

History of the North American Church

STMA 592 Fall 2006

1:35 - 4:25pm, Thursday

Joanne Carlson Brown

253-460-7580 - home

253-564-2754 - church

253-460-6532 - fax

nomatterwhat3@earthlink.net

UCUP@qwest.net

This course is an introduction to the major religious themes in North American history. Through the study of selected topics and periods, we shall explore the ways in which religion has shaped North American culture as well as the ways in which social change has influenced the religious expressions of North Americans.

Requirements

1. Do reading for the day assigned and **active** participation in class discussions.
2. 1-2 page reflection papers due at the end of each class in which you raise something from the readings that excited, angered, or puzzled you. These papers will be the spark for class discussion.
3. 4-6 page essay on one of the following books:

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps*

James Baldwin, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*.

Topics for essays at the end of the syllabus. Due any time before December 8.

Books

The following books have been ordered through the bookstore:

Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*

Edwin Gaustad (ed), *A Documentary History of Religion in America, Vol. I & II*

Rosemary Ruether & Rosemary Keller (ed), *In Our Own Voices*.

Class Assignments

September 21 Noll, ch. 1

Gaustad, Vol. I pp. 57-59, 63-81, 109-114

Ruether & Keller, pp. 19-21, 34-36

September 28 Noll, ch. 2-3
Gaustad, Vol. I pp. 82-85, 88-109, 114-147, 184-193
Ruether & Keller, pp. 64-67, 80-85

October 5 Noll, ch. 4-6
Gaustad, Vol. I pp. 194-200, 215-279, 293-297,
364-369
Ruether & Keller, pp. 86-89, 155-156, 169-174, 265-267

October 12 Noll, ch. 7 & 9
Gaustad, Vol. I pp. 201-214, 280-293, 297-299, 322-342,
382-428, 503-516
Ruether & Keller, pp. 36-41, 89-92, 222-231, 249-265, 267-273, 323-325

October 19 Noll, ch. 8
Gaustad, Vol. I pp. 300-306, 343-363, 369-381, 438-466
Ruether & Keller, pp. 343-362, 363-377

October 26 Noll, ch. 12-13
Gaustad, Vol. I pp. 467-502, 517-525
Gaustad, Vol. II pp. 6-49, 72-83
Ruether & Keller, pp. 36-41, 94-96, 333-336

November 2 Noll, ch. 10-11
Gaustad, Vol. II pp. 98-200, 286-291, 298-399
Ruether & Keller, pp. 42-45, 92-97, 175-178, 209-221, 228-240,
276-284, 311-316

November 9 Noll, ch 14-15
Gaustad, Vol. II, pp. 327-411
Ruether & Keller, pp. 274-276

November 16 Noll, ch. 16-18
Gaustad, Vol. II pp. 431-442, 449-455, 462-478, 488-493,
502-511, 593-634
Ruether & Keller, pp. 45-47, 49-60, 97-108, 181 - 190, 284-290, 325-330, 385-423, 447-451

November 23 Thanksgiving - No Class!!!!!!! Happy Turkey Day
(but remember - you are what you eat!)

November 30 Noll, ch. 19-20
Gaustad, Vol. II pp. 280-285, 293-295, 456-462, 479-487, 493-501, 512-533, 542-569, 574-592,
636-638
Ruether & Keller, pp. 47-49, 179-181, 190 -205, 240-245, 330-333, 427-431, 436-447, 463-467

Essay Topics

Uncle Tom's Cabin

In this essay you are asked to approach a work of fiction with the consciousness of an historian. In Uncle Tom's Cabin (as in most novels), a skilled artist shapes the ideas and symbols of her own culture to create a moral world. What emerges is Stowe's interpretation of reality, not a description of reality. Various characters might be said to stand for various moral positions and possibilities; the landscape on which the novel is set is painted in moral as well as descriptive tones; and both the story and the descriptions are

deeply informed by the author's assumptions about human nature and the meaning of life in the world. Working with the consciousness of an historian means, in part, being aware that Stowe's world view probably differs significantly from your own. The essay may refer to your own views, but be sure to distinguish them from Stowe's.

Keeping that in mind, you can choose one of the following topics:

- 1) Is religion an oppressive or a liberating force in the novel? Draw evidence from both the novel itself and our readings and discussions.
- 2) In what ways are Stowe's understandings of race and gender similar or dissimilar? Upon what religious and moral assumptions does she base her views of race and gender? Draw evidence from both the novel itself and our readings and discussions.

In His Steps

Again, I want you to approach a novel with the consciousness of an historian. Sheldon is using each of his characters to make a point in this polemical type novel.

Pick one character who accepts Rev. Maxwell's challenge. Discuss their decision and how it affects their lives. Evaluate whether Sheldon's portrayal of that character is unrealistic or true to what could have happened. Do you think the book/author is naive? Is this a possible solution for today?

Go Tell It On The Mountain

The central event of the novel is the religious conversion of an adolescent boy who is overwhelmed by poverty and racism. Does Baldwin think that the black Pentecostal church, its theology and practice, is a solution to these problems? What role does religion/the black church play in the novel? Draw evidence from both the novel itself and our readings and class discussions.