

Your Professor

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How This Course Helps You Graduate

This course fulfills your Christianity/Catholic tradition [core curriculum requirement](#).

Course Texts

Marie Griffith, ed., [American Religions: A Documentary Reader](#) (Yale University Press, 2005).

Dennis Covington, [Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia](#) (De Capo Press, 2009).

Both books are required. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard. Please bring your readings to class.

AMERICAN CHRISTIANITIES



Course Description

Americans frequently debate on whether or not this is a Christian nation. Those same Americans have different understandings of what a “Christian nation” is. In America, it seems there is no one way to be Christian. From initial encounters and exchanges between European colonists and Native Americans to the serpent-handling churches in rural Appalachia, we will build a thematic and chronological framework for understanding the diversity of Christianities in American history and culture. Christianity has been a dominant force in American history, and it has been a very diverse force. During the course, we will investigate the powerful social, cultural, political, and intellectual role Christianity plays in our nation’s past.

Historically speaking, how one is Christian in the United States is closely related to one’s social status. Thus race, politics, and gender are key themes in this course. This course will equip you with knowledge, tools, and resources to analyze arguments about Christianity in America’s past, present, and future.

Christianity/Catholic Tradition Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to identify the sources of Christian traditions: scripture, doctrines, historical developments, leading thinkers, or practices.

In American Christianities, we'll map various themes, trends, texts, and people in American religious history across different time periods.

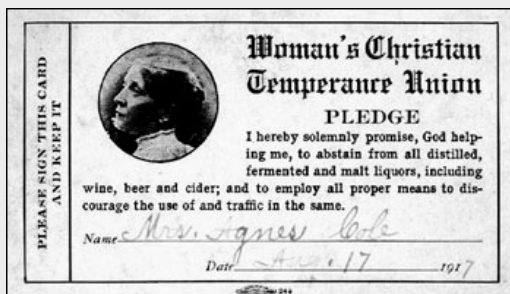
2. Students will be able to interpret and analyze sources of Christian tradition critically and creatively by employing contemporary scholarly methods that relate sources to historical contexts, to other sources, and to the experiences of faith.

In American Christianities, we'll analyze and contextualize primary sources about American religious history and culture. Additionally, we'll compare and critique how various Christian groups have related to one another and found their place in American culture.

3. Students will be able to articulate how the sources of Christian tradition and methods of interpretation and analysis promote cultural transformation and social justice.

In American Christianities, we'll assess how religion, power, and identity have intersected in American history and culture.

How to Succeed in this Course



1) Come to class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire meeting. Make-up quizzes will only be offered for excused absences: documented University approved activities, contagious illness, or family emergencies. **Email me when you know you're going to be absent.** Your lowest quiz grade is dropped to account for other absences.

2) Regularly check your email. I frequently email about grades, housekeeping issues, and more.

3) Complete assigned readings, in their entirety, on schedule. Engage with your reading. Consider coming to class with 3 Qs about the reading (a rich **q**uote to unpack, a discussion **q**uestion for the class, and a **q**uandary that the reading left with you.) And **bring** the readings to class.

4) Contribute to class discussions. You should come to class with questions and comments, prepared to participate in a lively discussion.

5) Complete all assignments, in a timely manner. Due dates are firm but I allow requested extensions if requested 12 hours before due date. Otherwise late papers will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late.

6) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist you in your attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments (Really, I am). Come to my office hours and I am always available via email.

Course Policies

RESPECT FOR MATERIAL, OUR SUBJECTS, AND YOUR PEERS

This course is not confessional in nature; that is, we are not here to promote a particular religious viewpoint or to debate religious “truth.” Rather, we will be engaging religious materials in order to understand their meanings for the people who have produced and used them. You may have your own religious commitment; if so, throughout this course you will likely encounter opinions and religious beliefs and activities with which you do not agree. This does not make them unworthy of your study, consideration, and respect. I ask you to imagine yourself in the shoes of someone else whose practices and beliefs may differ from your own and yet carry immense meaning and value for that person. Furthermore, you will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times, both in and out of the classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way. Treat your peers and the subject material with respect.

