

**ERSKINE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**CH 760 THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA**

SPRING 2009, Elective, 3 credit hours

Due West, Thursday – 1:00-4:00 PM

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**Course Description:**

In this course students study American religious traditions from Colonial times to the present. The stress is on the historical development of the general religious motifs and particular denominational expressions of American religious development.

**Course Objectives:**

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. Consistent with that mission is the study of Church History. We can minister more effectively if we study the path our forefathers have followed. The models, both good and bad, the decisions, courageous, flawed and cowardly provide us with informative roadmaps, to our past and perhaps to our future..

Convinced then of the spiritual and intellectual value of examining our Christian heritage, it is the goal of this instructor that upon successful completion of the class, each student will be able to:

1. Identify the key issues, people and ideas covered in the scope of this class.  
*viz.* c.1607-2000
2. Identify and define the significant of key dates and events in Amer. Religious History
3. State issues from the course which give rise to interpretive debate among church historians and theologians.
4. Construct a syllabus, and course outline of American Religious History for use in an Adult Sunday School or Discipleship Class.
5. Construct a preliminary bibliography of reference works and sources a specialized topic selected by the student. The topic may relate to your own denomination, or a theological topic that is relevant to the American context.
6. Identify the basic development of “their” denomination in America

## Course Methods:

The instructor will use lecture and discussion as the primary means of communicating the content of this course. Each student will also present two book critiques. One of them also requires an oral presentation. The professor and student will select appropriate books to critique. The oral book critique will parallel or compliment the lecture topic of the day. Specific details are found in the section below, titled, "Course Requirements" and/or TBA.

## Required Texts: (Note: Required texts may be ordered from the Erskine Theological Seminary Online Bookstore at <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>.)

Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*. Yale University Press, revised ed., 2004.

Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*. Yale University Press, 1991

George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1991

## Recommended Texts: (For your personal and church library)

Bradley, James E., and Muller, Richard A. *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995

Douglas, J.D. ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978

\_\_\_\_\_. *Twentieth-Century Dictionary of Christian Biography*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995

Hill, Samuel S. *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*. Atlanta: Mercer University Press, 1984.

Lippy, Charles H. and Williams, Peter W., eds. *Encyclopedia of the American Religious Experience*, 3 vols., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.

Marsden, George M. *Jonathan Edwards, A Life*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2003.

Mead, Frank S. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Reid, Daniel G. *et al*, editors. *Dictionary of Christianity in America*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990.

Note: The professor reserves the right to distribute periodic handouts and assign occasional reading not specifically identified in the syllabus.

## Course Requirements:

Requirement **One**: Each student will complete the assigned reading and come to class prepared to contribute to class discussion. At the end of the course students will sign a statement regarding the completion of the reading.

Requirement **Two**: Each student will complete 3 essay tests; (2 plus 1 final).

Requirement **Three**: Each student will complete two book critiques. One will include an oral presentation and a one page book critique following specific guide-

lines. Note: The 3 exams and the 2 book critiques carry equal weight. Each is 20% of the final grade. There is no such thing as “extra credit” in this class.

### **Criteria for Grading Book Critiques:**

Grasp of the book’s content and import  
Clarity and coherence of presentation  
Adherence to instructions, length, structure, etc.  
Analysis and not just a summary of the book’s argument  
Creative approach to the oral delivery e.g.- (Avoid saying, “my book is about...”)  
Proper use of English language

### **Grading Scale:**

Note: See current catalog, pp. 42-43.

100-95 A  
94-93 A-  
92-91 B+  
90-88 B  
87-86 B-  
85-84 C+  
83-80 C  
79-78 C  
77-76 D+  
75-72 D  
71-70 D-  
69-0 F

### **Course Expectations and Seminary Policies:**

#### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is crucial for the successful completion of this class. You cannot miss more than one class period and expect to pass the class. Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student be “allowed” to miss more than one class. It is also required that students arrive on time and perform at the best of their ability

Commuting students must arrange their schedules to arrive in a punctual manner. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the Professor in the unlikely event of an absence.

#### **Language:**

Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and The Church’s historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine language when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) And believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (I Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females,

they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example by saying/writing “humanity” rather than “man” or “people” rather than “men.”

Thus the seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers: therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The seminary catalog stands as an example of recommended language.

### **Conduct in Theological Discussions:**

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

### **Style and Form Standards**

All written (typed) work must conform to the Turabian manual of style (the 7<sup>th</sup> edition).

### **Plagiarism:**

Any student guilty of plagiarism or cheating is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. The integrity of the seminary student in the classroom is a good indicator of behavior in the Christian ministry. Members of the seminary community are expected to demonstrate exemplary behavior and attitudes.

“Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. Plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community.” The following is taken from the Seminary *Catalog*, pp. 41-2.

