

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary
NORTH AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY

<i>Course No.:</i> HS-614 (3 units)	<i>Professor:</i> Valerie Rempel, Ph.D.
<i>Semester:</i> Spring 2010 (January 25-May 14)	<i>Office phone:</i> 452-1722
Wednesdays, 8:30-11:30 a.m.	<i>Office Hours:</i> as posted or by app't
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the major developments in North American Church life and thought from colonial times to the present. Special attention will be given to the development of evangelicalism as an identifiable movement within North American religious life. Students will be encouraged to pay special attention to their own denominational traditions as they function within the context of American or Canadian church life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Understand the various cultural, political and theological influences that have shaped the Christian tradition in North America.
2. Identify critical themes and key individuals/movements in North American religious history.
3. Describe the role of denominations and para-church organizations in the United States and Canada.
4. Identify ways in which the institutional church has both shaped and been shaped by society.
5. Demonstrate basic skills in historical research and writing.

RELATED DEGREE OBJECTIVES

Within the larger curriculum goals of the Seminary, this course will facilitate growth in ability to:

1. Demonstrate familiarity with the Church's history, confessions and heritage including key individuals and events in the development of Western Christianity.
2. Describe personal and denominational theological positions in dialogue with the values of Anabaptism and the rest of the Christian tradition.
3. Describe the mission Dei view of church in dialogue with personal and denominational theology/history/sociology of church.
4. Explain the way church leaders help form God's people for the sake of the worlds in which they live.
5. Describe the influence of the context on church leaders and the systematic nature of leadership issues.

RESOURCES FOR THE COURSE

Required texts available at Pacific Bookshop or on reserve at Hiebert Library:

Noll, Mark A. *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Eerdmans, 1992.

DeBerg, Betty. UnGodly Women. Fortress Press, 1991 or Mercer Univ. Press, 2001.

Du Bois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk, any edition.

McLoughlin, William G. Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform, Univ. of Chicago, 1978.

Plus ONE of the following:

A denominational history of your choice, subject to professor's approval, **OR**

Moore, R. Laurence. Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans, Oxford Univ., 1986.

Raboteau, Albert J. Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans, Oxford Univ., 2001.

Stackhouse, John G., Jr. Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to its Character, Regent College, 1998.

NATURE OF THE COURSE

This course will survey the history of Christianity in the United States and Canada. Studying the history of two nations that share common roots provides a unique opportunity to compare and contrast developments within two particular contexts. Attention will be given to basic information, i.e., people, events and movements, but more particularly to themes in the religious history of these two nations. The course will rely on lectures, reading and writing assignments, discussion sessions, and film to explore how Christianity has taken shape in these two cultures.

REQUIREMENTS

1. **Lectures.** Lectures will be given on topics related to our study. Attendance is expected.
2. **Readings.** Discussion periods will be used to examine assigned texts and questions that arise. Successful completion of the course will require participation and adequate preparation for the sessions by careful reading and consideration of the assigned texts. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS FAIR WARNING: Because of the reading load percentage points have been factored into the course grade. *You will be asked to report your level of success on the reading assignments at the end of the semester. See Page 6 for form.*
3. **Written assignments:**
 - **Book review** - Students will write a 2-3 page review of *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* by William McLoughlin. The review should identify and critique the thesis of the book and the supporting argument.
 - **Book review/response** - Students will write a 2-3 page book review and response to *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois. The review should reflect the student's close reading of the text as well as the student's personal interaction with the material
 - **Book review** – Students will write a 2-3 page book review of *Ungodly Women* by Betty DeBerg. The review should identify the thesis and supporting argument. Students may

also want to identify questions this raises or insights gained in understanding 20th century fundamentalism and evangelicalism.

- **Short essay** – Students will write a 2-3 page essay using the additional reading assignment as a primary resource to reflect on insights gained into one’s own religious or cultural context.
- **Congregational introductions/histories** - Each student will choose a congregation to introduce to the class. Ideally, this will be the student’s home congregation. During the first weeks of class each student will gather information about the congregation for presentation to the class (no written report required). The purpose of this presentation is twofold: 1) to determine what can be gathered about this congregation’s historical/theological tradition, and 2) to introduce the congregation to the class. Helpful resources may include church bulletins, confessional statements, published histories or other items that furnish information about the congregation to visitors or members. (In other words, what can people learn about this church from handouts, brochures, things posted for public display, etc.?)
- **Historical research project** - Students will write a 15-20 page research paper on a topic related to a congregation or a denominational/theological tradition and this study of Christianity in the U.S. and Canada. Ideally, this will be a topic that relates the church tradition to larger events/issues in Canadian or American church life (e.g., “Military Participation and First Mennonite Brethren Church,” or “The Response to the Civil Rights Movement among Fresno Baptists, 1960-1970” etc.). *Alternatively*, the student may choose to write a research paper focusing on an individual, event or movement related to our study (e.g., “George Whitfield’s Contribution to the First Great Awakening,” “The Establishment of the United Church of Canada,” or “Women and Missions in the 19th Century”). Standard style and format (Chicago), including footnotes or endnotes, is expected. Short presentations/discussion of issues will be expected. Please be prepared to give me a topic and a preliminary bibliography establishing the availability of adequate source material by **March 24, 2010.**

