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Office Hours *by appointment only*:
T 11:25-12:25 pm,
Wednesday afternoons

FSP121-02
AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY: FROM SCOPES TO SEPTEMBER 11TH

Fall 2006
Tuesday, 12:30-3:20 pm in SSB340

Course Purpose and Description: This seminar provides students with opportunities to observe, analyze, and understand the four primary forms of U.S. Christianity (Black Protestant, Conservative Protestant, Mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic) during the past century. Students conduct field observations, read primary & secondary materials, and evaluate historical and sociological interpretations of American Christianity. Seminar foci include the interplay of culture and religion, the challenges of modernity & post-modernity, the interaction of religious institutions and American social structure, and the future of American Christianity. Class time is devoted to discussion and analysis; all students must be thoroughly prepared and participate weekly.

Learning Goals:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Use key concepts (e.g., meaning system, modernity, post-modernity, plausibility structure, culture, formal organization, social institution) to analyze American Christianity.
- Differentiate religious and theological perspectives from historical and sociological perspectives, and use the latter to evaluate American Christianity.
- Recognize differences between primary and secondary religious sources, and develop analytical skills in using both sources.
- Hone inductive and deductive thinking skills.
- Apply key concepts to observation and analysis of religious groups.
- Articulate the complex web of relationships among American Christianity, American culture, race/ethnicity, education, social stratification, and family life.
- Distinguish historically significant and widely-subscribed forms of U.S. Christianity -- in particular, Black Protestantism, Conservative Protestantism, Mainline Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism.

Required Texts:

Jay Dolan. *In Search of an American Catholicism*. Oxford University Press, 2002

Dean R. Hoge, Benton Johnson, & Donald Luidens. *Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Protestant Baby Boomers*. Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

Christian Smith. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

William H. Willimon, ed. *The Sunday After Tuesday: College Pulpits Respond to 9/11*. Abingdon, 2002.

Students must also read articles, chapters, and other excerpts listed in the syllabus or announced by the professor, and posted as pdf files to SOCS

Course Policies:

1. *Attendance and Participation:* Students demonstrate their commitment to learning by regularly attending class, by arriving *on time* and *staying for the full class period*, by contributing usefully to class, by doing their part to create an atmosphere of respectful and serious learning, and *by reading the assigned material in advance of the class*. You will be expected to so express your commitment in this class, with a sizable portion (14%!) of your final grade based on your class readiness & participation. You may also expect that I will start class promptly, end on time, answer your questions fully and respectfully, return your exams and papers in a timely manner, and be available to meet with you during my office hours.

2. *Papers and Examinations:* Students demonstrate their academic seriousness by turning in all papers and assignments on time, and by rigorously maintaining the highest standards of academic writing. This includes (but is not limited to) spelling, grammar, style, documentation, and format (thus, papers & assignments should be, except where noted, typed on 8.5x11 inch white paper, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and a 10-12 point typeface, stapled in the upper left-hand corner--*no manila/plastic/cardboard covers, please*). Dedicated students for whom this presents a challenge will avail themselves of the college's Writing Center. *Please note I have strict paper page and/or word limits:* it is *far harder* to write a brief, focused paper than to write a long one - allow plenty of time for editing and rewriting. I have VERY high standards about written work!

a. *All assignments must be turned in on time.* Overwork, personal struggles, and the like are important issues, and I encourage you to avail yourselves of your residence staff, student development staff, or the college's counselors for help in these matters. Such issues, however, do not constitute a valid excuse for lateness. Neither do variations on "the computer ate my paper," "I can't get the computer to print," "Didn't you get my paper in the mail," or "I uploaded my paper to SOCS - didn't you get it?" count as valid excuses. Valid excuses are a death in the immediate family or severe illness (which I will confirm with family members, the Dean of Students, &/or the Health Center). Late papers are *severely* penalized (i.e., 5 points for papers not turned in *at the start of class*, 10 points for papers arriving after class on the day assigned, 20 points the following day, 30 points the day after that). Papers and assignments must be turned in on time. Thanks to SOCS, I can see exactly when you submitted your SOCS assignments to me.

b. Likewise, *examinations must be taken at the scheduled time*. Only those with official TCNJ activities (e.g., field trips, athletic teams), or the valid reasons specified above, may reschedule their examinations. No make-up exams will be given to students who notify the professor *after* the exam has taken place, unless they were incapacitated and physically unable to call beforehand (i.e., unconscious in a hospital). Make-up examination format is at my discretion (usually an oral examination).

c. *Plagiarism/Cheating* will be prosecuted to the fullest extent possible. Don't be foolish--you don't want me as your adversary. Do what is honorable and right.

3. *Grading Distribution:* Your course grade will be based on the following percentages:

Class Readiness & Course Participation	14%
First Exam	16%
Second Exam	22%
Field Analysis Papers (4 @ 9% each)	36%
Final Project	<u>12%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Grade distribution is the traditional 0 to 100 point scale: 93-100=A, 90-92=A-, 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-, 77-79=C+, 73-76=C, 70-72=C-, 67-69=D+, 60-66=D, less than 60=F.

4. *E-mail & SOCS:* I will be making extensive use of e-mail and the course website on SOCS. Remember, you are required by college policy to check your TCNJ e-mail for notices, and use SOCS as required by your instructors.

