

**Birmingham Theological Seminary**  
**2200 Briarwood Way**  
**Birmingham, AL 35243**  
**205-776-5650**

**Fall 2019**  
**HT 4641 Church History In America**  
**Class Hours: 2**

**Professor: Dr. Jim Maples**  
**256-531-6529**  
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**Course Purpose**

This course presents a survey of Christianity in North America from colonial times to the present. The survey will also include cultural, ethnic, and philosophical influences on the shape of American Christianity.

**Course Objectives**

1. The student will be able to name major events in the history of Christianity in America.
2. The student will be able to name and discuss the contribution of many of the key people who shaped the history of Christianity in America.
3. The student will be able to describe the development of Christian thought and doctrine as a result of historical developments and key individuals.
4. The student will be able to draw from and relate the lessons of history to current developments.
5. The student will become acquainted with various views different segments of the church have held concerning culture, origins, racism, segregation, marriage, and the consequences of such views in a multicultural, pluralistic society.

**Course Texts**

**(Certificate students only read books with \*\*)**

Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972. **NOTE:** This book is not available in book stores but is readily available on Amazon and others for \$4-\$20. Look for 1972-1975 printing. This is a large book. Masters students will be required to read only this book and Simonson book below.

\*\*Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day*. Rev. ed. San Francisco: Harper, 1985 (pp. 193-530).

\*\*Simonson, Harold P. ed. *Selected Writings of Jonathan Edwards*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2004.

## **Course Requirements**

1. Class attendance
2. Completion of all assigned reading
3. Read Jonathan Edwards' sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and give an analysis of the sermon as you believe a 21<sup>st</sup> century American congregation would respond.
4. Masters students only – A project in which the student will be required to visit a church of a distinctly different ethnic and cultural make-up than their own and report on impressions, reception, worship style, theology expressed in preaching, and other distinctives.
5. A mid-term exam made up of short answer, multiple choice, and short essay questions.
6. A final exam which will lean more to short answer and essay questions.

## **Grading**

1. Completion of assigned reading 10%
2. Edwards analysis 20% (Certificate students 25%)
3. Project 15% (Certificate students 0%)
4. Mid-term exam 25% (Certificate students 30%)
5. Final exam 25% (Certificate students 30%)
6. Class attendance and participation 5%

All course materials must be submitted to the professor at the end of the semester (last day of class).

## Course Outline

- Sept 5<sup>th</sup> – Introduction    **Note:** Outline for Ahlstrom reading will be distributed  
Seeds sown in Europe: a new mood, Enlightenment & Romanticism,  
Puritan revolution, Pietism
- Sept 12<sup>th</sup> – Colonial America: Virginia, northern Puritans, Baptists, Catholicism  
The Wesley's, Whitefield, The Great Awakening  
Read Gonzalez pp. 193-210
- Sept 19<sup>th</sup> – The life and theology of Jonathan Edwards    Read - Simonson
- Sept 26<sup>th</sup> – Independence, The Princeton theologians  
Read Gonzalez pp. 229-292
- Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> – The second Great Awakening, Revivals and Revivalism  
**Edwards analysis due**
- Oct 10<sup>th</sup> – **Mid-term exam**
- Oct 17<sup>th</sup> – **Fall Break**
- Oct 24<sup>th</sup> – Growth of denominations, new religions, Foreign missions  
Read Gonzalez 301ff
- Oct 31<sup>st</sup> – Slavery and the Civil War    Continue Reading Gonzalez  
The Black Church
- Nov 7<sup>th</sup> – Liberalism, Social Engineering, and War, Rise of Liberalism – Post-War  
Finish reading Gonzalez pp. 301-530
- Nov 14<sup>th</sup> – Pluralism, Culture Wars, and Post-modern Christianity  
**Project due**
- Nov 21<sup>st</sup> – Growth of Denominations, Challenges to Christianity
- Nov 28<sup>th</sup> – **No Class Thanksgiving**
- Dec 5<sup>th</sup> – **Final Exam**

## Further Reading

- Bainton, Roland H. *Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and Its Impact on Western Civilization*. 2 vols. New York: Harper Torchbooks, Cloister Library, 1970.
- Burr, Nelson R. in collaboration with James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison. *A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Carpenter, Kaley Middlebrooks. "Religious Causes, Changes, and Consequences in the American Civil War." *Westminster Theological Journal* 64:2 (Fall 2002): 405-415.
- Deane, William Ferm. *Contemporary American Theologies*. New York: Seabury Press, 1981.
- Gerstner, John H. *Jonathan Edwards: A Mini Theology*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1987.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought*. vol. 3. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
- Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis Books, 1988.
- Heron, Alasdair I.C. *A Century of Protestant Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980.
- Jensen, Robert W. *American Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Marsden, G.M. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelism 1870 – 1925*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- 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.
- Murray, Iain H. *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001.
- Noll, Mark A., David F. Wells, et. al., eds. *Christianity in America: A Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983.

- Peacock, James L. and Ruel W. Tyson, Jr. *Pilgrims of Paradox: Calvinism and Experience among the Primitive Baptists of the Blue Ridge*. Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1989.
- Reid, Daniel G., coordinating ed., et.al. *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1990.
- Stephenson, George M. *The Puritan Heritage*. New York: Macmillan, 1952.
- Thornbury, John F. "Interpreting the Great Awakening." *Reformation and Revival* 1:2 (Spring 1992) 66-83.
- Woodson, Carter. *The History of the Negro Church*. Washington: Associated Publishers, 1990.
- Wuthnow, R. *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.