

GOVT 436 – AMERICAN THOUGHT

SYLLABUS

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COURSE DELIVERY:

Print-Based Correspondence Course

CREDIT HOURS:

Three Semester Hours

PREREQUISITES:

None

COURSE MATERIALS:

The texts are available through a welter of on-line book stores. These texts are not available through the ASC Bookstore. **Section Number: 1094**

Required Textbook:

Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life*, Oxford University Press, ISBN 9780195333299.

Monographs¹

John Fea, *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* Westminster John Knox Press. ISBN: 9780664235048

Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America*. Harvard University Press. ISBN: 9780674032538

Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. Norton. ISBN: 9780393066821

¹ A monograph is a scholarly book on a single subject or an aspect of it.

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

The interaction of religious ideas, practices, and aspirations in United States History, 1607 to Present

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Through successfully completing this course, the student will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the major bodies of religious thought, thinkers, ideas, practices and their impact on society and politics in the United States since 1607 through formal tests and outside writing assignments.
- Identify in its scholarly context an appropriate research problem and demonstrate the ability to analyze, appraise, and understand historical scholarship and research by producing an acceptable research paper and scholarly book essays.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This course is divided into 20 sections. To complete the course in a timely fashion, it is recommended that you consider each section to be one week.

1. **READING ASSIGNMENTS.** The course is divided into three units. The student should read the text as detailed in the lessons below. Keep in mind that you are reading in order to acquire a framework on which you can view the course content (concepts and specific terms) in their historic context and as ongoing discussions about core questions of the meaning of life, expressed in religious language. Rather than being expected to memorize dates of events, you will be asked to demonstrate that you have developed an understanding not only of what happened, but of the overall significance of that event to the historical period. In addition to top line events (such as might appear in newspaper headlines of the time), you are reading for social, political, and intellectual content. What key concepts or core ideas are prevalent at the time? How are these ideas influencing social and political history? What are the key conflicts taking place? Who are the players? What are the core ideas or concepts underlying these conflicts? The **KEY TERMS** that you should pay attention to in each chapter of each unit are listed in the study guide.

At the end of each unit of study are three or four essay questions. You should write out your answers to each one of these questions, making sure that your answers are defensible, that is, that you can support the argument you are making utilizing specific citations from the historical record. Please refer to the rubric at the end of this syllabus for guidance on how to construct an essay response based on (a.) structure, (b.) evidence, and (c.) quality of writing.

YOUR UNIT EXAMINATION WILL CONSIST OF ONE OF THESE FOUR ESSAY QUESTIONS, PLUS A LIST OF EIGHT KEY TERMS. YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO CHOOSE FIVE OF THE EIGHT TERMS THAT APPEAR ON THE EXAM. YOU WILL BE ASKED TO EXPLAIN EACH TERM AND IDENTIFY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH TO THE HISTORICAL PERIOD.

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- 2. EXAMINATIONS.** There are three units of study in this course, with an examination at the end of each unit. As stated above, each examination will consist of a list of eight identification terms, from which you will choose five. The examination will also include one of the three or four essay questions for which you have already prepared a response.

Each exam is worth 50 points. The essay is worth 35 points (70%). The identification items (significant terms) are worth 3 points each or 15 points total (30%).

The **FINAL EXAMINATION** will be included in the exam for Unit Three and will be worth an additional 50 points. The comprehensive examination section will include an essay question drawn from one of the three units of study (and for which you have previously prepared) and will be worth 35 points. There will be an additional list of identification items drawn from the entire course of study. Again, there will be eight items on this list, from which you will choose five. The comprehensive identification items are also worth three points each for a total of 15 points.

3. ESSAYS ON MONOGRAPHS. Each student shall craft a five-page essay in response to the following questions: (These essays should be typed, double-spaced, no more than 12 point font, one-inch margins all around).

- 1) Having read Fea, *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?*, was it? How did this idea evolve over time? **(Due at the beginning of Unit Two.)**
- 2) Having read Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson*, how is she unlike the caricature of her in *Elmer Gantry*? In what ways does she fuse culture, religion, and politics in the 1920s and 1930s? **(Due at the beginning of Unit Three.)**
- 3) Having read Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, how did largely rural and southern religious beliefs undergird and transform political conservatism in the Post World War II United States? **(Due at the end of Unit Three.)**

4. TERM PAPER. Each student shall draft a term paper, addressing an essential aspect of the era of the American Revolution. It should contain a minimum of ten pages of text and use the endnote citation form described in Turabian, *Manual for Writers*. These must make wholesale use of available primary sources and address an important scholarly issue regarding religious beliefs, practices, and/or their social or political implications. The topic must be located chronologically with Unit One in this course (1500-1800). You must obtain my informal approval for a topic by **Section Three**, submit a prospectus describing what you are going to argue and what source materials you will use by **Section Four**. You must submit your final draft by **Section Six**. Some suggested topics: Calvinism in 17th Century New England, Folk Beliefs in 17th Century New England, Witchcraft in Colonial New England, Anglican Establishment in Colonial Virginia, Jonathan Edwards and Edwardian Theology, Syncretic beliefs among African Americans in the 17th Century, George Whitefield and early Evangelicalism, Thomas Jefferson and Jesus.

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GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND SCALE:

In alignment with ASC academic policies, no D may apply to a major or minor field.

Distribution:

Test one	50
Test two	50
Final	100
Book essay one	25
Book essay two	25
Book essay three	25
<u>Term Paper</u>	<u>50</u>
Total points	325

Scale:

A =	292 -325
B =	259 - 291
C =	226 - 258
D =	193 - 225
F =	below 193

ADA STATEMENT:

Students who need special accommodation to complete this class should contact the instructor and the Diversity Officer in the Office of Equal Opportunity at 719.587.8213 as soon as possible.

EXAMINATIONS

Please refer to the Guidelines for Proctored Exams and submit your Exam Request Form three weeks BEFORE you plan to take the exam.