

James Bennett
Fall 2016
Department of Religious Studies

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Kenna Hall 300i, 551-1910
OH: W 10:30-11:30 a.m.,
Th 9:30-10:20am, by appt.

RSOC 111
INVENTING RELIGION IN AMERICA

T, TH 10:20 a.m.-noon, Kenna Hall 218

Course Description

This course explores the spiritual creativity that characterizes much of the American religious experience. The totality of this creativity is far too extensive to cover in a single quarter. Therefore, we will examine a representative cross section of traditions. Groups covered include Mormons, Adventists, Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Nation of Islam, Scientology, the People's Temple (Jonestown) and the Branch Davidians in Waco. The course will focus on the historical contexts that gave rise to each tradition and affected its growth and expansion. We will also explore unifying themes, including democratization, millennialism, gender, race, and the effort to integrate religion and science. Pervading our explorations will be attention to interpretive and ethical issues that create challenges for scholarly investigations of marginal religious groups, the social tensions that new religious movements both create and respond to, and the complex, controversial, and even contradictory ways that Americans have understood, defined, and treated such groups.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

- explain the origins, context and basic beliefs of several major new religious movements in the United States
- critically evaluate the use of the word “cult” to describe religious groups
- identify and critically evaluate sources of information concerning new religious movements
- apply theoretical frameworks to understand both individual movements and their relationship to the larger American religious landscape

Core Curriculum: Religion, Theology and Culture 3

The study of Religion, Theology and Culture forms an important component of a Santa Clara education. This course fulfills the requirement for the third course in Religion, Theology, and Culture (RTC 3). **In order to earn RTC 3 credit students must have completed both RTC 1 and RTC 2 courses, and have earned at least 88 units (transfer students excepted).** RTC 3 is part of the Explorations dimension of the Core Curriculum. It builds upon the first two RTC courses, applying insights from the study of religion to difficult, open-ended questions of vital interest to contemporary societies. As an RTC 3 course, this class will enable students to:

1. identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions
2. evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society

In the context of RSOC 111, we will develop these skills by exploring the role of “marginal” religions and the ways they are depicted and treated in American society.

American Studies Pathway

This course is associated with the American Studies Pathway: You can find information about Pathways on the Core Curriculum website <http://scu.edu/core> including specific Pathways, all courses associated with them, and the Reflection Essay prompt and rubric used to evaluate the final essay you will submit. <http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core/pathways/resources/>

SAVE YOUR WORK FROM THIS CLASS. If you declare an American Studies Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway materials you will upload via eCampus during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox or Google Docs, in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

Books (available at the University Bookstore and on reserve at Orradre)

Paul K. Conkin, *American Originals*

Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

James Tabor and Eugene Gallagher, *Why Waco?*

Additional Readings: Readings not included in the above texts will be posted on Camino.

Course Requirements

Intellectual Engagement. Your presence and participation is essential to your success in this course, and to the success of the course as a whole. Discussion of assigned texts forms a core aspect of this third-level religious studies course. As a result, the intellectual engagement grade extends beyond mere attendance to emphasize engagement with course materials. Attendance is only a necessary pre-condition for this engagement, not a measure of it. Intellectual engagement will be measured by the extent to which you come to class prepared and are willing and able to discuss the assigned readings. For each class meeting, you should have the assigned reading with you to refer to, be prepared with questions, comments and observations about the assigned readings and discussion topics, as well as having completed any additional assigned tasks for that day's class.

Writing. Written assignments will consist of one short essay, several Reflect and Respond papers, and a final research paper.

Essay (4 pages). Essay topics will be posted on Camino. Essays should be well-written, with a clear, focused thesis statement, supporting evidence and critical analysis, be free of grammatical and spelling errors, and include citations when appropriate (see note on academic integrity below).

Reflect and Respond Papers (2-3 pages unless otherwise noted). Throughout the quarter (approximately once a week), there will be Reflect and Respond papers, in which you will reflect upon a question or topic. Like all work for submission, these responses should be typed (doubled-spaced) and written with clear, concise prose. Based on the trajectory of our discussions and/or changes in the pace we move through the materials, the dates and/or frequency of Reflect and Respond papers may change from the schedule below. Any

changes will be announced in class and on Camino. Reflect and Respond papers may not be turned in late, as their purpose is to focus discussion for the particular day they are due.

Final Research Paper (10-12 pages). Students will write a research paper examining a religious movement or a theme in new religious movements. The topic must be different than those covered in class readings. The sources used for research must include at least three traditional scholarly resources (books, journal articles) that are not a part of the course readings. Students should start planning research topics from the beginning of the quarter in order to meet deadlines for progress on the research paper. Students will submit preliminary materials related to the research paper throughout the quarter, including a topic and an annotated bibliography.

