

**Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
(Huntsville Campus)**

Spring 2020

HT4641 CHURCH HISTORY IN AMERICA

A survey of Christianity in North America from colonial times to the present. Students will become acquainted with some of the increasing challenges of effective ministry in the most diverse country in the world, i.e. the United States of America. The history, culture, contributions, religion and family life of major minority groups will be surveyed.

Professor: Dr Blair Waddell, (931) 315-4759, blairwaddell@outlook.com

Course Objectives

1. The student should become acquainted with at least one basic approach to history that will be demonstrated within the book reviews.
2. The student should grasp the overall ebb and flow of American Christian history by recognizing the major periods of development and mastering strategic factual data assessed on the final exam.
3. The student should gain some comprehension of formative factors in Christian theology and Christian societal forms. Puritanism, Evangelicalism, fundamentalism, and the philosophical foundations of liberalism will be of particular importance demonstrated through essay questions on the final exam.
4. The student should develop greater aptitude and confidence in functioning within the larger Christian community, with discernment for the appropriate place of cooperation and polemics.
5. The student should be able to use historical perspective in developing spiritual disciplines.

Books

Noll, Mark. *The Old Religion in a New World. The History of North American Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002.

Bradley, Anthony. *Liberating Black Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

Edwards, Jonathan. *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Souls*. (1736)

Kay, William. *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Murray, Iain H. *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2001.

Requirements

1. Class attendance and participation in class discussions
2. Complete all assigned reading
3. Over the semester the student will write four short papers in response to specific questions. Papers should be 1 to 3 pages in length and are due April 1. You may turn in responses on the first day of class if you prefer.
4. The student will take a final exam consisting of short answer, multiple choice and short essay questions. The exam will be given at the conclusion of the class and must be mailed back into the professor.
5. The student will write an essay between 5,000 to 8,000 words (excluding footnotes) on one of the following topics. Topic to be chosen by February 28. This essay is due April 15.
 - a. How did the religious environment of the colonies contribute to American Independence?
 - b. How did the American university move from being a religious institution to becoming secular?
 - c. How did the revivalism of Charles Finney shape American religion?
 - d. Is David Barton a credible historian? What has been the effect of his scholarship on Evangelicalism?
 - e. How has modern media (internet, social media, television, twitter, blogging, etc...) affected the American Church?

Response Papers

Students will write a brief four-page paper answering the following topics.

1. Read the entry entitled 'My Take on the National Monument to the Forefathers' on Robert Tracy Mackenzie's blog at <https://faithandamericanhistory.wordpress.com/2014/11/23/my-take-on-the-national-monument-to-the-forefathers/> (which is an excerpt from his book *First Thanksgiving*). Answer this question 'Why not just focus on the positives of Christian history?' in your own thoughts and words.
2. After reading Jonathan Edwards *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* answer this question 'Were Edwards' signs of conversion during the New England revival valid? Why or why not?'
3. After reading *Evangelicalism Divided*, answer this question 'what are the strengths and weaknesses of ecumenical co-operation?'
4. What is Anthony Bradley's solution for a theology that will help the black church? Why do you agree or disagree with his proposal?

BTS Formatting and Style

All papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian/Chicago standards including the title pages.

Grading

Final Exam 20%

Theological Essay 20%

Response Papers 40% (4 total)

Attendance & Participation in Class 20%

All course materials must be submitted by the assigned date. Thereafter, course materials may be submitted for up to six (6) weeks after the end of the semester directly to the office of the Registrar with the permission of the professor. If a student submits course materials after the end of the semester but within the six (6) weeks grace period, the student's grade will be lowered by one letter grade. The course materials will not be accepted after the six (6) week grace period and a failing grade will be posted to the student's transcript.

Course Schedule

February 21 (6:30-8:30 PM) – Introduction & Lecture 1
February 22 (8:30 AM- 3:30 PM)- Lectures From 1500-1900
February 28 (6:30-8:30 PM- Lectures -Early 19th Century- Topic for Research Paper due
February 29 (8:30 AM-3:30 PM) Lectures from 1900 -2020.
March 9- Final Exam must be post-marked by this date.
April 1- All Response Papers due
April 15- Research Paper Due (Must be post-marked by this date if mailed)

Bibliography

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- Cashdollar, Charles. *A Spiritual Home: Life in British and American Reformed Congregations, 1830-1915*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity, Volume 2: The Reformation to the Present Day*. San Francisco: Harper, 1985
- Gaustad, Edwin & Leigh Schmidt. *The Religious History of America*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- Hill, Jonathan. *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity*. Oxford: Lion Publishing, 2006.
- Kidd, Thomas. *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Kidd, Thomas. *The Great Awakening: Brief History with Documents*. Gordonsville: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007.
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- Kuiper, B.K. *The Church in History*. Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans

- Publishing Co., 1964.
- Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009.
- Marsden, George. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelism 1870 – 1925*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Marsden, George. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991.
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- McKenzie, R.T. *The First Thanksgiving: What the Real Story Tells About Loving God and Learning from History*. Downer's Grove: IVP Academic, 2013.
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- Trueman, Carl. *History and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.
- Wells, David F. ed., *Reformed Theology in America, A History of its Modern Development*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997.
- Wolfe, John. *The Expansion of Evangelicalism*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 2007.