excerpts from Kathryn Lofton, "Why Religion is Hard for Historians (and How It Can Be Easier)," <i>Modern American History</i> (2019) ■ Stephen Prothero, <i>God is Not One</i> , 74-82
SECTION I: CONTACT AND COLONIALISM	
Week 2	
Tu Sep 8	➔ Sylvester Johnson, <i>African American Religions</i> , 1-5, 56-67, 107-111 • <i>Sublimis Deus</i> (1537), 2-3 • John Winthrop, <i>A Modell of Christian Charity</i> (1630), 16-19 ■ "Slavery Becomes a Legal Fact in Virginia" (1630-1691), <i>A Documentary History of Slavery in North America</i> , 16-22
Th Sep 10 – <i>Via Zoom w/</i>	"Visit" to the Allen Memorial Art Museum

Dr. Alexandra Letvin	
Week 3	
Tu Sep 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson</i> (1637), 38-63 • Roger Williams, <i>Letter to the Town of Providence</i> (1654-5), 75-6 <p>You will be assigned ONE of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Blasphemers who made an Abjuration <i>de Levi</i>” (1596), <i>The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536-1820: A Documentary History</i>, 166-7 ***CW: Violence ■ “Advice” (1636), <i>A Documentary History of Religion in America</i> (RA), 36-8 ■ “Virginia’s Cure” (1662), RA, 59-62
Th Sep 17	<p>➔ Rachel Wheeler and Sarah Everly, “Singing Box 331: Re-sounding Eighteenth-Century Mohican Hymns from the Moravian Archives,” <i>The William and Mary Quarterly</i> Vol. 76 No. 4 (2019): 649-696 (<i>Note: there are many images and footnotes included in this page count!</i>)</p> <p>You will be assigned ONE of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Penn, “Letter to the Indians” (1681), 73-4 ■ “John Rolfe (1585-1622) and Pocahontas (c.1595-1617),” RA, 54-7 ■ “Franciscans and Indian Revolt” (1598), RA, 29-31 ***CW: Violence
Week 4	
Tu Sep 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phyllis Wheatley Poems (1770s), 121-126 ■ Francis Le Jau, “Slave Conversion on the Carolina Frontier” (1709-1714), <i>African American Religious History: Documentary Witness</i>, 25-32 ■ “Quaker Abolitionism” (1737), RA, 153-4 ■ “African Religions in Colonial Jamaica” (1794), <i>AARH</i>, 20-23
SECTION II: EXPANSION AND U.S. EMPIRE	
Th Sep 24	<p>➔ Emily Conroy-Krutz, “Missions as Settler Colonies,” <i>Christian Imperialism</i>, 102-129</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hannah Adams, <i>Alphabetical Compendium</i> (1784), 157-162 ■ “Samuel Sherwood” (1776), RA, 227-8
Week 5	
Tu Sep 29 – <i>via Zoom w/Ken Grossi</i>	<p>“Visit” to Oberlin College Archives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Oberlin Covenant (1833)
Th Oct 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph Smith, <i>The Articles of Faith</i> (1842) and <i>Revelation</i> (1835), 164-171 ■ “Native American Visionary Experience and Christian Missions,” <i>Religions of the United States in Practice</i>, 445-51 ■ M.N. Nathans, “Ceremonial at Galveston” (1852)
F Oct 2	Primary Source Paper Due at 5pm ET
SECTION III: SLAVERY AND RACISM	
Week 6	

