

Religion, Race, and Resistance in America

REL 292 – Fall 2020

Meetings: 3:15 - 4:30 p.m. EST, T/Th, via Zoom

Instructor: Dr. David J. Howlett, Mellon Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion
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Office Hours: 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. EST, T/Th, via Zoom

Course Description: How has religion been used to construct race in America? How has race helped constitute religion? What can the shared histories of religion and race in America tell us about our culture and politics? And how have these understandings been used to foster resistance? This class examines these questions, from the era of colonization to the present, through a study of laws, uprisings, rituals, social movements, monuments, sacred texts, songs, theologies, and foodways

Course Goals: Students will leave this class with

- an understanding of the ways that various groups have harnessed, reacted against, and helped produce the categories of “religion” and “race.”
- an awareness of how religion and race have been shaped by their intersections with other categories of difference, such as gender, age, and class.
- an ability to engage secondary and primary historical sources in an original research paper.
- an ability to write a popular book review of a scholarly work.
- an ability to use readily accessible software to write and produce a podcast episode.

<u>Final Class Grade:</u>	Popular Book Review	15%
	Author Research Essay	15%
	Podcast Episode (3 component parts)	60%
	Moodle Posts/Class Participation	10%

Assignments and Assessment:

Journalistic Article/Popular Book Review: Students will complete a journalistic article on a select book that frames the book's main arguments in an accessible, journalistic style for an intelligent, non-specialist, non-academic audience. A rubric detailing this assignment will be handed out in class. (1000 words)

Author Research Essay: In preparation for your podcast episode, you will complete a mini-research essay on an assigned author we will read in class. In this essay, you will provide details about the author's educational background and the topics they study. You will then review two articles they have written (one from our syllabus and one from their c.v.). You will highlight the larger contributions these articles make and the relevant themes that link the articles to the author's larger intellectual project. A detailed rubric for this essay will be handed out in class.

Podcast Episode: With a partner, you will write and produce a podcast episode about the author you have researched. This project has three component parts.

- 1) **Author Interview:** As a class, we will agree upon five common questions to ask our select authors. With your class partner, you will interview and record your author via Zoom (media release forms will be collected prior to the interview). You will turn in the transcript of this interview (automatically generated by Zoom) and write a short reflection paragraph upon the interview process.
- 2) **Podcast Script:** You and your partner will write a podcast script about your featured scholar. To do so, you will use audio excerpts from your interview and analysis based upon your author research essay. As a class, we will agree upon a common intro and outro, as well as a generic outline for the body of the script. Beyond that, you will be responsible for the content.
- 3) **Edited Podcast Episode:** With script in hand, you will record and edit a podcast episode using WeVideo editing software. The Smith Learning, Research, and Technology Team will provide in-class tutorials about how to use this software, as well as share about best practices for a successful podcast episode. Your final podcast episode is due during finals week.

Moodle Posts and Participation: In the course of the semester, each student will be asked to lead the class in a discussion on one of the articles from the week. The student will be expected to lead the discussion for ten minutes and have three questions ready. To facilitate engaged learning, better discussions, and better comprehension of the material, each class will have a daily question or exercise that students are expected to complete at the beginning of each class. Daily questions will be collected at the midpoint of the semester and at the last class of the semester. Finally, you will post about each week's readings on Moodle. These posts may address your thoughts, questions, or epiphanies generated by the texts and should be, at minimum, 200 words. Each week, half of the class will post on the Tuesday reading (due on Monday night) and half of the class will post on the Thursday reading (due on Wednesday night). You may skip posting for two weeks at any point in the semester.

Assessment of Student Work: Students will be subject to a standard grading scale as follows:

A+ 97-100

A 94-96

A- 90-93

B+ 87-89

B 84-86

B- 80-83

C+ 77-79

C 74-76

C- 70-73

D+ 67-69

D 60-66

D- 56-59

F 55 and below

Classroom Procedures and Policies:

Academic Dishonesty: The Student Handbook notes the following:

Students and faculty at Smith are part of an academic community defined by its commitment to scholarship, which depends on scrupulous and attentive acknowledgement of all sources of information and honest and respectful use of college resources.

