AMERICAN EVANGELICALISM

(CH503)

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary/Boston

8-13 October 2012

PROFESSOR: Dr. Frank A. James III

TIME/PLACE: 8-13 October at GCTS Boston campus. Monday-Friday (Oct 8-12), class meets from 6:00 pm – 10:00pm. On Saturday (Oct 13), class meets from 9am – 4pm.

OFFICE HOURS: For questions regarding the course, please contact Tyler Lenocker: tlenocker@gordonconwell.edu

TEXTBOOKS: Students will be REQUIRED to read any two of the following books:

George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Eerdmans, 1991)
ISBN 0-8028-0539-6


ISBN 0-8028-3715-8

ISBN 0-8028-1694-1

Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Baker, 2009)
ISBN 0830833609
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the development of Protestant Evangelicalism in America, with background context from other European and American streams, comparing movements of evangelical awakening with other responses to Western secularization.

The course is designed to provide students with graduate level critical and analytical skills, a broad background in the field of American religious history. Special emphasis will be on reading primary sources.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course is designed to help students appreciate and assess American Evangelicalism and to give students the opportunity to utilize their understanding appropriately for ministry (article 2 of the GCTS mission statement).

In keeping with GCTS mission statement, the professor intends that upon completing the course, students will:

- Understand the complex cultural, theological and historical development of American Evangelicalism (article 5 of the GCTS mission statement)
- Develop skills in critical thinking, scholarly judgment, analytical reading, writing and research. (article 2)
- Discern both the global and personal implications of this Christian movement (articles 6 & 4 )
- To appreciate other expressions of the Christian faith (article 6)

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

While this course has a focus on the cognitive and intellectual, it is also concerned with the spiritual implications for students. It is hoped that this course will encourage the student to gain spiritual insight and self
understanding of one’s own religious heritage. The reflection paper is designed to stimulate intellectual as well as spiritual analysis (see below).

FEEDBACK LOOP

The student is not the only learner in this course. The professor is a learner too in that he/she seeks to learn from the student how to improve the course and be more effective. To that end, the professor will receive feedback from the student as to the learning outcomes. This is done in the following ways: student evaluations of the course, individual student feedback during the course and regular course evaluation by peer faculty.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Class Discussions of Assigned Reading (10% of grade)

Students will be expected to vigorously participate in daily class discussions. Three of the class discussions will be based on the following reading assignments:

- The first discussion will focus on “The Role of Women in the Church and Family,” by R. Johnston, located on Sakai. Discussion Monday 8 Oct.

- The second discussion will focus on “Evangelicals and the Pursuit of Racial Reconciliation: Role of Culture politics and Public Policy,” by David Ryden, located on Sakai. Discussion Tuesday 9 Oct.

- The third discussion will focus on “Homosexuality and the Evangelical” by R. Johnston, located on Sakai. Discussion Thursday 12 Oct.

2. Reflection Papers on Assigned Topics (75% of grade—25% each Reflection Paper)

Students will be assigned 3 reflection papers (5-8 pages each) based on the topics of the Reflection papers below. The final draft of all 3 reflection papers is due 20 December 2012.
• **How should Evangelicals respond to postmodernism?** Class discussion due Wednesday 10 October

• **In the recent past, many Evangelicals have identified with the religious right and the Republican party. Can one identify with the political left and remain a faithful Evangelical or must one identify with the religious right?** Class discussions due Friday 12 Oct.

• **Historically some Evangelicals have identified Christian expressions of social justice with the Social Gospel. And yet today, many younger evangelicals have vigorously engaged in social justice causes. How do you explain this shift? Are there dangers?** Class discussions due Saturday 13 Oct.

3. **Class discussion of Reflection Topics (10% of grade)**

   Students must be prepared to discuss each paper topic (see above) on the date of the assigned class discussion, although the final draft of each reflection paper is due 20 December 2012.

4. **Additional Interactions for each Reflection Paper (5% of grade)**

   Each reflection paper must include all 3 following interactions:

   • **Familial interaction:** each student must discuss topic with spouse if married or a friend if not

   • **Ecclesiastical interaction:** each student must discuss topic with a pastor, elder or church leader

   • **Communal interaction:** student must discuss topic with another student in the class from another racial/ethnic background or gender.

   At least half an hour should be taken for each discussion. Name, date and amount of time spent in discussion must be indicated at end of each paper.
READING REPORT:

At the end of the course, each student must indicate whether they have completed all the assigned reading.

GRADING

Each reflection paper is 20% of the final grade. Participation in class discussions is 10% of the final grade and completion of all reading assignments is 10% of the final grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Any form of cheating will automatically result in failure of the course.
Criteria for Evaluation of Reflection Papers

I. Grammar and Style (25%)
* Is the text clean of spelling mistakes?
* Is the text punctuated correctly? Is it DOUBLE SPACED?
* Does the sentence structure consistently adhere to basic rules of good grammar?
* Does the footnote/bibliographic apparatus follow Turabian consistently? (Turabian, A Manual for Writers).
* Is the paper written in clear, straight-forward style of academic prose (e.g., the guidelines in Strunk and White, The Elements of Style)?

II. Organization (25%)
* Is the subject of the paper clearly delimited? Is it significant, but still manageable?
* Does the subject correspond to what was assigned in the syllabus?
* Does the paper have a well-designed thesis statement and outline?
* Does the running text of the paper adhere to the outline, and are the larger divisions of the paper clearly signposted?
* Are the sentences and paragraphs of the text linked together clearly and in such a way that the thought of the student builds throughout the paper with continuity and coherence?

III. Clarity and Force of Argument (25%)
* Is a convincing case made to support the thesis statement?
* Is the evidence marshaled to support the argument used judiciously?
* Where the student provides exposition or summary, does she/he do so succinctly and objectively?
* Are opposing viewpoints treated fairly?
* Is there evidence of mature Christian reflection on the subject matter?

IV. Research (25%)
* Does the paper draw on primary sources for its main evidence?
* Are the secondary sources selected and used judiciously?
* Does the paper demonstrate sufficient depth and breadth of research, given the nature and level of the assignment?

Recommended Resources


