

Course Syllabus

RELIGION IN THE AMERICAS

RLG 6126/REL 4936

INSTRUCTOR:

Robin M. Wright

Anderson 107C

392-1625

(office hours: by apptmt.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The basic objective of the course is to offer a long-range, historical and hemispheric overview of the encounters and exchanges among the religions of the Americas. In this course, we will consider six broad thematic areas: 1. Theoretical and Methodological Questions on an Hemispheric Approach to the study of Religions in the Americas; 2. Indigenous Religious Traditions of the Americas; 3. Colonial Encounters Part I: Christianity and Indigenous Religious Traditions; 4. Colonial Encounters Part II: African Religious Traditions and Diaspora; 5. "Borderland" Religions and Post-Colonial Encounters; 6. Globalization, Transnationalism, and Migration.

This is primarily a reading and discussion course. The course bibliography is based on the Graduate Program's Religions in the Americas Area Reading list. We will read and discuss our way through the semester with each of us bearing some leadership load. Thus, the course requirements consist of participation in seminars, presentations of summaries of the readings, discussion and debate about ideas raised in the readings, as well as book reports and one longer paper (20-25 pp.).

We look upon this course as a kind of collective venture into the terrain in which all are expected to participate together, and each can provide a special area of expertise which will help us answer some of the questions posed by the thematic areas discussed in the course. The central guiding questions of the course are: what sorts of perspectives are entailed by "a hemispheric view" on the Religions of the Americas? How is such a view distinct from prior perspectives? What theories, concepts, methodologies and resources are available for constructing and developing a truly hemispheric perspective?

This is a proseminar. It is intended to immerse advanced undergraduate and graduate students in the literature. You will read and critically assess major books, articles and methods current in the field. You will not do primary research. Within the seminar you will be expected to clearly report on your reading and directly respond to the ideas of your fellow students. All of the class meetings, your readings, and written assignments are intended to help you develop a knowledge of the historiographical and methodological terrain.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

There are five major requirements:

- 1) Each week a core of common readings will form the basis of our discussions. Your careful reading and reflection upon these weekly readings is essential to the success of this course. The required books are listed in the syllabus, some are available at the University Bookstore and all can be purchased via the internet (many are Kindle e-books). Most of the articles will be available online or through course reserve in the UF library.
- 2) Three times during the semester each student will be responsible for summarizing the methodological and theoretical issues contained in the week's common readings (three presentations will be required of each student). This summary will offer a starting point for our discussions.
- 3) Six times in the course of the semester each student will be required to submit by class time a one-page synthesis of the required readings for that day.
- 4) Two book reviews will be required of each student. These reviews will consist of three to five pages, double-spaced. These students are also expected to provide expertise in the discussion of the week's topics based on their reading.
- 5) Each student will also prepare an essay on one of the topics discussed in the field. The essay should be twenty to twenty-five pages in length. The subject may be based on one of the oral reports or book reports, and it should fully cover the topic. First drafts of this essay will be distributed to class members and discussed in class.

GRADING:

Essay (20-25 pp.) 26%

Oral Report (3) 30%

Book Reviews (2) 14%

One Page Papers (6) 30%

TOPICS AND READINGS:

Schedule of Seminars:

I. Orientation (week 1)

Introductions

Review of syllabus

Course mechanics

II. Overviews (weeks 2-3)

Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe. 2003. *The Americas: A Hemispheric History*. New York: Modern Library.

Elliot, J.H. 2007. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830*

Ian Tyrell, "Beyond the View from Euro-America", Chapter 7 in: Bender, Thomas, ed. 2002. *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. 1956. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

III. Indigenous Religious Traditions of the Americas (weeks 4-5)

David Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, Waveland Press, 2014.

The Popol Vuh, Dennis Tedlock (ed.), (pdf in Modules section);

The Huarochiri Manuscript. *A Testament of Ancient and Colonial Andean Religion*. Translation from the Quechua by Frank Salomon and George Urioste, University of Texas Press, 1991; (available as Kindle e-book)

Tom Zuidema, "Inca Religion: Its Foundations in the Central Andean Context", Ch. 8, in: L. Sullivan (ed.) *Native Religions and Cultures of Central and South America*, N.Y.: Continuum, pp. 236-46 (pdf in Modules).

Kopenawa, Davi & Bruce Albert, *The Falling Sky. Words of a Yanomami Shaman*. 2013. Harvard (pdfs in Modules section).

DeLoria, Vine. *The World We Used to Live In: Remembering the Powers of the Medicine Men*. Fulcrum Press (or Kindle edition);

Richter, Daniel K. 2003. *Facing East from Indian Country*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Miguel León-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, expanded and updated edition, pp. xxv-xlvi, 1-126 (available as Kindle)

III. Colonial Encounters I: Christianity and Native Religions (weeks 6-7)

Gutierrez, Ramon. 1991. *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Greer, Allan. 2009. "Towards a comparative Study of Jesuit missions and indigenous peoples in 17th Century Canada and Paraguay." In *Native Christians: Modes and Effects of Christianity among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas*, eds. Aparecida Vilaca & Robin Wright, pp. 21-32. London: Ashgate, 2009;

(chapters) Joel Martin and Mark B. Nicholas, *Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape*, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2010

Austin, Alfredo Lopez, "Guidelines for the Study of Mesoamerican religious traditions", in J. Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp. 118-127;

Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short account of the Destruction of the Indies* (available as audible and ebook), 1992

Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru*. Princeton, 1991. [chapters]

IV. Colonial Encounters II: The African Diaspora (weeks 8-9)

Gomez, Michael A. 2005. *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas*. Cambridge: CUP.

Mattory, Lorand. 2005. *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism, and Matriarchy in the Afro-Brazilian Candomble*. Princeton: Princeton University Press;

Sensbach, Jon F. 2005. *Rebecca's Revival: Making Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press;

Sweet, James H. 2003. *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African- Portuguese World, 1441-1770*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

V. Borderlands and Post-Colonial Encounters (weeks 10-11)

Brooks, James. 2002. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Leon, Luis. 2004. *La Llorona's Children: Religion, Life and Death in the U.S.-Mexican Borderlands*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Saldivar, Jose David. 1997. *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Garcia Canclini, 1995. "Hybrid Cultures, Oblique Powers," in *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 206-63.

Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia," in *Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 103-17.

Hendrickson, Brett. 2017. *The Healing Power of the Santuario de Chimayo. America's Miraculous Church*. New York: New York University Press.

VI. Globalization, Migration, and Transnationalism (weeks 12 - 14)

McAlister, Elizabeth. 2002. *Rara: Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Khan, Aisha. 2004. *Callaloo Nation. Metaphors of Race and Religious Identity among South Asians in Trinidad*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Tweed, Thomas. 1997. *Our Lady of the Exile: Diasporic Religion at a Cuban Shrine in Miami*. New York: Oxford.

Appadurai, Arjun 1990. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." *Public Culture* 2/2: 1-24.

Napolitano, Valentina. 2016. *Migrant Hearts and the Atlantic Return: Transnationalism and the Roman Catholic Church*. Fordham University Press.

VII. Papers Workshop (Final Week)

Discussion of Drafts of Final Papers