

## Southern Religious Cultures

REL 4134; AMH 3931

Tuesdays 11:45AM-1:40 p.m.; Thursdays 12:50-1:40 p.m.

MAT 119

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Office Hours: Tues. 9-10 a.m., Wed. 9-11 a.m., or by appointment

**Description:** The South is “Christ-haunted”—or so observed southern writer Flannery O’Connor over fifty years ago. Recent surveys seem to confirm her view: residents of the southern states attend religious services, pray, and profess belief in God more than other Americans. So why is southern society so religious, and what is it about religion in the South that has seemed so distinctively “Southern” to its observers? This course will examine the history of religion in the South in order to better understand its peculiar shape and influence within the American and even global religious landscape. Beginning with the colonial era and moving up to the present day, this course will explore the rise of evangelical Christianity as a dominant note in southern culture, as well as its offshoots, fundamentalism and Pentecostalism; African-American Christianity, as well as how religion has both supported and challenged slavery and segregation; irreligion or secularism; religion and economic transformation; and the southern front of the so-called “culture war” that continues to shape ideas about the place of religion in American public life. Class time will be divided between lectures, analysis of key primary sources, and discussions of seminal historical works.

**Objectives.** By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify various religious traditions, beliefs, and practices in the southern past and present.
2. Situate the key transformations, episodes, and controversies of the southern religious past in historical context.
3. Speak more intelligently and write more clearly about the themes of the course.

### Course Readings:

Paul Harvey, *Moses, Jesus and the Trickster in the Evangelical South*, University of Georgia Press (2013)

Christine Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt*, The University of North Carolina Press (1999)

Charles Marsh, *God’s Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights*, Princeton University Press (2008)

Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South*, Oxford University Press (2004)

Randall J. Stephens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South*, Harvard University Press (2010)

Selected Primary Sources; links or PDFs will be available on course website

### **Assignments and Grading:**

1. *Book Reviews*, 25% (5% each): Over the course of the semester you will write five book reviews in response to the five secondary works assigned. These will be two-pages, double-spaced (about 600 words). A good book review typically includes the following: (1) a concise summary of the author's thesis and how it relates to (or claims to relate to) a larger historical question or debate; (2) a critical evaluation of the book's argument and its supporting evidence—whether you found it convincing and why; (3) any relevant comments on the readability of the book (its organization, style, accessibility, etc.). Rely on quotations only when necessary, and keep your quotations short. These reviews are an exercise in critical and analytical writing, and as such should be written in a straightforward style. Clarity and concision are essential to a good history book review.

2. *Midterm and Final Exams*, 30% (15% each): Exams will take place in class and consist of short-answer identifications of terms. You will receive a study guide in advance with a list of terms drawn from the lectures and assigned readings. You must take notes and complete the readings in order to do well on exams.

3. *In-class Participation*, 15%: In addition to lectures, class time will consist of group exercises and discussion. You are expected to complete the daily reading assignments in order to participate in class discussion. Analysis of primary sources (mainly texts, but also images and music) will take place in class, but you should PRINT OUT and briefly skim (or view) these sources in advance. We will keep things interesting with debates, small break-out discussions, occasional in-class writing, and film clips. Beyond regular attendance, your participation grade depends on your level of engagement during these class activities.

4. *Final Research Paper*, 30%: A major part of your grade will be based on your 10-page final research paper on an approved topic of your choice. To help you along, this project will be completed in three stages over the course of the semester, including: (1) A 1-page statement of your proposed topic and hypothesis with an attached bibliography (including primary and secondary sources); (2) An introduction (including your thesis statement) and detailed paper outline; (3) The final draft formatted according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*; the preparatory assignments are required for your own benefit; the assignment grade will be based primarily on the final written draft. I will adhere to the following grading standards for papers:

### **The D or F paper**

The D or F paper either has no thesis or else it has one that is strikingly vague, broad, or uninteresting. There is little indication that the writer understands the material being presented. The paragraphs do not hold together; ideas do not develop from sentence to sentence. This paper usually repeats the same thoughts again and again, perhaps in slightly different language but often in the

same words. The D or F paper is filled with mechanical faults, errors in grammar, and errors in spelling.

### **The C Paper**

The C paper has a thesis, but it is vague and broad, or else it is uninteresting or obvious. It does not advance an argument that anyone might care to debate. "Henry James wrote some interesting novels." "Modern cities are interesting places."

The thesis in the C paper often hangs on some personal opinion. If the writer is a recognized authority, such an expression of personal taste may be noteworthy, but writers gain authority not merely by expressing their tastes but by justifying them. Personal opinion is often the engine that drives an argument, but opinion by itself is never sufficient. It must be defended.

The C paper rarely uses evidence well; sometimes it does not use evidence at all. Even if it has a clear and interesting thesis, a paper with insufficient supporting evidence is a C paper.

The C paper often has mechanical faults, errors in grammar and spelling, but please note: a paper without such flaws may still be a C paper.

### **The B Paper.**

The reader of a B paper knows exactly what the author wants to say. It is well organized, it presents a worthwhile and interesting idea, and the idea is supported by sound evidence presented in a neat and orderly way. Some of the sentences may not be elegant, but they are clear, and in them thought follows naturally on thought. The paragraphs may be unwieldy now and then, but they are organized around one main idea. The reader does not have to read a paragraph two or three times to get the thought that the writer is trying to convey.

The B paper is always mechanically correct. The spelling is good, and the punctuation is accurate. Above all, the paper makes sense throughout. It has a thesis that is limited and worth arguing. It does not contain unexpected digressions, and it ends by keeping the promise to argue and inform that the writer makes in the beginning.

