

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

FALL 2018

RS 346.6 (43265)

AMS 327 (31187)

Instructor: Chad Seales

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the intellectual and social sources of evangelical Protestant traditions in the United States. It examines varieties of evangelical beliefs and practices. In the first section of the course, we address the self-professed ethical struggle of evangelicals to be in but not of the world. We historically contextualize that struggle, tracing its more recent expressions back to the categorical rupture between sacred “selves” and profane “society” that was at the heart of the Protestant Reformation. In our second section of readings, we study how evangelicals continually work out this ethical tension in their everyday lives. Surveying a range of themes, including language, revivals, social reform, and environmentalism, we examine how evangelicals have defined themselves in opposition to secular society but also have engaged the secular in an effort to convert souls, manage personal behavior, and transform American society in their image of Christian community.

Course Goals: By the end of this course, students should be able to defensibly define who is an American evangelical. They should be able to construct a broad historical narrative of nineteenth and twentieth century American evangelicalism. And they should be able to use this narrative to evaluate evangelical encounters in the twenty-first century with at least one sub-type of American culture listed on the syllabus.

Prerequisites: None. This course assumes no prior knowledge of the subject.

Texts:

Readings posted on Canvas.

Canvas:

Course information, handouts, assignments, review sheets, etc. will be posted on the class website on Canvas. To find the Canvas site, and go to <http://canvas.utexas.edu/> and log in with your EID and password.

Writing Flag

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

University of Texas Honor Code and Academic Integrity

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, or other violations, please feel free to ask me. Students who violate the University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possible failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. The policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For more information, you can talk with me or visit the Student Judicial Services Web site: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sis>.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Accommodations: Documented Disability Statement

If you require special accommodations, you must obtain a letter that documents your disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to me at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss the accommodations you need. No later than five business days before an exam, you should remind me of any testing accommodations you will need. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Grading and Course Requirements:

Your grade for the course will be based on:

1. Class Participation (30%) – Over the course of the semester, you will have the opportunity to participate in various class discussion exercises. Each exercise will count up to 3 points. Points are cumulative, and you will need to successfully complete 10 class exercises for full credit on this assignment. Once you have reached full credit, you can continue to complete and submit participation exercises for up to 0.3 points extra credit per entry.
2. Reading Journal (30%) – For each assigned reading, you will be given the option of writing a journal entry. Journal entries should briefly answer the reading guide questions posted on Canvas. This assignment requires you to keep a record of your responses to the readings, and helps you sharpen critical thinking and writing skills. Each entry counts up to 2 points. *Reading journals should be submitted on Canvas by 11am the day of the given class in which they are assigned.* Journal entries must directly answer the questions in your own words. You can quote from the assigned reading, but you must explain or use the quote to demonstrate your own analysis. Points are cumulative, and you will need to successfully complete 15 reading journal entries to receive full credit for this assignment. Should you receive less than full credit on any journal entry, you can submit additional journal entries until you reach full credit. And any additional entries beyond the cumulative 30 points are counted as extra credit at 0.2 points per journal entry.
3. Final Essay (40%) – For this assignment you will write a 4 to 5 pages double spaced essay in which you identify a recent example of evangelical engagement with American culture and situate it within the history of evangelical Christianity in the United States using relevant readings from the course.
 - a. Essay Outline with Thesis Statement Due in Class Tues Dec 4 (5 points)
 - b. Peer Review in Class – Tues Dec 4 (5 points)
 - c. Essay Draft Due in Class – Thurs Dec 6 (5 points)
 - d. Peer Review in Class – Thurs Dec 6 (5 points)
 - e. Final Essay Due on Canvas by 5pm Tues Dec 11 (20 points)

Course Schedule

Introduction

R Aug 30– Course overview

Who are Evangelicals?

T Sept 4

Readings: • Jonathan Merritt, “Defining ‘Evangelical,’” *The Atlantic* (December 7, 2015).

R Sept 6

Readings: • George Marsden, “Introduction: Defining Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism” in *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 1-6.

• Mark Noll, “Historical Overview” in *American Evangelical Christianity*, 9-28.

Modern Revival Techniques

T Sept 11

Readings: • William McLoughlin, “Awakening as Revitalization of Culture” *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform* (1978: 1-11)

R Sept 13

Readings: • “Jonathan Edwards Describes the Great Awakening in Northampton, Massachusetts, 1738,” (Allitt: 92-95)

- “Nathan Cole, Connecticut Farmer, Hears the Preaching of George Whitefield and Is Born Again (1741), 1765” (Allitt: 95)
- Charles Grandison Finney, “A Revival is Not a Miracle” and “Aim to Show what a Revival Is” (Gaustad 1: 321-324)

Religious Language

T Sept 18

Readings: • Susan Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), selections.