Smith College expects all students to be honest and committed to the principles of academic and intellectual integrity in their preparation and submission of course work and examinations. All submitted work of any kind must be the original work of the student who must cite all the sources used in its preparation.¹

If you have questions about what might constitute inadvertent plagiarism, please consult me before you hand in your work.

Late Assignment Policy: I hope you can hand in your work on time via Moodle, but I will be flexible as necessary. Please do be in contact with me before the due date if you cannot make it.

Accommodations for Students: If you have a disability or a personal circumstance that you think will affect your learning in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs. Students who need accessibility accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services (www.smith.edu/about-smith/disability-services) and obtain an official letter of accommodation.

Title IX Rights and Responsibilities: The Smith College Title IX website notes the following:

¹ “Student Conduct & Social Responsibility: Academic Honor Code,” Smith College, accessed September 3, 2019, <https://www.smith.edu/sao/handbook/socialconduct/honorcode.php>.

Gender-based and sexual misconduct is any unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior that significantly interferes with a student's success or access to educational opportunities at the college. A student with a complaint alleging gender-based and sexual misconduct should report it to the Title IX Coordinator (Amy Hunter, ahunter65@smith.edu). Complaints regarding sexual violence (sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, and stalking) may also be reported to the Campus Police Department or the Dean of Students Office (Marge Litchford, mlitchfo@smith.edu). Complaints of gender-based or sexual misconduct between Smith College students or where the individual allegedly committing the misconduct is a Smith College student are governed by the Smith College Student Code and applicable state and federal laws.

Beyond this policy, you should know that I am a mandatory reporter at the college. In the event that you experience a Title IX violation, you may talk to me, and I will keep your information private to the greatest extent possible. However, as a professor, I have a responsibility to report any information regarding sexual misconduct and crimes that I learn about to make our campus a safe place for all. For further information about Title IX rights and related all-college policies, as well as support services, please consult the following webpage: <https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/title-ix>

Work Expectations: Students should expect nine to ten hours of outside preparation work for class each week. On written assignments, successful students distribute their workloads over the course of a week rather than cram their writing into the night before the due date. Be a successful student.

General: My goal is to create a classroom environment that fosters open inquiry, with engaged discussion and mutually respectful interaction. Let's all do our utmost to challenge and support one another in our work together. Along the way, if anyone has ideas about how the structure of the course and general classroom interactions could be altered to encourage greater inclusion and participation, please let me know.

Required Texts for Purchase

■ Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

ISBN-13: 978-1479888801

■ Henry Goldschmidt, *Race and Religion among the Chosen Peoples of Crown Heights* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2006).

ISBN-13: 978-0813538976

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY TOPICS & STUDENT READING ASSIGNMENTS

Religion, Race, and Resistance in America
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All assignments are to be read before the specified class. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the reading schedule. Should changes be made, students will be informed in advance.

Prologue: The Invention of Religion and Race

WEEK 1 Colonialism and Categories
(9/1 - 9/3)

Readings: 1) Geraldine Heng, "Did Race and Racism Exist in the Middle Ages?" *Not Even Past* <https://notevenpast.org/did-race-and-racism-exist-in-the-middle-ages/>

2) Anthony Padgen, "The Peopling of the New World: Ethnos, Race and Empire in the Early Modern World," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. by Miriam Eliav-Feldon, et., al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 292-312. (Moodle)

Unit I: Religions and Race in Colonial America

WEEK 2 Creating Red, Black, and White Religions
(9/8 - 9/10)

Readings: 1) Rebecca Anne Goetz, "Baptism and the Birth of Race," in *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 86-111. (Moodle)

2) Linford Fisher, "Natives, Religion, and Race in Colonial America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Race in American History*, (Moodle)

WEEK 3 Islam and West African Religions in America
(9/15 - 9/17)

Readings: 1) Walter C. Rucker, "Dance, Conjure, and Flight: Culture and Resistance in Colonial South Carolina," in *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Colonial South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 91-122. (Moodle)

