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## CH 560 History of Christianity in America

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# History of Christianity in America CH 560

Kenneth J. Collins, Professor

## 1. Course Description and Objectives

The course will explore the role of religion (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish) in American life from the establishment of the Jamestown colony in 1607 to the twentieth-century. Special attention will be given to Puritanism, revivalism, disestablishment, the utopian movement, black religion, evangelicalism, and the new intellectual climate which emerged at the beginning of this century. In all of this, the course will be sensitive to the interplay between religion and culture in the creation of a truly American ethos.

## 2. General Goals

Upon completion of the course successful students will be able to do all of the following:

- 1) Identify the major periods in American religious history and give a brief description of each
- 2) Evidence an awareness of historiographical concerns in the interpretation of American religion, especially in terms of narrow, limited or unfair (biased) perspectives
- 3) Demonstrate an awareness of religious traditions other than their own and the contributions of these traditions to the larger American culture
- 4) Explore the interplay between religion and culture, especially in terms of the intellectual developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries
- 5) Display an extensive knowledge of American evangelicalism in terms of both its Reformed and Wesleyan manifestations
- 6) Understand the history of church and state relations and the ongoing effects of that history for the contemporary church
- 7) Understand one's calling as a minister of the gospel in light of the history of the American Church
- 8) Articulate the relevance of American Religious History for effective pastoral ministry today

## 3. Texts:

Marsden, George M. *Religion and American Culture*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1990.

Gaustad, Edwin Scott. *A Religious History of America*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1990.

Collins, Kenneth J. *The Evangelical Moment: The Promise of an American Religion*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005.

#### 4. Topical Outline

##### I. Christendom and American Origins

- A. The Puritan Heritage
- B. The Great Awakening
- C. Jonathan Edwards

##### II. Religion and the American Revolution

- A. Dissent: An American Tradition
- B. The New Order for the Ages
- C. A Secular Constitution
- D. Civil Religion

##### III. The Age of Democratic Revivals

- A. America's Revivalist: Charles Finney
- B. Evangelicalism and American Culture
- C. Divisions Within the Evangelical Camp
- D. Slave Religion

##### IV. Nonevangelical America

- A. Native Americans as Outsiders
- B. The Catholic Church
- C. Judaism
- D. Protestant Outsiders
- E. Romanticism and Transcendentalism
- F. Sectarian Innovations

##### V. Protestant and Progressive America: 1860 - 1917

- A. The Golden Age
- B. Women and Reform
- C. The Social Gospel
- D. The Modernist Impulse

##### VI. Traditional Religion and 20th Century American Culture

- A. The Last Crusade for Protestant Civilization
- B. Conflict: Fundamentalists Versus Modernists
- C. Darwinism as Symbol
- D. Bryan and the Scopes Trial.
- E. "The Acids of Modernity"
- F. The Neo-Orthodox Critique

##### VII. Return to Faith and Quest for Consensus: 1941 - 1963

- A. World War II and American Faith
- B. The Irony of American History
- C. From "Fundamentalist to Evangelicalist"
- D. Catholics Move into the Mainstream
- E. Secularism
- F. Civil Rights
- G. Martin Luther King, Jr.

##### VIII. Fragmented America -- A Nation in Search of a Soul: 1960's - 1980s

- A. The Mainline Churches in Decline
- B. The Catholic Revolution: Vatican II
- C. The Women's Movement

- D. New Age Thought
- E. Evangelical Resurgence
- F. Free Exercise of Religion in a Pluralistic Society

## 5. Course Procedures

Competency in this course will consist in satisfying the following criteria:

A. Two examinations will be given during the semester, a mid-term and a final. These exams will not only include the designated reading material but also the class lectures. This will constitute 50% of the grade.

B. In light of (A) it is imperative that students attend class on a regular basis. Indeed, attendance will be taken at each class by means of a seating chart, and absenteeism (missing more than 2 classes) will result in grade reduction. Class participation, attendance, and completion of the assigned readings will count as 20% of the grade.

C. Students, in consultation with the instructor, must prepare a 15-20 page paper on a topic of their choice in American religion. This paper must be coherent, clear, and penetrating in its discussion. It should, therefore, be backed by considerable research and should evidence a competent use of the English language. It will make up 30% of the grade. *This paper is due two weeks before the last day of class.*

D. A reading report which indicates that students have completed all of the readings is due on the day of the final exam. If this report is not handed in, then grade reduction will result.

## 6. Bibliography

### **General Works of American Religious History**

Ahlstrom, Sydney E., ed. *Theology In America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-orthodoxy*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1967.

Baird, Robert. *Religion in America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1970.

Brauer, Jerald C. *Protestantism in America: A Narrative History*. Rev. ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965.

Gaustad; Edwin S. *A Religious History of America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.

Hudson, Winthrop S. *Religion in America*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965.

Marty, Martin E. *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America*. New York: Dial Press, 1970.

Mead, Sidney E. *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Moberg, David O. *The Church as a Social Institution: The Sociology of American Religion*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, 1962.

Smith, Hilrie Shelton, Handy, Robert T, and Loetscher, Lefferts A. *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960-63.

Sweet, William W. *The Story of Religion in America*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950.

### **Themes in Protestant History**

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *The American Protestant Encounter with World Religions*. Beloit, Wisconsin: Beloit College, 1962.

Baltzell, Edward Digby. *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America*. New York: Random House, 1964.

Brumm, Ursula, *American Thought and Religious Typology*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1970.

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Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *Missions and the American Mind*. Indianapolis: National Foundation Press, 1949.

McLoughlin, William G. *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham*. New York: Ronald Press Co., 1959.

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Niebuhr, H. Richard, *The Kingdom of God in America*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937.

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Osborn, Ronald E. *The Spirit of American Christianity*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1958.

Perry, Ralph Barton. *Puritanism and Democracy*. New York: Vanguard Press, 1944.

Sweet, William W. *Revivalism in America: Its Origin, Growth and Decline*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944.

Weisberger, Bernard A. *They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact upon Religion in America*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1958.

### **American Puritanism**

Foster, Stephen. *Their Solitary Way: The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.

Hall, David, ed. *The Antinomian Controversy: A Documentary History*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968.

Miller, Perry. *Errand into the Wilderness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956.

\_\_\_\_\_, *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts, 1630-1650*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933.

Morgan, Edmund S. *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1958.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. *Buidlers of the Bay Colony*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930.

Pettit, Norman, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.

Simpson, Alan. *Puritanism in Old and New England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.

### **Later Colonial Religion**

Aldridge, Owen. *Benjamin Franklin and Nature's God*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967.

Bailyn, Bernard. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1967.

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Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1948.

Bushman, Richard L. *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1795*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Carroll, Peter N. ed. *Religion and the Coming of the American Revolution*. Waltham, Mass.: Ginn&Co., 1970.

Gaustad, Edwin Scott. *The Great Awakening in New England*. New York: Harper & Row, 1957.

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McLoughlin, William G. *Isaac Backus and the American Pietistic Tradition*. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967.

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### **Antebellum Protestantism**

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Cleveland, Catharine C. *The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916.

Cross, Whitney R. *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950.

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Sweet, William W. *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

### **Sectional Issues and the Civil War**

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### **Slavery and the Black Churches**

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### **Protestantism Since the Civil War**

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Bass, Clarence B. *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Co., 1960.

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### **Liberal Trends in Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought**

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