RS 151B: RELIGION IN AMERICAN HISTORY SINCE 1865

Professor Catherine L. Albanese

TR, 11:00 am-12:15 pm
Winter 2010

Course Description

This course surveys American religious history since 1865. We discover, after the Civil War, a religious landscape that becomes increasingly crowded and subject to change. Older Protestant evangelical forms adapt to new and urbanizing situations. Growing metaphysical religions carry forward themes from the past and express them in new and more clearly visible ways. Increasing pluralism means Eastern religions, brought by immigrants and adopted, too, by nonimmigrant Americans. A stronger presence than before for Catholics, Jews, and numerous others adds to the emerging mix. Meanwhile, in a mood of cultural anxiety, Protestants stake out liberal and conservative positions while they work to shape a new social form of the Christian gospel. We watch as mainstream Protestants yield their hegemony to others and begin to feel themselves outsiders in the religious culture that they had the principal role in creating. We also acknowledge the continuing importance of Protestantism even as it is challenged: The course examines the impact of the Protestant and pluralistic experience in American history and culture and looks for the mutual lines of influence between American Protestant Christianity, American religious pluralism, and general American history and culture.

Course Texts (Required)


Course Reader (Grafikart, 6550 Pardall Road, Isla Vista). See class schedule below for contents as assigned.

Undergraduate Course Requirements

A midterm examination (25 percent of course grade) will test your grasp of basic factual materials and ask related questions regarding readings and lectures for the first half of the course.

A final examination (25 percent of course grade) will again seek to determine your grasp of basic information and ask related questions concerning readings and lectures, this time for the second half of the course. The final is scheduled for Thursday, March 18, from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm.

A research paper (50 percent of course grade) will also be a major course requirement. The paper should work from one of the questions listed on the syllabus and answer it for the post-1865 period—or the appropriate part of that period—in America. The paper should use, minimally, six or seven scholarly sources (books or journal articles) that are not used in class reading and discussion. It should either (1) explore the question in general terms, give concrete examples, and
arrive at generalizations that make sense, given the data; or (2) give a brief general answer to the question and then focus on one particular aspect, case study, or example generated by the question. In whatever way you approach the paper, the point is to produce a sustained and creative synthesis that represents your encounter with historical materials and your intellectual response to them.

Your paper should be 1,800 words in length (that is, at least 7-8 pages long, printed double-spaced in font-size 12 with one-inch margins all around). Be sure to number the pages!!! The paper should be carefully documented, with citations made in endnotes (NOT notes in parentheses in the body of the paper). A bibliography of works consulted should accompany each paper. The endnotes and the bibliography should follow standard historical referencing format, as found in Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 6th ed. (University of Chicago Press). Papers are due on Thursday of the last week of the quarter at class time (Thursday, Mar. 11). Late papers, if still acceptable, will be penalized.

Your paper will be graded as follows:

(1) clearly answers a question on the syllabus using historical material for the post-1865 period in America (35 percent of paper grade);
(2) offers concrete examples to illustrate general points, and generalizes appropriately and convincingly from the evidence presented (20 percent of paper grade);
(3) produces a study that is approximately 1,800 words (about 7-8—but not more than 10—pages), printed double-spaced in font size 12, with standard one-inch margins all around (10 percent of paper grade);
(4) is appropriately documented with endnotes following the Turabian standard historical referencing format (NOT parentheses in the text) (15 percent of paper grade);
(5) includes a bibliography of sources consulted, again in the Turabian standard historical referencing format, which contains at least six or seven serious items, either university press or comparable books or scholarly journal articles (20 percent of paper grade).

Please also note the following:

(1) Papers without any notes or bibliography are considered incomplete and will be very seriously downgraded, if still acceptable.
(2) CLAS will schedule workshops specifically designed to aid you in this research project.
(3) Meryle Gaston (gaston@library.ucsb.edu), the Religious Studies bibliographer, will be available to assist you with research strategies. Consult the instructor for Gaston’s hours, or arrange for yourself to see her in the library.

**Graduate Course Requirements**

Regular class attendance/participation (10 percent of grade). Graduate students are expected to take a leadership role in class participation, raising questions, offering comparative historical insights,
and giving critical commentary and perspective on topics under consideration. There will be three additional meetings with the instructor. Besides these, the graduate requirement will be a major research paper on some aspect of religion in United States history in the period from the end of the Civil War until the present (90 percent of course grade). The paper should be an example of historical thinking throughout. It should be sensitive to U.S. social and cultural context and seek to explain changes and continuities regarding its American topic. It should review previous historical work on the topic and highlight its own contribution. The paper should incorporate primary sources from the historical period under consideration, utilizing these for about half of its bibliography. Endnotes should follow the Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed., and a full bibliography of works consulted should accompany the paper. Papers are due on Monday, Mar. 15.

Class Schedule

Much of the learning in this course should occur through your careful reading of assigned writings, through my lectures, and through our focused discussion. Hence, you are expected to come to class with reading completed and with some questions about it.

Jan. 5 Orientation: The American Religious Landscape since 1865
Jan. 7 Death and Life in the Post-Civil-War Era
How did Northerners and Southerners create religious meaning after the Civil War?
Reading: Reader #1 (Bushnell, Wilson).

