THEO 604-01  Research Problems in American Christian History  Spring, 2007
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Office:  HU 340  Phone:  977-2867
Office hours: Tuesdays 11:00 – 2:00  or by appointment

Course description
The course investigates methods, trends and approaches that are current to the academic
discourse within the study of American Christian History, especially as the latter has been
impacted by the changing demographics of world Christianity.  The course presumes a
general knowledge of American religious history.

We will examine the issues, questions and sources, which scholars are investigating today
in American Religious History.  Students will assess representative pivotal texts and
essays which represent the historiographic shifts since the 1960s.

American Religious History has been impacted in the last forty years by many factors,
including the location and type of sources used, varying perspectives and ecclesiologies,
a shift to the “subject,” gender/race awareness, internationalism, and post-modern
attitudes toward narrative.  As a result, new questions are raised theologically and
historically.  We will study some of these changes through texts which represent the
repositioned field.

Learning Outcomes
Students will
Identify the key directions in American religious historiography before and after
the 1960s.
Critically analyze key books and articles which exemplify recent historiographic
trends.
Locate and analyze primary sources for a chosen topic reflective of newer
historiographic trends.
Demonstrate the ability to create and defend a thesis germane to course content.
Share resources as a community of scholars.

Texts
Carol Coburn and Martha Smith,  Spirited Lives. How Nuns Shaped Catholic Culture and
American Life, 1836-1920.  Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
1999.  0-8078-4774-7
0-8272-0490-6  [1/10: The SLU bookstore informed me that this is on back order.
Better to get this from a second-hand bookstore.  If you have read this book for
another course, I will provide a different resource for you to look at the concept
entailed here.]
Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity. Religion and Popular Culture in America.* Yale University Press, 1996  0.300.07499.9


DT 476 S26 1999


**Course Responsibilities**

Attendance and active involvement

Completion of readings and written assignments on time

**Written Assignments**

A. Due on the first day of class:

Write a response (double space the paper) to FOUR of the five readings. For each of the readings, note the thesis, summarize the key points (one paragraph), and identify questions and points for discussion (one paragraph). After you have done this, write a concluding paragraph wherein you suggest some cumulative ideas and observations, having read all the articles.

B. Beginning with the second class, write a two-page, double spaced paper which notes the thesis of the BOOK for each class and the key questions and points the book raises for you. Conclude with a few paragraphs which indicate the advantages and/or disadvantages of the “lens” of that methodology and how you might use that methodology in present or future research.

C. Locate primary sources (either printed or in archives) for the paper noted in “D” below. This might be an opportunity to explore an archives for your dissertation topic, if you are that far along.

D. Students will write a final 25-page paper on a topic determined in conversation with the professor. Students will give a class presentation on their in-progress work and provide the class with a bibliography of sources used in the paper. One student will be assigned to respond formally to the paper-in-progress. The paper, of substantial quality to consider as a possible submission to an appropriate journal, will use the primary sources found by the student and employ one of the methodologies/problems treated in the course.

**Rubrics for Assessment**

Written Paper (final paper)

A. A clear thesis (can you sum up the main point in a sentence or two?)
B. Thoroughness and depth in the development of the argument; quality of evidence or sources
C. Clear organization, correct grammar, sentence intelligibility
D. Paragraph unity or coherence
E. Effective transitions/connections between ideas
F. Appropriate use of primary and secondary sources to support or elucidate the thesis
G. Conclusion logically follows from the development of the thesis
H. Correct and consistent footnote documentation and bibliography

Meaning of Grades (See the University Graduate Catalogue)

Grading System for Course (percentage of Course Grade)

- Active participation, attendance 20%
- Written responses to books 30%
- Final paper 50%
- Total 100% of grade

Academic Integrity Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to your course instructor, who will investigate and adjudicate them according to the Policy on Academic Honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion by the University.

Disabilities Act Any student who feels that he/she may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course—as outlined in the syllabus, due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Disabilities Services. Please telephone the office at 314.977.2930, or visit Room 131 in the Academic Resources Center, 3840 Lindell Blvd. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Timeline, Topics and Readings

Important Events

February 8th at 4:00pm in Cook Hall AB Auditorium: “Catholic Social Teaching and US Immigration Policy: Church at the Border.” Co-sponsored by Theology and International Studies.

February 20th at 7:00pm in Cook Hall AB Auditorium: Mark Noll of Notre Dame will present the 12th Annual DeLubac Lecture, “Is the Reformation Over?”

1/22 The state of the field in American Religious History – an overview and an operational definition of historiography.
Historiography is a category of intellectual history, “which relates historical works to the periods in which they were written and attempts to uncover their basic assumptions, revealing more immediately the limitations of the historical discipline, suggesting new questions to be asked, new avenues to be explored, new techniques, new metaphors, new models to be utilized.”


NOTE ON P. 9 OF THIS SYLLABUS A LIST OF THE BOOKS ON RESERVE IN PIUS LIBRARY.


1/29 The State of the Field in American Religious History - the Influence of World Christianity and the Internationalization of History and Theology

Justo Gonzalez, *The Changing Shape of Church History*.

Electronic reserve:

2/5 Civil religion
BELLAH
Electronic reserve:


2/12 Feminist Studies and Religion in America
**COBURN**

Electronic reserve:

**2/19 Immigration, Migration, Ethnicity**

**SANNEH**

**2/26 Religious diversity**

**TWEED**
Electronic reserve:


**3/5 Popular Religion**

**ORSI**

**3/19 Material culture**

**MCDANELL**
Not on reserve, but you might want to read these:


**3/26 Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism**

**MARSDEN**


4/2 Lived Religion and Reception Theory  
Orsi, Madonna of 115th Street


4/9 Race  
Electronic reserve:  


4/16 Regionalism  
Not on reserve, but you might be interested in perusing these:  

4/23 Student Papers; Professor Dries will present a paper, “Women Religious, Mission and World Christianity.”

4/30 Student Papers

5/9 **Papers are due by 3:00 P.M.,** either in the Professor’s mailbox in the Department Office, or underneath the door to HU 340.


Miller, Perry, “The Puritans’ Errand into the Wilderness,” 75-82.


McNally, Michael, “The Uses of Ojibwa Hymn-Singing at White Earth: Toward a History of Practice,” 133-159.


Koyama, Kosuke “American Church History from a Third World Perspective,” 171-185.


# Books on Reserve at Pius Library

**Professor/instructor** DRIES, ANGELYN (PIUS)

**Course name/number** THEOLOGICAL STUDIES THEO 604-01 (PIUS)

RESEARCH PROBLEMS IN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN HISTORY THEO 604-01 (PIUS)

## Reserves List

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Call #</th>
<th>Format</th>
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<tr>
<td>New directions in American religious history / edited by Harry S. Stout, D.G. Hart</td>
<td>(no author)</td>
<td>Pius Reserve -- BR515.N47 1997 c.3 -- NOT CHECKD OUT</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Perspectives on American religion and culture / edited by Peter W. Williams</td>
<td>(no author)</td>
<td>Pius Reserve -- BL65.C8 P46 1999 -- NOT CHECKD OUT</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>READINGS FOR RESEARCH PROBLEMS IN AMERICAN CHRISTIAN HISTORY</strong></td>
<td>(no author)</td>
<td>Pius Reserve -- VF #1 (DRIES) -- NOT CHECKD OUT</td>
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