Bemidji State University

HST 2799: Religion in America

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Credits: 3
Lecture Hours/Week: *.*
Lab Hours/Week: *.*
OJT Hours/Week: *.*
Prerequisites: None
Corequisites: None
MnTC Goals: Goal 06 - Humanities/Fine Arts

This course explores the history of America's diverse religious traditions since the colonial era and their relationship to historical developments in society, politics, and culture. We will consider how religion has both acted as a conservative force in society by preserving the status quo AND been the motivation for radical democratic upheaval. We will investigate patterns of religious establishment, revivalism, the influence of science on religion, the rise of a national civil religion, changes in denominational structures and theology, secular accommodation, and cycles of denominational growth and change. While we will explore the history of American Christianity, we will also study the influence of other faith traditions. Lib Ed Goal Area 6.

B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES: 08/27/2018 - Present
C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS
1. African American Christianity and the Civil Rights Movement
2. African American religion and abolitionism in the early republic
3. An introduction to Reformation theology
4. Anti-Catholicism and nativism
5. Christianity, Second Wave Feminism, and the Gay Rights Movement
6. Civil Religion during the 1950s and 60s
7. Civil Religion in the early republic
8. Classical Republicanism
9. Darwinism, Higher Criticism, and Scientific Modernism
10. Deism, Unitarianism, and the Enlightenment
11. Established churches and disestablishment in pre-Revolutionary America
12. Feminism and religion in the early republic
13. Fundamentalism and the 'cultural crisis' of the 1920s
15. Judaism and Catholicism enter the religious mainstream
16. Just War Theory during WWII
17. Millennialism and Utopianism
18. New Age Religion
19. Pietism, Quakerism, Judaism, Anglicanism, Puritanism, Baptism, and the resulting religious diversity in early America
20. Protestant Reform Movements in antebellum America
21. Puritanism and the ideal of a ‘covented community’ in early New England
22. Religion in the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction
23. Religion’s effects on the American Revolution and vice versa
24. Religious Revalism during 1950s America
25. Socio-cultural challenges to the Chain of Being during the early modern era
26. The Americanist vs. Traditionalist debate within Gilded Age Catholicism
27. The Baptists, Methodists, and marketplace of religion in the early republic
28. The Counterculture, New Left, and the Religious Left
29. The First Great Awakening: theology and socio-cultural ramifications
30. The Gospel of Wealth vs. The Social Gospel
31. The Great Chain of Being and its theological justifications
32. The Religious Right and the Moral Majority
33. The Scopes Trial and its consequences
34. The Second Great Awakening
35. The Second Vatican Council and its ramifications
36. The Separation of Church and State and its political, economic, and theological justifications
37. The Temperance Movement and Progressivism
38. The Voluntary Principle in the early republic
39. The decline of religious adherence in the early twenty-first century
40. The difference between evangelicalism and fundamentalism
41. The difference between pentecostalism and charismatism
42. The expansion of Catholicism and Judaism during the Gilded Age
43. The ideology of American Exceptionalism in antebellum America
44. The socio-cultural consequences of the antebellum ideologies of ‘conscience,’ ‘Christian Perfection,’ and ‘progress’
45. The socio-cultural contexts and theologies of the Holiness, Pentecostal, Fundamentalist, and other ‘disaffected’ churches
46. The ‘Cultural Wars’ of the late twentieth century
47. Theosophy, Christian Science, and other ‘outsider’ faiths
48. Urban revivalism during the Gilded Age
49. Witchcraft and folk magic in early America

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)

1. Refine their critical thinking, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students will read several hundred pages of text, analyze and evaluate the perspectives of the authors of these readings, and construct their own interpretations in writing and online discussion.
2. Create sound historical arguments. Students will both investigate primary sources and debate historians’ clashing views in order to practice the skills that historians use to examine the past.
3. Interpret the historical significance of the values, ideologies, and assumptions expressed in the writings of religious leaders, theologians, lay adherents, and secular critics of America’s diverse faith traditions. Students will likewise interpret the historical significance of religious rituals and visual art.
4. Recognize and examine the key people, events, and themes that shaped American religious history. Students will interpret how and why America’s wide ranging religious traditions have both shaped and been shaped by their social, cultural, and political contexts.

E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies

Goal 06 - Humanities/Fine Arts

1. Demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities.
2. Understand those works as expressions of individual and human values within an historical and social context.
3. Respond critically to works in the arts and humanities.

F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

As noted on course syllabus

G. SPECIAL INFORMATION

None noted