Jan. 12 Evangelical Piety in the Later Nineteenth Century
How was evangelical piety related to new circumstances after the Civil War?
Reading: Text, 273-85; Reader #2 (Moody in McLoughlin, ed.).

Jan. 14 Reforming the Body Social: Temperance Tales
How did the temperance movement express the beliefs and stresses of Anglo-Protestants?
Reading: Text, 298-300; Reader #3 (Nation).

Jan. 19 Metaphysics and American Healing: Body Cure/Mind Cure
What are the basic ideas of the American metaphysical movement, and why do you think it experienced rapid growth in the late nineteenth century?
Reading: Text, 291-95, 306; Reader #4 (Trine).

Jan. 21 American Religious Thought and the Pragmatic Theory of Truth
What is pragmatism, how is it religious, and how does it relate to American culture?
Reading: Text, 261-72; Reader #5 (James).

Jan. 26 All That Glitters Is Not Gold: Gilded Age Spirituality on Trial
What was the religious response to Darwinian evolution?
Reading: Text, 326-29; Reader #6 (Boller).

Jan. 28 Catholic Life in Protestant America
What were the distinctive religio-cultural challenges that Catholics faced from the time after the Civil War through the twentieth century?

Feb. 2 Jewish Life in Protestant America
What were the distinctive religio-cultural challenges that Jews faced from the time after the Civil War through the twentieth century?
Reading: Text, 220-23, 317-18, 330-31, 359; Reader #7 (Glazer).

Feb. 4 Midterm Examination

Feb. 9 Protestantism and Pluralism: The Long View
How did pluralism affect mainstream Protestants from the Civil-War-era and afterward? What were Protestant fears, and what were Protestant hopes?
Reading: Text, 310-18, 334-49; Reader #8 (Strong).

Feb. 11 The Social Gospel: What Would Jesus Do?
How did the Social Gospel express Protestant and middle-class concerns?
Reading: Text, 295-98, 320-21; Reader #9 (Sheldon).

Feb. 16 Speaking in Tongues: Pentecostal Revival in American Culture
What is pentecostalism, how did it arise, and how can it be explained in cultural terms?
Reading: Text, 322; Reader #10 (Blumhofer).

Feb. 18 Standing by Fundamentals: The Role of Fundamentalism in American Culture
What is fundamentalism, how did it arise, and how can it be explained in cultural terms?
Reading: Text, 323-36; Reader #11 (Marsden).

Feb. 23 African American Religion in the Old and New Century
What major religious changes did African Americans experience from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth? How were they related to racism?
Reading: Text, 331-34, 350-54, 368-78.

Feb. 25 Religion and the Native American "Other"
What major religious changes did Native Americans experience from the late
nineteenth century until the present, and how were they related to Christianity?
Reading: Text, 212-18, 286-89, 315-16, 413-14, 427; Reader #12 (Radin).

Mar. 2  East Meets West: Eastern Peoples and Eastern Religions
What are the differences between the ethnic and export versions of Eastern traditions in America, and how did these traditions grow and change in the United States?
Reading: Text, 218-19, 380-83, 410-11; Reader #13 (Albanese).

Mar. 4  The "New" Religious Woman Spanning the Centuries
What did it mean to be a new religious woman during the period under consideration?
Reading: Text, 278-79, 290, 384-87; Reader #14 (Stanton; Bednarowski).

Mar. 9  Second Coming or New Age? The Acids of Modernity in the Late Twentieth Century
What did premillennial dispensationalism and the New Age movement have in common in the late twentieth century and beyond?
Reading: Text, 319-21, 387-91, 394-407, 411-414; Reader #15 (Albanese).

Mar. 11  The Religious Politics and Performance of Pluralism
What did an evolving pluralism do to transform the face of religious America in the late twentieth century?
Reading: Text, 408-10, 414-26, 430-32.
Course Evaluation.
FINAL PAPERS DUE.

Mar. 18  Thursday, 12:00 noon-3:00 pm. Final Examination.

Selected Bibliographical Resources


**Other Information**

This course satisfies requirements in General Education, American History and Institutions, and Writing.

Students are to supply small-size Scantron sheets and #2 pencils for midterm and final exams.

The instructor's office is 3001G Humanities and Social Sciences Building. Telephone is 893-3564. E-mail (preferred form of communication) is albanese@religion.ucsb.edu. *N.B.* Please do not send attachments. Embed all material in a regular email text file. No papers may be submitted by e-mail.

Office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 pm.

Students with disabilities who would like to discuss special academic accommodations should contact the instructor.

*Incompletes* will be given only under the rarest of circumstances—a serious illness, a family death, and the like. *Incompletes must be made up during the period allotted according to university rules.* If a student allows an Incomplete grade to become an F by not completing the paper on time, the grade will not be changed—even if the student later submits a paper.

Plagiarism means presenting the words and ideas of others as one’s own in a written paper. It is a serious offense—a form of stealing—and it will not be tolerated. Evidence of
plagiarism is easy to obtain with Internet search engines, and any evidence of plagiarism discovered will result in a written report to the Dean of Students’ office in accordance with university rules. A plagiarized paper will be inadmissible for fulfilling the writing requirement for the course and will result in a grade of F in the course. Also, any evidence of cheating during written exams will be handled stringently and will result in a written report to the Dean of Students’ office and an automatic F for the exam.