### **The A Paper.**

The A paper has all the good qualities of the B paper, but in addition it is lively, well paced, interesting, even exciting. The paper has style. Everything in it seems to fit the thesis exactly. It may have a proofreading error or two, or even a misspelled word, but the reader feels that these errors are the consequence of the normal accidents all good writers encounter. Reading the paper, we can feel a mind at work. We are convinced that the writer cares for his or her ideas, and about the language that carries them.

The sure mark of an A paper is that you will find yourself telling someone else about it.

\*\*These grading standards are adapted from the Derek Bok center for teaching and learning at Harvard University.

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, see:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

**Extension and Late Paper Policy:** In fairness to other students who abide by course deadlines, paper extensions will not be granted except in extreme cases, and may require documentation. You are free to turn in a late paper, but with the understanding that the paper will be **docked a full letter grade for each day it is overdue.**

**Attendance Policy:**

Students are responsible for locating notes and making up all work in the case of a missed class. When possible, please provide documentation of illness, extracurricular activities, family emergencies, and other approved excuses. More than two unexcused absences will result in a drop of a full letter grade. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities request accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Instructor Evaluations:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

**Academic Integrity:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

**Course Schedule:**

**Week 1:**

Tues. (Aug. 26): Course Introduction: Why is the South So Religious?

Thurs. (Aug. 28): Southern Religious Geography  
*Read:* Harvey, Introduction and Ch.1

**Week 2:**

Tues. (Sept. 2): Transplanting English Religion  
*Read:* Rabateau, Ch. 1; primary source selections  
Thurs. (Sept. 4): Anglican Parish Life  
*Read:* Heyrman, Prologue; primary source selections

**Week 3:**

Tues. (Sept. 9): Native American Religious Encounters  
*Read:* Heyrman, Ch. 1; primary source selections  
Thurs. (Sept. 11): Toleration and Dissenters  
*Read:* Heyrman, Ch. 2; primary source selections

**Week 4:**

Tues. (Sept. 16): Evangelical Beginnings  
*Read:* Heyrman, Ch. 3; primary source selections  
Thurs (Sept. 18): The Enlightenment, Skepticism and Irreligion  
*Read:* Heyrman, Ch. 4; primary source selections

**Week 5:**

Tues. (Sept. 23): Evangelical Explosion  
*Read:* Heyrman, Ch. 5 and Epilogue; primary source selections  
**\*\*Review of Heyrman due\*\***  
Thurs. (Sept. 25): Catholics and Jews  
*Read:* Rabateau, Ch. 2; primary source selections

**Week 6:**

Tues. (Sept. 30): Slave Resistance and Rebellion  
*Read:* Rabateau, Ch. 3; primary source selections  
Thurs. (Oct. 2): Proslavery Christianity  
*Read:* Rabateau, Ch. 4; primary source selections

**Week 7:**

Tues. (Oct. 7): Sacralizing the Confederacy  
*Read:* Rabateau, Ch. 5; primary source selections  
Thurs. (Oct. 9): Emancipation as Jubilee  
*Read:* Rabateau, Ch. 6 and Conclusion; primary source selections  
**\*\*Review of Rabateau due\*\***

**Week 8:**

Tues. (Oct. 14): MIDTERM EXAM  
Thurs. (Oct. 16): Library Research Tutorial, **CLASS MEETS IN LIBRARY WEST 211**

**Week 9:**

Tues. (Oct. 21): Reconstructing Black and White Churches  
*Read:* Stephens, Ch. 1; primary source selections

Thurs. (Oct. 23): Evangelicals and the Rise of the Lost Cause  
*Read:* Stephens, Ch. 2; primary source selections

**Week 10:**

Tues. (Oct. 28): Purity, Respectability, and Segregation  
*Read:* Stephens, Ch. 3; primary source selections

**\*\*Topic Statement and Bibliography Due\*\***

Thurs. (Oct. 30): Evangelical Dominance and Religious Outsiders  
*Read:* Stephens, Ch. 4; primary source selections

**Week 11:**

Tues. (Nov. 4): Appalachia  
Viewing of *Holy Ghost People* (1967)  
*Read:* Stephens, Ch. 5

**\*\*Review of Stephens due\*\***

Thurs. (Nov. 6): Fundamentalism, Neo-evangelicalism, and the Image of the South  
*Read:* Marsh, Ch. 1; primary source selections

**Week 12:**

Tues. (Nov. 11)—HOLIDAY, NO CLASS

Thurs. (Nov. 13): Civil Rights  
*Read:* Marsh, Ch. 2; primary source selections

**Week 13:**

Tues. (Nov. 18): Latinos and Changing Religious Demographics  
*Read:* Marsh, Ch. 3; primary source selections

**\*\*Introduction and Outline due\*\***

Thurs. (Nov. 20): The Religious Right and the Southernization of America  
*Read:* Marsh, Ch. 4; primary source selections

**Week 14:**

Tues. (Nov. 25): God and Wal-mart  
*Read:* Marsh, Ch. 5; primary source selections

**\*\*Review of Marsh due\*\***

Thurs. (Nov. 27)—THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS

**Week 15:**

Tues. (Dec. 2): New Religious Currents  
*Read:* Harvey, Ch. 2; primary source selections

Thurs. (Dec. 4): Game Day and God  
*Read:* Harvey, Ch. 3; primary source selections

**\*\*Review of Harvey due\*\***

**Week 16:**

Tues. (Dec. 9): FINAL EXAM; Course Wrap-up

**\*\*Final papers submitted to Turnitin.com and EMAILED TO ME by assigned time of class final\*\***