M Oct 5 – <i>LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN OHIO</i>	
Tu Oct 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angelina Emily Grimké, <i>Appeal to the Christian Women of the South</i> (1836), AR, 220-234 ■ “Nat Turner” (1831), RA, 477-81
Th Oct 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Albert Raboteau, “The Rule of Gospel Order,” <i>Slave Religion</i>, 151-180 • George D. Armstrong, <i>The Christian Doctrine of Slavery</i> (1857), 239-244.
Week 7	
Tu Oct 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Donald G. Mathews, “The Southern Rite of Human Sacrifice: Lynching in the American South,” <i>The Mississippi Quarterly</i> (2008), 27-70. • W.E.B. Du Bois (1903-6), AR, 328-340
Th Oct 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Josiah Strong, <i>Our Country</i> (1886), 365-381 • Mabel Potter Daggett, <i>The Heathen Invasion of America</i> (1912), AR, 384-9 ■ “Temporary Suspension of Immigration” (1920), <i>The Jew in the Modern World</i>, 568-70 ■ “The Klan’s Americanism” (1926) RA, 256-263
SECTION IV: INDUSTRIALIZATION AND CAPITALISM	
Week 8	
Tu Oct 20 – <i>via Zoom, w/Dr. Kati Curts</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Nicole C. Kirk, “Introduction,” <i>Wanamaker’s Temple</i>, 1-15 • Russell Herman Conwell, <i>Acres of Diamonds</i> (1890), 301-8 ■ Kati Curts, “Spiral glimpses,” <i>The Immanent Frame</i>, January 1, 2018 ■ Kati Curts, Review of <i>Wanamaker’s Temple</i>
Th Oct 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walter Rauschenbusch, <i>A Theology for the Social Gospel</i> (1917), 309-320 • Dorothy Day, <i>The Long Loneliness</i> (1952), 462-486 <p>One of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ “Salvation Army” (1899, 1900), RA, 168-171 ■ The Call for Two Weekly Rest Days (1915), <i>Religion and State in the American Jewish Experience</i>, 156-9
Week 9	
Tu Oct 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Antin, <i>The Promised Land</i> (1912), 352-364 ■ Wong Chin Foo, “Why Am I a Heathen” (1887), <i>Chinese American Voices</i>, 70-78 ■ “The Miracles of St. Anthony of Padua,” <i>RUSIP</i>, 337-344
Th Oct 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Black Elk Speaks</i> (1932), 341-352 ■ “The Indian Concept of Time,” <i>This Country Was Ours</i>, 263-6 ■ “Lucy Smith and Pentecostal Worship in Chicago” (1936) <i>RUSIP</i>, 11-22 ■ Vaughn A. Booker, “Religious Movements of the Great Migration: An Interview with Judith Weisenfeld,” <i>Religion and Politics</i>, February 7, 2017
F Oct 30	Racism/Slavery Paper Due at 5pm ET
INTERLUDE: RELIGION AND THE 2020 ELECTION	
Week 10	

Tu Nov 3	TBD
Th Nov 5	TBD
SECTION V: THE COLD WAR AND GLOBAL POLITICS	
Week 11	
Tu Nov 10	<p>➔ K. Healan Gaston, “Dreaming America, Deciphering Judeo-Christianity,” <i>Imagining Judeo-Christian America</i>, 1-18.</p> <p>■ Billy Graham, “Cold War “(1951), <i>RA</i>, 463-4</p> <p>■ “Vietnam,” <i>RA</i>, 465-70</p>
Th Nov 12	<p>• Jack Kerouac, <i>Dharma Bums</i> (1958), 486-492</p> <p>■ “Lausanne Covenant” (1974), <i>RA</i>, 516-23</p> <p>■ Nathan Glazer, “Fighting for Israel,” (1981), <i>RA</i>, 457-8</p> <p>■ “Charismatic Renewal Among Latino Catholics,” <i>USRIP</i>, 347-54</p>
Week 12	
Tu Nov 17	<p>• Howard Thurman (1936), 492-501</p> <p>• Martin Luther King Jr., <i>Letter from Birmingham Jail</i> (1963), 502-514</p> <p>• Malcolm X, <i>Letters from Abroad</i> (1964), 514-517</p> <p>■ Fannie Lou Hamer, “To Make Democracy a Reality” (1970), <i>The Speeches of Fannie Lou Hamer</i>, 98-103</p>
Th Nov 19	<p>• Mary Daly, <i>Beyond God the Father</i> (1973), 536-546</p> <p>■ Audre Lorde, “An Open Letter to Mary Daly” (1979)</p> <p>■ “Touch Me I’m Yours,” <i>Sexing History Podcast</i></p>
Fri Nov 20	Exhibit Proposal Due at 5pm ET
Week 13	
Tu Nov 24	<p>One of the following:</p> <p>➔ Justine Howe, “Introduction: Approaching American Islam,” <i>Suburban Islam</i>, 1-21</p> <p>➔ Brent Hendrickson, “Introduction,” <i>The Healing Power of the Santuario de Chimayó: America’s Miraculous Church</i>, 1-14</p> <p>■ Melani McAlister, “Introduction: How We Suffered; How We Loved,” <i>The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals</i>, 1-16</p> <p>■ Elizabeth Pérez, “Introduction,” <i>Religion in the Kitchen: Cooking, Talking, and the Making of Black Atlantic Traditions</i>, 1-24</p>
Th Nov 26	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
Week 14	
Tu Dec 1	Workshop
Th Dec 3	Conclusions
Finals Period	