COURSE POLICY ON RACE AND ETHNICITY

This class and classroom is one that respects and welcomes each other. Many of my classes cover topics related to race, colonialism, religion, and racism. These conversations and readings are difficult for some students, and I encourage you to live in that space of productive discomfort and allow yourself to be challenged. Gonzaga’s [Mission Statement](#) emphasizes a commitment to intercultural competence, diversity, and social justice. Let’s live that mission in the classroom. Through these sometimes-uncomfortable conversations, we will learn and grow together.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. We are an intellectual and academic community, and all of us are responsible to act with integrity. All violations of the Gonzaga Academic Honesty Policy will result in a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism is the act of passing another’s work off as your own. Whether intentional or not, all plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, consult the guide on blackboard. [Click here for more on Academic Citizenship at Gonzaga.](#)

SCREEN POLICY

You are welcome to use your computer or tablet in class to take notes and refer to pdf readings you did not print out. Screens are **not** to be allowed for other purposes during class. If you have your screen open, you have agreed that I can cold-call on you at any time. The only exceptions to this rule are those with relevant disability accommodations.



DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Access.
2. Bring a letter to me from the [Disability Access Office](#) indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done within the first two weeks of class. The sooner I know, the sooner we can work together and help you succeed.

For more information about services available to GU students with disabilities, contact:

disability@gonzaga.edu; 313-4134; Foley Library 209.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I enforce the [Gonzaga attendance policy](#), if you miss more than 6 class meetings, you will receive a “V,” which is the same as a “F.” Per the University [policy on religious holidays](#), exceptions to this include religious holidays. And any COVID-related issue, like exhibiting symptoms, is fully excused.

A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga’s policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in [Gonzaga’s Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy](#).

As a faculty member, I want get you connected to the resources here on campus specially trained in and experienced in assisting in such complaints, and therefore **I will report all incidents of gender-based harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct to Title IX**. A representative from that office will reach out to you via phone and/or email to explore options for support, safety measures and reporting. I will provide our Title IX Director with all relevant details, including names and identifying information, of the information reported. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following websites: Equity and Inclusion and Title IX. If you would like to directly make a report of harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct directly, you may contact our Title IX coordinator (Stephanie Thomas; 509-313-6910; Business Services Building 018; thomassn@gonzaga.edu). Or fill out an online [Sexual Misconduct Form](#). For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit our [Title IX](#) website or the website for [Equity and Inclusion](#). My office is a safe space but I am legally required to report sexual misconduct.

Assignments and Grading

1) Reading Quizzes: There will be 11 pop quizzes each worth 15 points. These quizzes will cover the day’s reading assignment. At the end of the semester your lowest quiz grade will be dropped and your total quiz score determined from the remaining quizzes. Make up quizzes will only be offered for

students with excused (officially documented) absences. Worth 150 points.

2) Primary Source Worksheets: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to fill out 4 primary source worksheets. The worksheet is due the class period the reading was assigned. Each is worth 50 points. **Once we're out of primary sources, we're out.** No exceptions.

3) Take Home Midterm: This essay has you reflecting on the most significant reading so far in the semester and why. Full prompt posted to blackboard. Worth 100 points. (A general rubric for essays in this class is on blackboard in the Prompts/Guides area.)

4) Primary Source Response Paper: You will write a 750 word response paper to an assigned primary source of your choice. This is akin to an expanded primary source worksheet. Like the worksheets, it is due the class period the reading was assigned. Worth 100 points. **Once we're out of primary sources, we're out.** No exceptions.

5) Jundt Museum Reflection: There will be one class period set aside for you to go to the Jundt Art Museum and reflect on two pieces of art of your choice. More information on Blackboard. Worth 100 points.

6) Final Essay/Unessay: You will write a 1500-word essay in reflection of the semester or complete an [unessay](#). Worth 225 points.

7) In-Class Participation: The least boring and most effective way to learn is to participate fully in the process. You are expected to contribute to the success of this course by: Reading the assigned materials, attending every class, taking notes, listening respectfully, staying on task, and **actively contributing** to class discussions. Worth 125 points. (A rubric for class participation is on blackboard in the Prompts/Guides area.)

