Course Description: Readings in American Christianity is designed to provide the student with an understanding of the development of Christianity in America from the early seventeenth century to the present time. This course is designed to help students interact with the rich tradition of American Christian history over the past 400 years, as well as explore aspects of that history at a deeper level through their reading and research.

Textbook:


Course Requirements: Students who are taking the course for credit are required to attend the three two-hour class sessions, to write two brief research papers, and to complete at least 2,500 pages of reading related to American Christianity. (A reading report will be due on the last day that coursework may be submitted for the Spring 2015 semester.) Students should consult the course bibliography in this syllabus regarding reading choices. In addition, it will be expected that students will focus their reading on their research for their papers. There will be no examinations.

For your course reading, 1,100 pages will be from your required textbook, 600 pages from other readings in American Christianity listed in the course bibliography, and your final 800 pages from works you will read as part of the research for your two course papers. Please note the annotated bibliography assignment described later in the course syllabus.

Research Papers: Each student will be asked to write two research papers for the course. Research papers should be prepared according to the standards found in the eighth edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013). Each student should own a copy of *Turabian* for consultation as you prepare your research paper.

1. The first paper (due by second class meeting in March 2015) should focus on one significant individual in American Religious History. Research should include the reading of at least one major biography of the person and at least one major piece of writing by that person. The paper should consist of a seven-page biographical sketch of the person you have studied, a two-to-three page summary of specific ways (both positive and negative) in which your individual's life and work might be of help to you in your future ministry, and a bibliography listing the research materials you have read and cited as part of your research. (40 percent of your course grade.)

Biographical topic: At our first class meeting in February 2015, the instructor will ask you to identify the individual on which you choose to write. Students should select an
individual for whom there is ample access to primary source material and secondary literature. With the instructor’s approval, you are free to choose any individual related to American Christianity and its history. If you wish to write about someone from your Christian or denominational tradition, you are welcome to do that with approval from your instructor.

2. The second paper (due with your reading report on the last day that work can be submitted for the Spring 2015 semester) should focus on one significant theme or issue in American religious history. Length of your paper should be 12-15 pages and research should include the use of both primary and secondary materials. The paper should consist of a description and analysis of the theme or issue you have selected and a summary of the impact that your topic makes on the life of American evangelicalism today. Include a bibliography of resources that you have consulted and cited as part of your research and writing. (40 percent of your course grade.)

Research Paper Topic: At the second class meeting in March 2015, students should bring a one-paragraph description of their research topic to the March class meeting. The instructor is available for consultation regarding research topics for both papers and will help provide guidance in terms of potential research topics and materials if needed.

Reading annotated bibliography: On the final coursework due date for the Spring 2015, each student will submit an annotated reading list of all course readings (including the assigned textbook). Each annotation should include a bibliographic entry formatted according to proper Chicago/Turabian format and a four-to-five sentence entry describing the significance of the work. With each bibliographic entry, please include the number of pages that you have read. (20 percent of your course grade.)

Personal consultations: The instructor will normally be available both before and after each class session and in his office on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday afternoons of each week. He can be reached by Email at bmayer@gcts.edu, or by phone at (704)940-5821. Please allow 24 to 48 hours for the instructor to respond to you.

Semester beginning and ending dates: Spring 2015 semester begins on Monday, January 19, 2015 and ends on Sunday, May 9. That is your final due date for all Spring 2015 course work including work for this class. Let me encourage you to begin your course reading on or before January 19.

Class Sessions: This is a readings course with six required hours of class time. Class will meet during Module three from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on the following three Saturdays: February 14, March 14, and April 11.

Saturday, February 14, 2015


Saturday, March 14, 2015

Report from students on selection topic for second research paper.
Three American awakenings (1730-1870).
First paper is due.

Reading: Ahlstrom, 385-730.

Saturday, April 11, 2015

The Modernist-Fundamentalist controversies and 20th Century.
Prospects for the American Christian future.

Reading: Ahlstrom, 731-1096

Academic Standards
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.
Extension Policy
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades
Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals, who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

Returned Work
Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued.
Research in Christian History

Christian history is a sub-discipline located within the overall context of historical studies and as such, it uses the research and writing conventions of the academic discipline of history. For presentation of your research papers, you are expected to prepare them according to the standards articulated in:


Please use the *eighth edition of Turabian* as it includes the most up-to-date citation formats for electronic and internet resources.

Two guides for research and writing are helpful tools for understanding use of sources and methods:


For a guide to historical method from a Christian viewpoint, see:


See also:


**Recommended reference works:**

These works will help you with initial research and can be especially helpful in locating initial bibliography for your research subjects.


**Collections of Documents:**

Primary source documents that include many of the most important materials related to Christianity in America.


**Textbooks in American Religious History:**


**The Puritans**


**The Missionary Impulse in Early American Christianity:**


Charles Lippy, Robert Choquette and Stafford Poole, *Christianity Comes to the Americas* (New York: Paragon House, 1992).


**The First Great Awakening**


American Religious Freedom


The American Revolution


The Democratization of American Christianity


Slavery, Segregation, and Evangelical efforts toward reform


Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1969).


**Fundamentalism, Modernism, and the New Evangelicalism**


Dan D. Crawford, *A Thirst for Souls: The Life of the Evangelist Percy B. Crawford* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2010);
George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987);