GRADING

Congregational Intro./Assigned readings	10%
Book review, McLoughlin	15%
Book review, DuBois	15%
Book review, DeBerg	15%
Short Essay	15%
Research project	30%

Written work will be graded on clarity of thought, comprehensiveness, and originality. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Work deemed as such will be given a grade of F.

POLICY NOTES

MBBS academic policies are described at www.mbseminary.edu/fresno/policies. These policies provide guidance on academic integrity and plagiarism, incomplete course work, extensions, dates for changing registration, non-discriminatory and inclusive language, appeals, etc. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies and will be held responsible for adhering

to them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to you or to a situation that you face in your studies, please speak to the professor or consult the Registrar or Academic Dean.

Policies specific to this course:

- **Late work:** Percentage points may be deducted for work turned in late. “Late” is defined as any time after the professor has graded the class assignment.
- **Submission of assignments:** Unless special arrangements have been made, please submit all assignments in hard copy on or before the due date.

SCHEDULE OF READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

TBA

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

REFERENCE

Gaustad, Edwin S.

Historical atlas of religion in America, 1976.

Noll, Mark A.

Eerdmans' handbook to Christianity in America, 1983.

Reid, Daniel G.

Concise dictionary of Christianity in America. 1995.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford, , ed.

Women and religion in America, 1981.

GENERAL

Ban, Joseph D.

In the great tradition : in honor of Winthrop S. Hudson : essays on pluralism, voluntarism and revivalism, 1982.

Brauer, Jerald C.

Reinterpretation in American church history, 1968.

Dayton, Donald W.

The Variety of American evangelicalism, 1991.

Gaustad, Edwin S.

A religious history of America, 1990.

Gaustad, Edwin S.

Dissent in American religion, 1973.

Grant, John Webster

The church in the Canadian era, 1988.

Handy, Robert T.

A history of the churches in the United States and Canada, 1977.

Koch, Gustav Adolf.

Republican religion : the American Revolution and the cult of reason, 1964.

Marty, Martin E.

Pilgrims in their own land : 500 years of religion in America, 1984.

Moore, R. Laurence

Religious outsiders and the making of Americans, 1986.

Silcox, Claris Edwin
Church union in Canada : its causes and consequences, 1933.

Sweet, William Warren
Religion on the American frontier, 1964.

Weber, Timothy P.
Living in the shadow of the Second Coming : American premillennialism, 1875-1925, 1979.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN

Raboteau, Albert J.
A fire in the bones : reflections on African-American religious history, 1995.

Johnson, Paul E.
African-American Christianity : essays in history, c1994.

Lincoln, C. Eric
The Black church in the African-American experience, 1990.

FUNDAMENTALISM/MODERNISM

DeBerg, Betty A.
Ungodly women : gender and the first wave of American fundamentalism, 1990.

Geffre, Claude
The debate on modernity, 1992.

Hutchison, William R.
The modernist impulse in American Protestantism, 1976.

Marsden, George M.
Fundamentalism and American culture : the shaping of twentieth century evangelicalism, 1870-1925, 1980.

Sandeen, Ernest Robert
The roots of fundamentalism; British and American millenarianism, 1800-1930, 1970.

MENNONITES IN US AND CANADA

Epp, Frank H.
Mennonites in Canada, 1786-1920 : the history of a separate people, 1974.

Epp, Frank H.
Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940 : a people's struggle for survival, 1982.

Juhnke, James C.
Vision, doctrine, war : Mennonite identity and organization in America, 1890-1930, 1989.

MacMaster, Richard K.
Land, piety, peoplehood : the establishment of Mennonite communities in America, 1683-1790, 1985.

Schlabach, Theron F.
Peace, faith, nation : Mennonites and Amish in nineteenth-century America, 1988.

Toews, Paul
Mennonites in American society, 1930-1970 : modernity and the persistence of religious community, 1996.

MISSIONS

Elsbree, Oliver Wendell
The rise of the missionary spirit in America, 1790-1815, 1980.

Hutchison, William R.
Errand to the world : American Protestant thought and foreign missions, 1987.

