



Power & Piety: Evangelicals and Politics in the Contemporary U.S.

Religion 1491/HDS 2193
GSAS 64741

Course Description

This course examines the history, beliefs, practices and aesthetics of evangelical Christians in the United States, paying particular attention to the relationship between evangelical theology and national politics since the American Civil War. Topics covered will include: the development of the Social Gospel; the Niebuhr Brothers and neo-orthodox theology; women's suffrage and Civil Rights; the "Southern Strategy" and the rise of the Religious Right; as well as Christian Reconstructionism.

Instructors

Marla Frederick, PhD

Professor of African And Af. Am.
Studies and of the Study of Religion

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Plummer Professor of Christian
Morals and Professor of Religion and
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Course Requirement & Grade Distribution

Midterm Examination	25 points
Attendance/Discussion Participation	20 points
Critical Review Essays	30 points
Final Examination	25 points

Required Texts

Derogatis, Amy. *Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Dochuck, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. Norton, 2011.

Dupont, Carolyn Renee. *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1975*. New York University Press, 2015.

Fitzgerald, Frances. *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*. Simon & Schuster, 2017.

Flowers, Elizabeth. *Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power Since World War II*. UNC Press, 2014.

Ingersoll, Julie. *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Kruse, Kevin. *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America*. Basic Books, 2015.

McGuire, Danielle. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance. A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the rise of the black power movement*. Vintage, 2011.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Smith, Michael. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001 (1944).

Week 1 Introduction

September 6

“Who are Evangelicals and What Do They Want?”

Week 2 Evangelicals, Abolition, and the Social Gospel

September 13

Readings:

Matthew Bowman, “Sin, Spirituality and Primitivism: The Theologies of the American Social Gospel, 1885-1917” in *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol 17, Issue 1, 2007, Pages 95-126

Jacob H. Dorn, “The Social Gospel and Socialism: A Comparison of the Thought of Francis Greenwood Peabody, Washington Gladden, and Walter Rauschenbusch,” in *Church History*, Vol. 62, Issue no. 1, 1993, pages 82-100.

Week 3 The Scopes Trial and the Retreat and Rebirth of Evangelicalism

September 20 (Critical Review Essay 1 Due)

Readings:

Noah Adams, [“Timeline: Remembering the Scopes Monkey Trial,”](#) on *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, July 5, 2005.

Dochuck, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. Norton, 2011.

Week 4 1940s Evangelicalism Birth of the Modern Day Movement

September 27

Readings:

Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*

Week 5 Evangelicals and Corporate America

October 4 (Critical Review Essay 2 Due)

Readings:

Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America.*

Week 6 Evangelicals and Civil Rights

October 11

Readings:

Dupont, Carolyn Renee. *Mississippi Praying: Southern White Evangelicals and the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1975.*

Week 7 Evangelicals and Black Christian Activism

October 18

Readings:

McGuire, Daniel. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance : a New History of the Civil Rights Movement.*

Week 8 Evangelicals and Complimentarism

October 25 (Critical Review Essay 3 Due)

Readings:

Elizabeth Flowers, *Into the Pulpit: Southern Baptist Women and Power Since World War II*

Week 9 Evangelicals and Reconstructionism

November 1

Readings:

Julie Ingersoll, *Building God's Kingdom*

Week 10 Evangelicals and the Republican Revolution

November 8 (Critical Review Essay 4 Due)

Readings:

[Jimmy Carter, "Energy and National Goals: A Crisis of Confidence,"](#) Speech delivered from the Oval Office on July 15, 1979.

[Ronald Reagan, "The Evil Empire,"](#) Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals," delivered March 8, 1983 in Orlando, Florida.

Week 11 Evangelicals and the Discourses of Racial Reconciliation

November 15

Readings:

Smith, Michael. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Russell Jeung, "Evangelical and Mainline Teachings on Asian American Identity," *Semeia*, 2002, pages 211-236.