2) Sylviane A. Diouf, "The First Stirrings of Islam in America," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam in America*, ed. by Yvonne Haddad and Jane I. Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 15-28. (Moodle)

Unit II: Religion and Race in Nineteenth-century America

WEEK 4 Racial Myths and Their Discontents
(9/22 - 9/24)

- Readings:
- 1) Sylvester Johnson, "Ham, History, and the Problem of Illegitimacy," in *The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God* (New York: Palgrave, 2004), 51-72. (Moodle)
 - 2) Albert J. Rabouteau, "'Ethiopia Shall Soon Stretch Forth Her Hands': Black Destiny in Nineteenth-century America," in *A Fire in the Bones: Reflections on African-American Religious History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 37-56. (Moodle)

WEEK 5 Battling White Supremacy, Reforging White Empire
(9/29 - 9/30)

- Readings:
- 1) Emily Suzanne Clark, "'To Battle for Human Rights': Afro-Creole Spiritualism and Martyrdom," *Journal of Africana Religions* 6.2 (2018): 161-189. (Moodle)
 - 2) Edward J. Blum, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness: Global Missions, Religious Belief, and the Making of the Imperial White Republic," in *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 209-243. (Moodle)

WEEK 6 Asian Religions and American Orientalisms
(10/6 - 10/8)

Author Research Essay Due (10/6)

- Readings:
- 1) Kathryn Gin Lum, "Religion on the Road: How Chinese Migrants Adapted Popular Religion to an American Context," in *The Chinese and the Iron Road: Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, ed. by Gordan H. Chang and Shelley S. Fishkin (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 159-178. (Moodle)
 - 2) W. Paul Reeve, "Oriental, White and Mormon," in *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 215-246. (Moodle)

WEEK 7 Judaism as Race and Religion
(10/13 - 10/15)

Fall Break -- No Class (10/13)

- Readings:
- 1) Eric L. Goldstein, "'Different Blood Flows in Our Veins': Race and Jewish Self-Definition in Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 11-34. (Moodle)

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2) Sarah Imhoff, "Indian-Israelite Identification: Claiming a Manly Past for American Judaism," in *Masculinity and the Making of American Judaism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), 128-150. (Moodle)

Unit III: Religion and Race in Twentieth-Century America

WEEK 8 Remaking Religion, Reconstructing Race

(10/20 - 10/22)

Book Review Due: Weisenfeld (10/22)

Readings:

1) Tisa Wenger, "Making Religion on the Reservation: Native Americans and the Settler Secular," in *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 101-142. (Moodle)

2) Judith Weisenfeld, "Religio-Racial Self-Fashioning," in *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 95-127.

WEEK 9 The Nation State and the Management of Religion and Race

(10/27 - 10/29)

Readings:

1) Anne M. Blankenship, "Civil Religious Dissent: Patriotism and Resistance in a Japanese American Incarceration Camp," *Material Religion* 10.3 (2014): 264-292 (Moodle)

2) Edward E. Curtis, IV, "The Black Muslim Scare of the Twentieth Century: The History of State Islamophobia and Its Post-9/11 Variations," in *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance*, ed. by Carl W. Ernst (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 75-106. (Moodle)

WEEK 10 The Civil Rights Movement

(11/3 - 11/5)

Interview Transcript Due (11/3)

Readings:

1) Clayborne Carson, "Martin Luther King, Jr. and the African-American Social Gospel," in *African-American Religion: Interpretive Essays in History and Culture*, ed. by Timothy E. Fulop and Albert J. Raboteau (New York: Routledge, 1997), 341-364. (Moodle)

2) Randall J. Stephens, "'It Has to Come from the Hearts of the People': Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, Race, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act," *Journal of American Studies* 50.3 (2016): 559-585. (Moodle)

WEEK 15 Listening to Your Podcast
(12/7)

1) Listen to your classmates' podcast episodes (they will not be the final versions).

FINAL PODCAST DUE – Tuesday, December 15