*The Seminary adheres to the following general requirements for the acknowledgment of sources of academic work. These requirements apply to both print and the electronic media.*

- 1. Quotations. Any sentence or phrase that a student uses from another source must be placed in quotation marks or, in the case of longer quotations, clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Any quotation must be accompanied (either within the text or in a note) by a precise indication of the source.*
- 2. Paraphrasing. Any material that is paraphrased or summarized must also be specifically acknowledged in a note or in a text.*
- 3. Ideas. Specific ideas that are borrowed should be acknowledged in a note or in the text, even if the ideas has been further elaborated by the student.*
- 4. Bibliography. All sources consulted in the preparation of the essay or report should be listed in a bibliography.*

*In addition to plagiarism, the following related practices are also unacceptable compromises of the truth requisite to a free community:*

- 1. Multiple submission. Failure to obtain prior permission of the relevant instructors to submit work which has been submitted in identical or similar form*

- in fulfillment of any other academic requirement at any institution.*
- 2. False citation. The deliberate attribution to or citation of, a source from which the material in question was not in fact, obtained.*
  - 3. Submission of work done by someone else, either with or without that person's knowledge. Neither ignorance of the regulations concerning academic violations nor personal extenuating circumstances are an adequate defense against charges of plagiarism. The seminary's provisions for "due process" apply in cases of alleged plagiarism.*

[The italicized statement above is used by permission of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1990 ed.]

### **Office Hours:**

My office hours for Spring, 2009 will be posted on my office door. I will be in my office Wednesday and Thursday mornings, and Tuesday and Friday afternoons. If you need to see me please schedule an appointment. Contact me by phone or e-mail.

### **Drop/Add/Withdrawal**

Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a **binding contract** and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. **No exceptions will be made to this policy.**

### **Incompletes**

The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F."

### **Chapel Attendance Policy (For Tuesday-Thursday On Campus Classes)**

All morning and afternoon on-campus classes (except for Friday and Saturday Course) carry a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the catalog or registration booklet for the specifics of the chapel attendance policy. There is a per chapel fee if you attend fewer chapels than required.

## **Course Outline: Lectures and Reading Schedule**

- February** Introduction of the course, distribution of syllabi, explanations, etc.  
Reading on reserve: (1) “Two Hundred Years of Christianity in America: An Overview” by Paul Boyer and (2) “Recent Historiography Of Protestant Churches in Amer. by Paul A. Carter  
Lecture- “The English Reformation as a catalyst”  
Lecture- “Old World Puritanism  
Lecture- “New World Puritanism, Parts I & II”  
Film – “*Plimouth Plantation*”  
Student book critique: E.S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma*  
Or, J. Adair, *Founding Fathers: The Puritans in England and America.*
- Lecture- “Roger Williams in Historical Context”  
Lecture- “Regional Development of the Colonies”  
Student book critique: E.S. Gaustad, *Liberty of Conscience: Roger Williams in America*  
Lecture- “The Columbian Exchange and its Legacy: Indians, Black Slaves and Ethics”  
Mini-lecture- “Thoughts on David Brainerd”  
Film – “*Wings of the Morning*” (if available)  
Student book critique: Brainerd’s Journal, edited by Edwards  
Reading on Library Reserve- TBA  
Reading by the end of February: Ahlstrom, pp. 84-279
- March** Lecture- “The First Great Awakening”  
Lecture- “Jonathan Edwards, God’s Genius”  
Student book critique: Harry Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: Geo. Whitefield and the Rise of Mod. Evangelicalism*  
Or, Frank Lambert, *Inventing the Great Awakening*  
Or, Iain H.Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*

## Prepare for Examination

### ESSAY EXAM NUMBER ONE – March 12

Reading on Library Reserve- TBA

Lecture- “The American Revolution: a Christian View”

Student book critiques: M. Noll, *Christian's in the Amer. Revol.*

Or, J.L. Adams, *Yankee Doodle Went to Church, the Righteous Revolution of 1776.*

Lecture- “Revive Us Again: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening”

Student critique: Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost*

Or, Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the B. Belt*

Or, Mulder, *A Controversial Spirit: Evangelical Awakenings in the South*

Or, L. Ruth, *A Little Heaven Below: Worship At Early Methodist Quarterly Meetings*

Lecture- American Religious History in the Age of D.L.Moody

Student critique: Hatch, *The Democratization. Of American Xty*

Or, James L. Findlay, *Dwight L. Moody*

Or, Gundry, *Love Them In: The Theo. of D.L. Moody*

Reading complete by the end of March:

Ahlstrom, pp. 280-471

Hatch, pp. 1-124

Prepare for examination #2

April

### EXAM #2 APRIL 2

### NO Classes, Spring Break – Holy Week, April 4-12

Lecture- “Progressivism and the Social Gospel”

Lecture- “Eschatology and Social Reform”

Student book critique: Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming*

Or, D. Frank, *Less Than Conquerors: How Evangelicals entered the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Lecture- “Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, Parts I & II”

Student book critique: Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Or, Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Remaking of American Fundamentalism*

Lecture- “Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, (contin.)

Student book critique: Harold Lindsell, *Battle for the Bible*