R Sept 20

Readings: • T. M. Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God* (New York: Random House, 2012), selections.

In-class listening: Patricia Cox, “What a Total God Shot! Understand That? Then You Speak Christianese,” *The World in Words* (PRI Podcast).

Political Culture

T Sept 25

Readings: • Seth Dowland, “Introduction,” *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 1-20.

R Sept 27

Readings: • Beal, “The Promise Keepers’ use of Sport in Defining ‘Christlike’ masculinity” in *The Promise Keepers: Essays on Masculinity and Christianity*, 153-163.

- Balmer, “Keep the Faith and Go the Distance: Promise Keepers, Feminism, and the World of Sports,” in *The Promise Keepers: Essays on Masculinity and Christianity*, 194-203.

Cultural Politics

T Oct 2

Readings: • Shayne Lee and Phillip Luke Sinitiere, “Chapter 6: Surfing Spiritual Waves: Rick Warren and the Purpose-Driven Life,” *Holy Mavericks: Evangelical Innovators and the Spiritual Marketplace* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2009), 107-128.

- David Brooks, “A Natural Alliance,” *New York Times* (May 26, 2005)

R Oct 4

Readings: • Jennifer E. Dyer, “The Politics of Evangelicals: How the Issues of HIV and AIDS in Africa Shapes a “Centrist” Constituency in the United States,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (December 2014), 1010-1032.

The Limits of Evangelicalism

T Oct 9

In-Class Film Screening: The Heretic (Bullfrog Films, 2018) – Part 1.

R Oct 11

Readings: • Kelefa Sanneh, “The Hell-Raiser: A Megachurch Pastor’s Search for a More Forgiving Faith,” *The New Yorker* (November 26, 2012).

In-Class Film Screening: The Heretic (Bullfrog Films, 2018) – Part 2.

Racial Divisions

T Oct 16

Readings: • Selections from Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

R Oct 18

Readings: • “Chapter 6: Reproducing White Hegemony” and “Conclusion” in Korie L. Edwards, *The Elusive Dream: The Power of Race in Interracial Churches* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 117-140.

Spatial Divisions

T Oct 23

In-Class Screening “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth” (First Run Features 2011) – Part 1

R Oct 25

In-Class Screening “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth” (First Run Features 2011) – Part 2
and Class Discussion

Environmentalism

T Oct 30

Readings: • Lynn White, “The Historical Roots of Ecological Crisis,” *American Association of Science* (1967).

R Nov 1

Readings: • Laurel Kearns, “Noah's Ark Goes to Washington: A Profile of Evangelical Environmentalism,” *Social Compass* 44 (3) (1997): 349-366.

Prison Religion

T Nov 6

Readings: • Randall Styers, “Slaughter and Innocence: The Rhetoric of Sacrifice in Contemporary Arguments Supporting the Death Penalty,” in *Human Sacrifice in Judeo-Christian and Other Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, ed. Karin Finsterbusch and Armin Lange, Numen Book Series (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2006), 321-51

R Nov 8

Readings: • Winnifred Sullivan, "Introduction," *Prison Religion: Faith Based Reform and the Constitution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-18.

Corporate Reform

T Nov 13

Readings: • Kevin Lewis O'Neill, "The Soul of Security: Christianity, Corporatism, and Control in Postwar Guatemala," *Social Text* Vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 2012.

R Nov 15

Readings: • Amy Julia Harris and Shoshana Walter, "They Thought They Were Going to Rehab. They Ended Up in Chicken Plants," *Reveal* (October 4, 2017).

T Nov 20

Readings: • Chris W. Surprenant, "Policing and Punishment for Profit," *Journal of Business Ethics* (2017).

In-class Screening • "Prisons for Profit," *NOW on PBS* (2008).

• "Private Prison Help with Overcrowding, but at what Cost?," *PBS News Hour* (June 24, 2017).

R Nov 22 – NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Holiday

Religious Food

T Nov 27

Readings: • Grem, Darren E. "The Marketplace Missions of S. Truett Cathy and Chick-fil-A." In *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Space, Place and Region*, edited by Darren Dochuk and Michelle Nickerson, 293-315. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

In class screening: Selections from "Food, Inc." (Alliance, 2010).

R Nov 29

Readings • Pamela Walker, "Rehoboth Ranch and Windy Meadow Farms: For the Love of God and Family," in *Growing Good Things to Eat in Texas: Profiles of Organic Farmers and Ranchers Across the State* (Everbett Printing Company, 2009), 92-119.

Final Essay Peer Reviews

T Dec 4

Assignment: Bring to class a title, thesis statement, and outline for your final essay.

R Dec 6

Assignment: Bring to class a draft of final essay.