Reading Quizzes: 150 points	A range: 1000-895 points	D range: 694-595 points
Worksheets: 200 points	A/A- cutoff at 925	D+/D cutoff at 665
Midterm: 100 points	B range: 894-795 points	F: 594 points and below
PS Response: 100 points	B+/B cutoff at 855	
Art Reflection: 100 points	B/B- cutoff at 825	
Final Essay/Unessay: 225 points	C range: 794-695 points	
Participation: 125 points	C+/C cutoff at 755	
Total: 1000 points	C/C- cutoff at 725	

Course Schedule

Important: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed.

Week 1: Course Introduction

Wednesday, Jan 12: What are American Christianities?

Friday, Jan 14: Why American Christianities?

Reading: "The Color of Christ" on blackboard



Week 2: Colonial Encounters

Monday, Jan 17: MLK Day. No Class

Wednesday, Jan 19: New Spain

Reading: *Sublimis Deus* in *American Religions 2* (AR page # reading begins) and El Requerimiento” on blackboard

Friday, Jan 21: New France

Reading: “Jesuit Relations” on blackboard

Week 3: Colonial Encounters

Monday, Jan 24: New England

Reading: Winthrop “A Model of Christian Charity” in AR 16

Wednesday, Jan 26: Puritans

Reading: Mather “Sleeping at Sermons is a Great Evil” in AR 19, and Mather “Wonders of the Invisible World” in AR 80

Friday, Jan 28: The First Great Awakening

Reading: Edwards, “*Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion*” in AR 92



Week 4: Making Early America

Monday, Jan 31: Christianity and the Atlantic Slave Trade

Reading: Armstrong “The Christian Doctrine of Slavery” in AR 239

Wednesday, Feb 2: Enslaved Christianity

Reading: Wheatley, (all three poems), in AR 121, and Douglass “From *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*” in AR 213



Friday, Feb 4: Christianity and America’s Founding

Reading: Jefferson “A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom” in AR 150, and Madison “Memorial and Remonstrance” in AR 152, and “The Petition of the Philadelphia Synagogue” in AR 148

Week 5: 19th-Century Christian Diversity

Monday, Feb 7: The Second Great Awakening

Reading: Finney “From *Memoirs*” in AR 189 and Wesley, “A Plain Account of Christian Perfection,” in AR 115

Wednesday, Feb 9: Antebellum Spiritual Hothouse

Reading: “Evidence from Scripture and History” on blackboard

Friday, Feb 11: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Reading: Smith “Articles of Faith” and “Revelation” in AR 164

Week 6: 19th & 20th-Century Christian Diversity

Monday, Feb 14: Nineteenth-century Utopianism

Reading: “The Oneida Community” on blackboard

Wednesday, Feb 16: Strong Bodies

Reading: “The Living Temple” on blackboard

Friday, Feb 18: No class meeting. Dr. Clark will be at a departmental retreat.

Your art museum reflections are due by noon.

Week 7: Christianity and Prejudice

Monday, Feb 21: President’s Day. No Class

Wednesday, Feb 23: Catholic Immigration

Reading: *Toth Meeting with Archbishop John Ireland* in AR 382; and “Solving the Italian Problem” on blackboard

Friday, Feb 25: Anti-Catholicism

Reading: Strong “From *Our Country*” (section on “Romanism” only) in AR 365; and “Maria Monk” on blackboard

Take-Home Midterm Due by 5pm



Week 8: Christianity and Violence

Monday, Feb 28: Christianity and the Civil War

Reading: “Second Inaugural Address” on blackboard

Wednesday, March 2: Massacre at Wounded Knee

Reading: Black Elk, “From *Black Elk Speaks*” in AR 341

Friday, March 4: Jesuit Missions and Sexual Abuse

Reading: “Jesuits West Disclosure List” on blackboard and “[These Priests Abused in Native Villages for years. They retired on Gonzaga’s Campus](#)” from *The Reveal*



March 7-March 11: SPRING BREAK! No Class

Week 9: Modern America

Monday, March 14: World’s Parliament of Religion

Reading: Clarke “The Ten Religions and Christianity” in AR 389, and Daggett “Heathen Invasion” in AR 384

