[3/28/19 note: This is the syllabus from the classroom version of the course that I taught last summer. Several things will change this time around, but what follow should give you an idea of how the course will proceed. The online version of the course will consist of 8 one-week units, or modules. Feel free to email me with any questions (spmiller@wustl.edu). Thank you! – Steven P. Miller]

(SU2018 L22 History 3513 41)
Religion, Race, and Politics in Recent American History

Steven P. Miller, Ph.D.

Washington University in St. Louis
Summer Session 4 (M 7/16 – R 8/16)
MTWRF, Cupples II L011, 3:00 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Email: spmiller@wustl.edu (the best way to reach me)
Phone: 314-853-5495 (for emergencies only; no calls after 8:30 p.m., please!)


Course Description and Themes
Religion and politics often are seen as topics best avoided in polite company. Yet matters of faith have exerted a powerful influence in American public life. For the last two-plus decades, analysts have debated the existence of “culture wars” dividing Americans on issues of values, lifestyles, and beliefs. This course traces the relationship between American religion and politics from the Cold War through the Civil Rights Movement and up to the present. We will explore how faith has driven diverse, often conflicting forms of political engagement. We will devote particular attention to civil rights activism (and opposition) in the 1950s and 1960s and to the prominence of evangelical Christianity since the 1970s. Case studies include civil rights leaders Martin Luther King, Jr., and Fannie Lou Hamer, as well as influential evangelicals like Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell. The course will allow students to critique interpretations of the place of religion in American life, exploring links (as well as differences) between the recent past and present headlines.

Required Books/Readings (Please let me know if you are using the Kindle edition of either book. Thank you.)

• Miller, Steven P. *The Age of Evangelicalism: America’s Born-Again Years*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. PAPERBACK (2016) ISBN: 9780190636692. NOTE: As the author of this book, I am assigning it with the goal of fostering a class-wide conversation in which students will feel comfortable raising questions and offering critiques. In consultation with the publisher, I tried to ensure that the book was moderately priced.
• Shorter readings posted or linked in dated folders on the Blackboard course home page.

Assignments

#1 Participation (20% of final grade)
• Quality participation reflects engagement with the assigned readings. Raising important questions represents one valuable way of contributing to discussions. The participation component may include extemporaneous in-class assignments.

#2 Reflections, five of six possible, as noted on course schedule (20%)
• When prompted, prepare a brief (~600 words) reading reflection. I will provide prompts. This is not a formal essay, but do pay attention to clarity and grammar. Demonstrate that you are taking into account relevant course materials from the week.

#3 Response essays on *God’s Long Summer*, due M 7/30, and *The Age of Evangelicalism*, due F 8/10 (40% total—20% each)
• These somewhat longer essays will ask you to analyze each book in light of course themes.

#4 Final exam essay, due R 8/16 (20%)
• This capstone assignment will ask you to interpret major themes in the history of American religion and politics since the end of World War II.

Grading Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>F</td>
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Class Structure and Expectations

• Classes will integrate discussions and short lectures, with a strong emphasis on discussion. Fruitful discussion requires close engagement of the readings, listed just below each class date. Reflection assignments will complement the in-class material and facilitate in-class discussion.
• Please clear foreseeable excused absences in advance. In the event of emergencies—e.g., illness—please check in with me as soon as possible.
• All assignments are due as listed. Under normal conditions, late submissions are granted only with advance clearance from the professor (and, in most cases, with a reduced grade).

Accommodations and Resources

• Washington University is committed to providing equal opportunity for students with disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) assists students with disabilities by providing services and arranging for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access and
equal academic opportunities. Students wishing to request services or accommodations must register and provide appropriate documentation to the DRC at cornerstone.wustl.edu. The DRC serves as a resource and advisor to students with disabilities and welcomes opportunities to consult with students, families, faculty, and staff. [Source: University College Online Teaching Manual]

- I encourage you to take advantage of the many resources offered by the Writing Center: https://writingcenter.wustl.edu/, 314-935-4981, writing@artsci.wustl.edu.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

- Students are bound by the University College policy on academic integrity in all aspects of this course. All students are responsible for following the rules outlined in the document regarding the university academic integrity policy: http://ucollege.wustl.edu/faculty/academic_integrity. [Source: University College Online Teaching Manual]

**Course Schedule**

**M 7/16** Talking about Religion and Politics

**T 7/17** Things to Keep in Mind about American Religious—and Political—History
  (**Please complete all readings before the relevant course meeting.**)

**W 7/18** Civil Religion
- Michael Kazin, “The Father of America’s ‘Civil Religion’ Has Died” (2013)
  REFLECTION 1 DUE

**R 7/19** The Cold War Revival
- Norman Vincent Peale, “Let the Church Speak Up for Capitalism” (1950)
- Billy Graham, “A Christian America” (1955)

**F 7/20** . . . and Its Discontents
- Bob Dylan, lyrics to “With God on Our Side” (1963)
- Abraham Joshua Heschel on the Vietnam War (1967)
  REFLECTION 2 DUE

**M 7/23** The “Sixties Reformation”
- Michael Kazin and Maurice Isserman, from America Divided (2015)

**T 7/24** A Post-Christian America?
- Amanda Porterfield, from The Transformation of American Religion (2001)
  REFLECTION 3 DUE
W 7/25 The Civil Rights Movement: Divided by Faith
- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence” (1960); and “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” (1963)
- “Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee Statement of Purpose” (1960)

R 7/26 Divided by Faith, cont.
- “Billy Graham Makes Plea for an End to Intolerance,” Life, 1 October 1956
- Jerry Falwell, “Ministers and Marches” (1965)

F 7/27 “The Soul of a Nation”
- Be reading Charles Marsh, God’s Long Summer (1997)

M 7/30 God and Civil Rights in Mississippi
- God’s Long Summer (1997)

T 7/31 Therapeutic Faith in the Seventies
- Tom Wolfe, “The ‘Me’ Decade and the Third Great Awakening” (1976)

W 8/1 The Restructuring of American Politics
- Andrew Hartman, from A War for the Soul of America (2015)

R 8/2 The Restructuring of American Religion
- Robert Wuthnow, “Divided We Fall: America’s Two Civil Religions,” The Christian Century (1988)

F 8/3 Case Study: Abortion and the Christian Right

M 8/6 Culture Wars?
- “They have labeled Moral Majority the Extreme Right because we speak out against Extreme Wrong!” (New York Times, 1981)
- James Davison Hunter, “America at War with Itself” (1992)

T 8/7 Case Study: Barack Obama and Religious Pluralism

W 8/8 Case Study: Latino Mennonites and Religious-Political Identity
- Felipe Hinojosa, from Latino Mennonites: Civil Rights, Faith, and Evangelical Culture (2014)

R 8/9 Religion & Politics beyond the USA
• Current History article of your choosing (Details TBA)
BRIEF PRESENTATION on chosen articles

F 8/10 An Age of Evangelicalism?
• Steven P. Miller, The Age of Evangelicalism (2014)
• Optional reading: Any reviews of the book that you can find (***If you use reviews for your response essay, you must cite them!***)
RESPONSE ESSAY

M 8/13 Religion & Politics in the Headlines
• Religion & Politics article of your choosing (Details TBA)
BRIEF PRESENTATION on chosen articles

T 8/14 or W 8/15 Final Exam Essay Consultations (details TBA)
• Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, from American Grace (2010)
• OPTIONAL: E. J. Dionne, Jr., and Michael Cromartie, from Is There a Culture War? (2007)

R 8/16 Closing Arguments
FINAL EXAM ESSAY DUE R 8/16