Late Paper Policy:

There will be a minimum one point deduction for each day late (*late Reflect and Respond papers will not receive any credit*).

Grading:

Intellectual Engagement	10
Reflect and Respond Papers	30 (3 points each)
Essay	20
Annotated Bibliography	10
Research Paper	30

Final grades will be based upon the following scale: A (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D (60-69); F (below 60). Final grades are not negotiable and cannot be changed, except in the case of clerical error.

The Santa Clara University *Undergraduate Bulletin*, identifies the standards for grades as follows: A (excellent), B (good), C (adequate), D (barely passing), F (not passing).

Attendance

Students who miss two or more classes will lose at least one point off the total grade for each absence.

Disability Accommodation Policy

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://www.scu.edu/disabilities> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be

contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Academic Integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class.

Students are encouraged to collaborate, share ideas, and ask questions of one another. However, all written work must be your own and clearly distinguishable from the work of others. When you present others' work as your own, or fail to cite the contributions of others to your own work, you have engaged in plagiarism. It matters not whether the work is from a fellow student, the world-wide web, or a traditional printed source. If you have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask the instructor. Santa Clara University and the Religious Studies department take seriously the commitment to academic integrity. Any violations, including plagiarism or cheating, may result in an "F" and referral to the Office of Student Life.

Course Schedule

Tentative: schedule and readings subject to change
Additional information and instructions on Camino

PRELIMINARY MATTERS: CATEGORIES, CONCEPTS, AND TERMS

Sept. 20 Course Introduction and Overview

Sept. 22 Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Of Churches, Sects, and Cults: Preliminary Concepts for a Theory of Religious Movements"; Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, "Cult Formation: Three Compatible Models"

**** Reflect and Respond Paper: BEFORE completing any of the readings, write your own definition of the words Cult, Sect, Church and Religion**

MORMONISM

Sept. 27 Nathan O. Hatch, "The Crisis of Authority in Popular Culture"; Gordon Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism"

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

Sept. 29 Conkin, *American Originals*, 162-216; Book of Mormon (excerpts)

Oct. 4 Conkin, *American Originals*, 216-225; lds.org

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

UTOPIAN AND COMMUNAL IMPULSES: GENDER IN THE 19TH CENTURY US

Oct. 6 Suzanne Thurman, "Shaker Women"; "Shakers: Primary Source Documents"

Oct. 11 Louis Kern, "Ideology and Reality"; "Oneida Community"

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

MILLENNIALISM, PART 1

Oct. 13 Millerites and Seventh Day Adventists

Paul Conkin, *American Originals*, 110-145; "Millerites"; Adventist.org

Film (in class): "Midnight Cry!"

Oct. 14**** Essay due by 4:30 p.m. via Camino**

Oct. 18 Jehovah's Witnesses

Paul Conkin, *American Originals*, 145-59; James Penton, "Major Doctrines"; jw.org

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Oct. 20 Christian Science

Conkin, *American Originals*, 226-69; Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (excerpts); Robert Peel, *Spiritual Healing in a Scientific Age* (excerpts); "Ian Lundman Case"; Stephen Carter, "The Power of Prayer Denied"; christianscience.com

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

Oct. 25 Spiritualism

Video: "Telegrams from the Dead"

**** Profile/theme topic due at beginning of class**

RELIGION AND RACE

Oct. 27 *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, chp 1-4

Nov. 1 *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, chp 5-11

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

Nov. 3 *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, chp 12-19; noi.org

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

RELIGIOUS CREATIVITY IN CALIFORNIA: PEOPLE'S TEMPLE, SCIENTOLOGY AND BEYOND

Nov. 8 Scientology: *Dianetics* (excerpts); www.scientology.org; Janet Reitman, "Inside Scientology"; Hugh Urban, "Fair Game: Secrecy, Security and the Church of Scientology in Cold War America."

**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

Nov. 10 The People's Temple: Catherine Wessinger, "1978-Jonestown"; David Chidester, "Rituals of Exclusion and the Jonestown Dead"

Nov. 12**** Annotated Bibliography due at 4:30 p.m. via Camino**

MILLENNIALISM, PART 2

Nov. 15 Tabor & Gallagher, *Why Waco?* chp 1-3

Nov. 17 Tabor & Gallagher, *Why Waco?* chp 4-6
**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

Nov. 29 Tabor & Gallagher, *Why Waco?* chp 7-8

THE FUTURE OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Dec. 1 Rodney Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model"
**** Reflect and Respond Paper**

Dec. 8 @noon:

**** FINAL PAPER DUE VIA CAMINO**