HIST284801 U.S. Religious History in the 20th Century (3 Credits)
Boston College Summer Session 2016
Summer II, [June 27-August 5 2016]
Monday and Wednesday, 6:00-9:15

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Office Hours: email appointments

Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to
the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit
of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its
graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation’s finest universities and to bring to the company of its
distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating
relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic
and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity,
especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this
spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

**Course Description**

This course has two broad goals: first, it aims to familiarize students with the religious history of the twentieth century United States; and, second, it seeks to interrogate the category of “religion.”

This course will include a field trip to select religious institutions in the Boston area. We will work with the religious artifacts and extensive pamphlet collection at the Burns Library at Boston College. The end of this course will include an in-depth study of the Creation Museum. Students will also have an opportunity to watch films about religion in America.

We will investigate religion(s) as historians do, that is, with the historical method, and in a particular place and time. The historical method (as applied to religion) entails, on the most basic level, reading primary sources to understand how religious subjects acted in the past. Our object of study is religion in the United States in the twentieth century. We will investigate not only the cultural manifestation of religion but we will actively interrogate how religion shaped American society in significant ways. We will cover a wide variety of religious movements and religious experiences: Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, mainline Protestantism, evangelical Protestantism, and a few ‘alternative religions.’ Religion played important roles in many of the events students of the twentieth century United States are familiar with: the New Deal, World War II, suburbanization, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, Feminism, the most recent rise of capitalism, the turn to “conservative” politics, and society-wide debates about gender, sexuality, and identity. These public events and disputes are important (and we will study many of them), but they do not capture the full story or reveal the full role that religion plays in twentieth century US society.

To study religion, we must look deeply at what the category entails. Religion includes: worship, theology, spirituality, belief, prayer, conversion, protest, prophecy, ritual, relics, devotion, hell, nationalism, churches, spaces, gender, violence, family life, and good old week-to-week church-going. The list could be extended. We will ask, time and again, what constitutes “religion.”

**Course Objectives**

1. At the end of this course, you should be able to (1) use primary sources to interpret the past, and (2) explain change over time. At a minimum, students are expected to be able to put primary sources in context and to identify generally when historical events occurred.
2. This course also aims to develop students’ analytic and narrative skills. Analytic skills include interpreting primary course, and the ability to relate or connect events over time. Narrative skills mean your confidence in speaking and writing about history, including your ability to formulate a thesis and support it using multiple sources.
3. The student will gain knowledge of religion in the 20th century United States (i.e., gender, race, class, state-formation) as demonstrated by analyzing key events and trends in terms of cultural, political and social life in American religious history.
4. The student will gain ethical and empathic historical attitudes pertaining to twentieth century religious topics by reading and discussing primary source texts.

**Textbooks & Readings (Required)**

Primary Sources (Canvas)
Secondary Source Readings (Canvas)
Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude: Women’s Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes*
Susan L. Trollinger and William Vance Trollinger, *Righting America at the Creation Museum*
Class 1
Monday June 27
Introduction
Main Themes of American Religious History
In Class Writing Assignment #1
“The 5 ‘Cs’ of History”
“What is the Study of Religion?”

Class 2
Wednesday June 29
Religion in the New Deal & Great Depression
Reading Quiz 1

Jon Butler, “Jack-In-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History”
Bob Orsi, “When 2+2=5”
Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*
Geertz, “Religion as Cultural System”

No Class, July 4

Class 3
Wednesday, July 6
The Mid-Twentieth Century Religious Revival
In Class Writing Assignment #2

Orsi, *Thank You St. Jude*, 1-115

Class 4
Monday, July 11
Religion in the 1950s
Reading Quiz #2

Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*

Class 5
Wednesday, July 13
American Catholicism in Mid-Twentieth Century America
In Class Writing Assignment #2

James O’Toole, “The Church of Vatican II”

Class 6
Monday, July 18
Religion and Race/Religion and the Civil Rights Movement
Reading Quiz 3

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 1-158
Martin Luther King, *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

Class 7

Wednesday, July 20
Exam 1
Religion on the Left: The Vietnam War and Beyond

*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, 158-300
Jason C. Blivins, “The Fracture of Good Order: The Berrigans and Ritual Protest”

Class 8

Monday, July 25
Religion and Gender/Religion and Feminism
What is Religion? Part II
In Class Writing Assignment #3

Class 9

Wednesday, July 27
Religion on the Right
Evangelical Christianity Since 1960
Reading Quiz #4

*Righting America at the Creation Museum*, 1-200
Molly Worthen, “The Theological Origins of the Religious Right”

Class 10

Monday, August 1
Religion in the early 21st century: global warming, 9/11, the rise of the “nones,” and sexual abuse

Pew Polling Data
Osama Bin Laden, Videotaped Address, October 7, 2001
George W. Bush, Address to Nation, October 7, 2001
*Righting America at the Creation Museum*, 200-285
*Boston Globe* articles
Excerpt, *Laudato Si*

Class 11

Wednesday, August 3
Final Exam
Film: *Spotlight*
In Class Writing Assignment
Canvas is the Learning Management System (LMS) at Boston College, designed to help faculty and students share ideas, collaborate on assignments, discuss course readings and materials, submit assignments, and much more - all online. As a Boston College student, you should familiarize yourself with this important tool. For more information and training resources for using Canvas, click here.

### Grading

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Class Reading and Writing Assignments</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
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<td>Writing Assignment</td>
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<td>Exam 1</td>
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The undergraduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:

- A (4.00), A- (3.67)
- B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67)
- C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67)
- D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67)
- F (.00)

The graduate grading system for Summer Session is as follows:

- A (4.00), A- (3.67)
- B+ (3.33), B (3.00)
- B- (2.67), passing but does not count toward degree
- C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit
- F (.00)

All students can access final grades through Agora after the grading deadline each semester. Transcripts are available through the Office of Student Services.

### Deadlines and Late Work

Students can only make-up In Class Reading and Writing Assignments and reading quizzes with documented excuses for absences. Documented excuses entail official forms and notes from doctors, administrators, etc., explaining the student’s absence. Without documented absences students will receive a 0 on ICRWAs and reading quizzes. The writing assignment is due on June 15; for each day it is late, it the grade will be decreased by one increment (A to B, B to C, etc.).

### Course Assignments

This course will require reasonable preparation outside of class. Students should plan to spend an average of 13 hours per week preparing for this course. Students are expected to read for each class on days where books and articles are assigned. Students should be ready to take a quiz on the reading material (a total of 5 quizzes over the course of the semester). Some classes (Mondays) will require more preparation than other classes (Wednesdays). Certain classes will require students to complete an In Class Reading and Writing Assignment. Both of the in-class exams as well as the Writing Assignment will also require considerable preparation time outside of class.