Course Assignments:

1. *Field Observations & Analysis Papers:* It would be a crime to teach this class and never take advantage firsthand of the vivid examples of religious groups & organizations that surround us. Hence, you will complete three independent observations of a conservative Protestant, mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic worship service. We will also go together to a worship service at a Black Protestant church. These observations and field trip are **mandatory**. Specific information will be distributed in class as the details are settled for our field trip. In partial compensation for the time you will spend in observation, class has been cancelled one time.

You will need to complete your observations in light of the schedule below, so that you can write 1200 word (max.) analysis papers of "*reflections and connections*" and submit it by the dates indicated. This is a paper in which you will *reflect* upon what you observed/experienced – how the observation helped you understand or see American Christianity in a different, more vivid, or more nuanced way (if true) – and in which you will *connect* your observations/experience with concepts discussed in course readings. Again, no more than 1200 words, and submit it on the date indicated. The best papers identify one or two key observations and then make thoughtful connections to the texts, key concepts, and possibly other course materials (a guest speaker, documentary). The worst papers present one's gut reactions only, write long lists of things that were observed, and lack insightful connections to the course texts.

When you attend these worship services, you will be expected to dress appropriately (i.e., conservatively), and behave respectfully. By respectful, I mean to sit when others sit, stand when others stand, and be quiet when others are quiet. You do not need to participate, however. You do not need to sing, give money, or participate in any religious rituals. I do expect that you will arrive early, so that you'll have ample time to observe the building and parishioners as they arrive, and that you'll take the opportunity – if available – to talk with parishioners and the clergy before or afterwards. You should not choose to observe worship at a church you already attend – visit a different parish or denomination than your own (it actually makes observation and analysis easier); try, if at all possible, to attend one of the specific churches that your professor recommends. Should you attend with others from the class, do not sit with more than two of you together. *And do pick up a worship "program" or "bulletin" or some other printed material with a date as evidence of your visit (attach it to your analysis paper).* Again, you will be restricted to 1200 words (use word count to check). See the due date for this paper on the schedule below.

2. *Exams:* There will be two essay examinations. The first exam will be an in-class examination. The second examination will have two parts: a set of cumulative essays that you will write and submit via SOCS (again, with a strict word limit), and an in-class examination on the second set of course materials.

3. *Final Project:* During the scheduled final examination time, you will have the option of a paired or individual poster presentation. This presentation will require an in-depth examination of a specific American Christian group, organization, denomination, church, movement, or business. It will require both primary and secondary source materials, and will 1) locate this group/organization in its historical and social context, 2) describe its present status (e.g., financial status, adherents, resources), 3) project its future in light of its past/present and course materials, and 4) discuss its academic "significance" (e.g., what it illustrates about the relationship of American religion and American culture). The poster will be designed to facilitate a five minute oral presentation, and it will be augmented by a one page narrative summary of the presentation, and a one page list of sources. You will give your presentation several times during the poster presentation "fair," and during one of those times I will be among the group of students listening to you. You will also be evaluated by your classmates (and will evaluate your classmates' presentations as well). Poster presentations will be evaluated based on quality and thoroughness of the research, organization and insightfulness of the presentation, effectiveness of poster and oral presentation, and ability to generate and answer listener questions. I strongly urge you to discuss your project ideas and plans with me well in advance of the presentation date.

Course Schedule: (tentative; the professor reserves the right to adjust)

Date:	What's happening:	What needs to be done:
Aug 29	Course Welcome & Overview	Read "Body Ritual ..."
Sept 5	<i>NO CLASS; FOLLOW MONDAY SCHEDULE</i>	Be ½ way thru reading assignment for next week.
12	Religion as a social and cultural entity; the precursors to and significance of the Scopes trial; 1 st and 2 nd Disestablishments	Read Charon excerpts; Marsden excerpt; Dolan, Introduction & ch. 1
19	Americanization of Roman Catholicism	Read Albanese excerpt, pp. 77-86; Dolan ch. 2-3
26	American Catholicism	Dolan ch. 4-5; <i>Analysis paper on visit to off-campus Roman Catholic mass due to SOCS with paper copy due at start of class.</i>
Oct 3	Black Protestantism	Read Albanese excerpt, pp. 198-210; Raboteau excerpt
10	Black Protestantism continued; First Exam during 2nd half of class	Read Albanese excerpt, pp. 103-111; <i>study for exam</i>
17	Conservative Protestantism	Read Smith ch 1-4; <i>Analysis paper on field trip to Black Protestant church due to SOCS with paper copy due at start of class.</i>
24	<i>NO CLASS; FALL BREAK</i>	<i>Relax, please!</i>
31	Conservative Protestantism, continued	Read Smith, ch 5 thru conclusion
Nov 7	<i>Class Cancelled, in lieu of Field Observations</i>	Be ½ way thru reading assignment for next week.
14	Mainline Protestantism	Read Hoge, intro., ch 1-5 <i>Analysis paper on visit to Conservative Protestant church due to SOCS with paper copy due at start of class.</i>
21	Mainline Protestantism, continued	Read Hoge, ch 6-8, & epilogue; Willimon, Introduction to Chapter 3
28	American Christianity Interpreting Sept 11 th	Read Willimon, Ch 4-20; <i>Analysis paper on visit to Mainline Protestant church due to SOCS with paper copy due at start of class.</i>
Dec 5	Christianity and Sept 11 th , continued Second Exam during 2nd half of class	Read Willimon, ch 21 thru afterword
<i>Final Exam Period</i>	Final Project Presentations	<i>See final exam schedule for time and date</i>