

RA6126 – IF61
Robin M. Wright
Fall - 2016

**RELIGION IN THE AMERICAS
RLG 6126 IF61**

**INSTRUCTOR:
Wright, Robin
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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The basic objective of the course is to provide a long-range historical and hemispheric overview of the encounters and exchanges amongst the religions of the Americas. The course bibliography is based on the Religion and 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 short reflection papers. The central guiding questions of the course are: what sort of perspective is entailed by “a hemispheric view” on the Religions of the Americas? How is such a view distinct from prior perspectives? What methodologies and resources are necessary for constructing and developing a truly hemispheric perspective?

This is primarily a reading and discussion course. 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 above.

In this course, we will consider five broad thematic areas: 1. Theoretical and Methodological Questions on a Hemispheric Approach; 2. Colonial Encounters I: Indigenous Religious Traditions and Catholicism; 3. Colonial Encounters II: African Religious Traditions and Diaspora; 4. “Borderland” Religions and Post-Colonial Encounters; 5. Globalization, Transnationalism, and Diaspora.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This is a proseminar. It is intended to immerse 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.

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. Most of the articles will be available on line or through course reserve in the UF library.
- 2) Each week one student will be responsible for summarizing the methodological and historiographical 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) Each week one or more students will present written reports on particular books (Two 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 no longer than twenty 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:

Historiographical Essay	
28%	
Oral Report (3)	
26%	
Book Reviews (2)	
16%	
One Page Historiographical Papers (6)	
30%	

TOPICS AND READINGS:

- *Electronic course reserve
- **provided

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Schedule of Seminars:

I. First Week: Orientation (August 22nd)

Introductions
Review of syllabus
Course mechanics
The State of the Field

II. Overviews (August 29 – September 12)

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

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

c) Bender, Thomas, ed. 2002. *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Recommended:

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)

The Popol Vuh, Dennis Tedlock (ed.), (or version in: *In the Language of Kings*); (also available as Kindle e-book);

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

Austin, Alfredo Lopez, "Guidelines for the Study of Mesoamerican religious traditions", in J. Olupona (ed.), *Beyond Primitivism*, pp. 118-127; Be David Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, Waveland Press, 2014.

September 05 – No Class – Labor Day;

III. Colonial Encounters I: Catholicism and Native Religions (September 19 – October 3);

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

b) Axtell, James. 1995. *Beyond 1492: Colonial Encounters in North America*. New York: Oxford University Press;

c) Jonathan Hill, ed., 1996. *History, Power and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, DesMoines: University of Iowa 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;

Recommended Reading:

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)

Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, trans. Stafford Poole, pp. 185-194, 212-239

Ramon Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*

Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes*. Princeton, 1991.

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

IV. Colonial Encounters II: The African Diaspora (October 10 – 24)

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

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

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

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V. Borderlands and Post-Colonial Encounters (October 31 – November 7)

a) Chesnut, Andrew. 2012. *Devoted to Death: Santa Muerte, the Skeleton Saint*. New York: Oxford University Press.

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

Recommended Reading:

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

Bhabha, Homi. 2004. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge. Introduction and Chapters 1 & 4.

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

Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage.

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

November 21: American Academy of Religions Annual Meeting – No Class

VI. Globalization, Diaspora, and Transnationalism (November 14 - 28)

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

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

c) McAlister, Elizabeth. 2002. *Rara: Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and its Diaspora*. Berkeley: UC Press.

Recommended Reading:

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

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Glick-Schiller, Nina. 1999. "Transmigrants and Nation-States: Something Old and Something New in the U.S. Experience." In *Handbook of International Migration*, edited by Charles Hirshman et al. New York: Russell-Sage;

Tweed, Thomas. 2010. "Expanding the Study of US Religion: Reflections on the state of a Subfield", *Religion* 40(4): 250-58;

VII. Papers Workshop (December 5)

Discussion of Drafts of Final Papers

Final Papers are due on Monday, December 12th