Wednesday, March 16: Pentecostalism

Reading: “Searching for Eden with a Satellite Dish” on blackboard

Friday, March 18: Social Gospel

Reading: Rauschenbusch “From *A Theology for the Social Gospel*” in AR 309

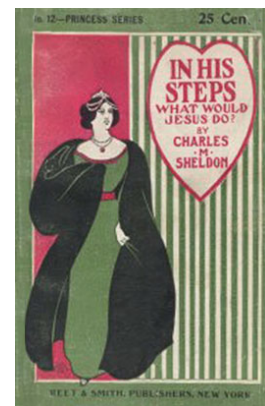
Week 10: Modern America

Monday, March 21: Fundamentalists & Modernists

Reading: Fosdick “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” in AR 418

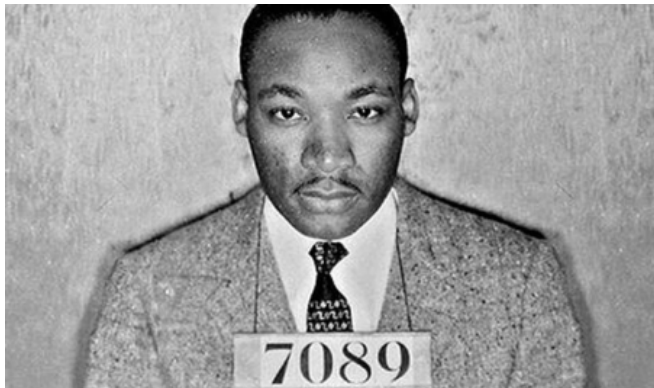
Wednesday, March 23: Catholicism and Gender

Reading: “Father Siekmann’s Advice for Boys and Girls” on blackboard



Friday, March 25: America and “godless Communism”

Reading: “Is This Tomorrow?” on blackboard



Week 11: Civil Rights Crusades

Monday, March 28: The Black Church

Reading: DuBois, Sorrow Songs, *Credo*, and *Litany of Atlanta* in AR 328

Wednesday, March 30: The Black Church and Protest

Reading: “How Far the Promised Land?” on blackboard

Friday, April 1: Christianity and Rights

Reading: King “Letter from Birmingham Jail” in AR 502

Week 12: Christianity and Cultural Changes

Monday, April 4: Culture Wars and the Religious Right

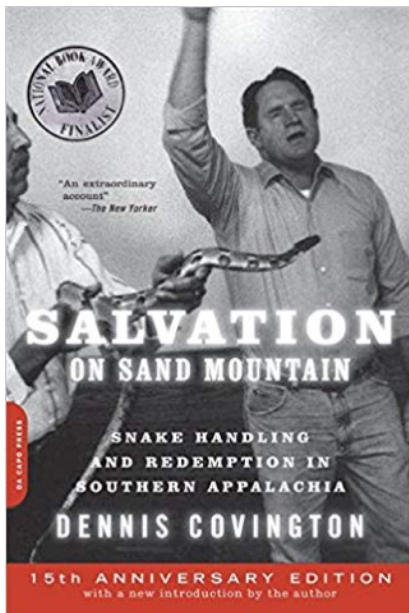
Reading: Hauerwas “Gay Friendship” in AR 550

Wednesday, April 6: Culture Wars and the Religious Freedom

Reading: U.S. Department of Education “Religious Expression in Public Schools” in AR 624

Friday, April 8: Christianity and 9/11

Reading: Graham “From The Name” in AR 602, Letter to Franklin Graham in AR 605, and Rodriguez, “Danger and Grace” in AR 606



Week 13: In-Depth Case Study: Serpent Handling

Monday, April 11: Appalachian Mountain Religion

Reading: Chapters 1 and 2 in *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Wednesday, April 13: *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Reading: Chapters 3 and 4 in *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Friday, April 15: Good Friday. No Class.

Week 15: In-Depth Case Study: Serpent Handling

Monday, April 18: Easter Monday. No Class.

Wednesday, April 20: *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Reading: Chapters 5 and 6 in *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Friday, April 22: Holy Ghost People

Reading: Reading: Chapters 7 and 8 in *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Week 16: In-Depth Case Study: Serpent Handling

Monday, April 25: *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Reading: Chapters 9 and 10 in *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Wednesday, April 27: *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Reading: Finish *Salvation on Sand Mountain*

Friday, April 29: No Class. Dr. Clark will be away at a conference.

Final Exam Week

10 am Class: Tuesday, May 3, 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

11 am Class: Thursday, May 5, 8:00 am - 10:00 am