Eric L. Daniel & Christopher G. Ellison, God's Party? Race, Religion, and Partisanship Over Time. *Political Research Quarterly*. Vol 61. No 2. June 2008

[Reverend Samuel Rodriguez on Bill Moyers Journal](#)

Week 12 Thanksgiving Break

Week 13 Sexual Politics of Evangelicalism

November 29. (Critical Review Essay 5 Due)

Readings:

Derogatis, Amy. *Saving Sex: Sexuality and Salvation in American Evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Steve Inskeep, [“The Preacher and the Activist,” NPR](#), June 30, 2006.

[“Open Letter from Mel White to Jerry Falwell”](#) June 5, 1999

Ellison, Acevedo, & Ramos-Wada, “Religion and Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Among U.S. Latinos. *Social Science Quarterly*; Volume 92. No 1. March 2011.

Assignments

CRITICAL REVIEW ESSAYS

Critical review essays provide an opportunity to respond thoughtfully to the readings. You will be required to write six analytical review essays. They should be one page single-spaced. They are due on the designated dates above. If you will not be in attendance, you should arrange for an electronic copy of your essay to be uploaded to Canvas prior to the due date class meeting.

The following questions should guide your discussion:

1. What is the author's historical and political context?
2. What is the general argument of the book?
3. How is religion employed as a tool for political engagement?
4. How are debates about class, gender and race negotiated?
4. What major themes connect this work with other works in our readings?
5. How is the intersection of religion and politics understood?
6. Who is the audience and why has this audience been chosen?
7. With what intellectuals (or schools of thought) is this author engaged?

The above questions do not form a rigid template for your review essays. You may want to address other issues and some will not be particularly relevant for specific texts. These questions, however, should help structure your reading, note-taking in class, and your essays. Critical review essays are compulsory! Failure to submit three of the five analytical essays will result in an automatic F in the course.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Fundamental to learning is full participation in the classroom experience. It is here where questions are raised and discussion brings about clarity, though not necessarily agreement on all issues. Your participation is not only crucial to your growth, but also that of your classmates. Thus absence from the class should be avoided at all costs. Nevertheless, emergencies do arise. In light of this, you are permitted one excused absence. After this, your grade will be

affected. Full participation in the classroom dynamic is expected at all times. We have entered into a contract of reciprocity where we learn from one another. Let us enjoy and respect the process.

Moreover, though we require critical interpretations of the assigned readings and each other's perspectives, all conversation MUST remain collegial. Always err to the side of generosity! You never know when you will need liberality reciprocated. Being rude and "going hard" in order to perform your intelligence is not a sign of intelligence. It is a sign of being an @\$\$!!!

Academic Integrity

Using the ideas of others without giving appropriate credit is plagiarism. You are expected to cite your work (including electronic/internet/media sources). I suggest the Chicago humanities style of documentation. For examples of appropriately cited sources according to the Chicago Manual of Style see:

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/cmosfaq/tools.html>

Moreover, any other form of intellectual dishonesty is unacceptable. Academic integrity is expected at all times. This is not a matter of getting caught (though you will be punished according to University guidelines) but a matter of your own personal integrity. You owe yourself nothing less than your best. Do not compromise your most valuable assets: your name and character.

Additional Suggested Readings for Lectures

Balmer, Randall. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 25th anniversary edition.

Bowman, Matthew. *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism*

Gardner, Christine. *Making Chastity Sexy: The Rhetoric of Evangelical Chastity Campaigns*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 2011.

Luker, Ralph. *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform 1885-1912*

Miller, Steven. *The Age of Evangelicalism: America's Born-Again Years*

Miller, Steven. *Billy Graham and the Rise of the Republican South*. Philadelphia: UPenn Press, 2009.

Rice, Daniel. *Reinhold Niebuhr and His Circle of Influence*

Griffith, R. Marie. *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission*