

University of South Alabama
History 457 Spring 2006
Office: 376 Humanities Building
E-mail: mmonheit@jaguar1.usouthal.edu

Department of History
Dr. Michael L. Monheit
460-6868/6210

Historical Approaches to the Study of Religion History 457

WEB PAGE FOR THIS CLASS (REQUIRES PASSWORD):
<http://www.southalabama.edu/history/faculty/monheit/HY457-553/>

Office Hours: Monday, 8:30-9:30 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT -- I am happy to arrange a time to meet that is convenient to you. MY OFFICE IS RATHER HIDDEN -- PLEASE SEE MAP AT END OF SYLLABUS.

OVERVIEW OF THE CLASS

This class is a little different from most history courses that you have taken, as it does not cover a single period of time, such as Russia, 1905-1989, or The Reformation, 1500-1650. Rather, in it we will take a look at how different historians write the history of religion. Thus we will read selections from a church historian living in the Medieval period, The Venerable Bede about his own time; two historians, Leopold von Ranke (19th century) and Max Weber (early 20th century), writing about the Reformation, Alexis de Tocqueville (19th century) writing about the French Revolution, and two contemporary historians, William Martin and Lyndal Roper. Martin writes about the religious right in the U.S., and Roper writes about witchhunting in 16th and 17th century Europe. We will also be reading three more theoretically oriented writers who discuss the nature of religion, Karl Marx and his associate Friedrich Engels, Émile Durkheim and William James. From Marx and Engels, we will read both theoretical writings about religion and an important historical account (*The Peasants' War in Germany*) from a Marxist Perspective. Although Durkheim and James are not writing history in the chosen selections, their ideas have been extremely influential on modern historians of religion. While you will learn a good deal about the history of each of the periods we read about and discuss, the focus will be more on historical method in religious history and on "the history of history," specifically, the history of how historians think about religion.

FORMAT OF THE CLASS – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

I have designed this class as a seminar class. This means that virtually all class time will be devoted to student presentations and discussion by you, the students in the class. Thus this class depends upon your commitment to it and active participation in it. If you do so you will find it very rewarding.

However your lack of participation or absence from the class will hurt the other students as well as you. If you are unable to make the commitment to attend this class regularly and participate in it actively, you would do better not to remain enrolled in it. The grading for this class reflects my approach: significant percentages of your grade depend upon your active participation and your preparation of class presentations. Since this class meets only once per week, one absence is equal to missing class for an entire week. Thus I am allowing only TWO unexcused absences for the entire semester (the equivalent of missing six 50-minute classes or two whole weeks out of a fifteen week semester). Each absence beyond two will result in reduction of your final grade by one-half (A- to B, B- to C, etc.).

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Introduction by Anthony Giddens, London (Routledge) 1992

William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, rev. ed., New York (Broadway Books) 2005

Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*, New Haven (Yale University Press) 2004

Many additional assignments are located on this course web page as indicated below in the weekly assignment schedule.

WEB=On course web page in pdf format.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Due Dates for all assignments are on last page of this syllabus

READINGS: You are expected to read the assigned readings carefully and in time for the class in which they will be discussed. You are expected to take notes on the readings. Questions will be provided ahead of time for each reading. I strongly encourage you to bring to class questions you have about hard-to-understand aspects of the readings. You will find that you are not the only one having a hard time!

ATTENDANCE is required. You are permitted TWO absences during the semester (equivalent to missing two entire weeks of a regular three-meeting-per-week class). After that, your final grade will be lowered by 1/2 grade for each absence.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Each student is expected to attend classes regularly, to have carefully read the assigned selections for that class, and to participate actively in discussing them.

CLASS PRESENTATION: Each student will present readings to the class several times during the Semester. If possible, two students will be assigned to each presentation. In preparing your presentation, you are expected to do some background reading in addition to the assigned readings, such as more reading by and about the individuals involved, more reading about the topic, etc. THE PENALTY FOR NOT SHOWING UP FOR A SCHEDULED CLASS PRESENTATION, WITHOUT GOOD EXCUSE, WILL RESULT IN 5% OFF OF OVERALL CLASS AVERAGE FOR EACH OCCURRENCE.

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAM.

PAPER: You will write two papers. You will write a rough draft and a final draft of each paper (note penalty for failure to submit a rough draft).

The first paper, 5-7 pages, will involve doing further reading in one of the figures studied in this class, and presenting that individual's thought in greater depth. You may consider someone not included in this course with permission of the instructor.

The second paper, 7-10 pages, will involve comparing the individual considered in the first paper to another individual studied in the course. You may consider someone not included in this course with permission of the instructor, but you must include the person you considered in the first paper.

JOURNAL: Although this will not be graded, I strongly suggest that you keep a journal in which to write down ideas that occur to you in connection with course-related discussions, readings and research. Use your journal to have a kind of dialogue with yourself about what you are studying. Jot down insights, ideas for papers, questions you want to bring up in class, etc. You will be surprised at how much this increases your sense of involvement in the topics of the class and at how much more you benefit from it!

GRADING:

Class Participation:	15%
Presentations:	15%
First Paper:	15%
Second Paper:	20%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	25%

Failure to do a rough draft for either paper: -5% of total average each time

You will note that the above adds up to 110%, that is, to more than 100%. This means that you have 10 bonus points, and that you can do especially well in one area and thus make up for a weakness in another area. BUT YOU ALSO NEED TO NOTE THAT IF YOU DO NOT TURN IN A ROUGH DRAFT YOU LOSE ½ OF YOUR GRADE (-5% OF YOUR OVERALL AVERAGE) EACH TIME.

PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism -- the use of another person's ideas or words without citing that person -- is a very serious offense and can lead to a failing grade or expulsion from the University.

THE FOLLOWING ARE ALL FORMS OF PLAGIARISM:

Using someone else's ideas without citing that person as the source – NOTE THAT PUTTING SOMEONE ELSE'S IDEAS INTO YOUR OWN WORDS IS STILL CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM IF YOU FAIL TO CITE YOUR SOURCE.

Using someone else's exact words without placing them in quotation marks.

Using someone else's words without citing that person as the author.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify a disability and advise faculty members of reasonable accommodations.

TENTATIVE LIST OF CLASS TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Monday, January 16, MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr. HOLIDAY -- NO CLASS
Read Bede, and Begin Reading Martin, *With God on Our Side* for January 23

First Week, January 23: A Medieval Christian Historian
The Venerable Bede (c. 673-735), *Ecclesiastical History of England*, 13 page selection, **WEB**

Second Week, January 30: A Contemporary Sociological Approach to Religion
William Martin, *With God on Our Side*

Professor Martin, the author, will be visiting the History Department on Wednesday, February 8 and Thursday February 9. He will be giving two presentations to which you and all students are invited (free of charge). The times for his presentations are available on the course web page.

Part I: Author's Note, vii-xi, Introduction and Chapters 1 through 7, pp. 1-190

Third Week, February 6: A Contemporary Sociological Approach to Religion
William Martin, *With God on Our Side*

Reminder: Professor Martin, the author will be visiting the History Department on Wednesday, February 8 and Thursday February 9. He will be giving two presentations to which you and all students are invited (free of charge). The times for his presentations are available on the course web page.

Part II: Chapters 9 through 13, "Epilogue," "Afterword," and "Political Landscape,"
pp. 191-393.

Fourth Week: February 13: Two Nineteenth Century Historians:

Leopold von Ranke, *History of the Reformation in Germany*, selection: "Disturbances at Wittenberg," 246-263 **WEB**

Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Régime and the French Revolution*,
Pt. I, chs. 2 & 3, Pt. III, ch. 2. **WEB**

Fifth Week, February 20: Marx's Approach to Religion
Selections from Marx's Early Writings **WEB**
Friedrich Engels, *The Peasants' War in Germany* **WEB**

Sixth Week, February 27: Émile Durkheim, A Pioneering Anthropologist of Religion
Durkheim, "Religion and Ritual", selections from his writings, 219-238. **WEB**

A former student in this class, Ms. Areda Bush, found three sites on Durkheim:

<http://www.relst.uiuc.edu/durkheim/>

<http://www.emile-durkheim.com>

<http://durkheim.itgo.com/>

All three have valuable accounts of Durkheim's life and work. The first has a particularly good discussion of Durkheim's Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, his major work on religion.

Seventh Week, March 6: Midterm Exam
Exam will take 1-1/2 hours, then class will be dismissed

March 13: NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

Eighth Week, March 20: Max Weber, A Pioneering Sociologist of Religion I
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
Introductions and Prefaces, pp. vii - xliii, Part I: pp. 1-50

Calvin on Predestination, Institutes III, chapter 21 **WEB**

Ninth Week, March 27: Max Weber, A Pioneering Sociologist II
Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*
Part II: pp. 51-125

Tenth Week, April 3: A Psychological Approach to Religion
William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, selections **WEB**

Eleventh Week, April 10: A Contemporary Socio-Psychological Approach I
Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze* I
Part I: Preface, ix-xii, Prologue, Part I and Part II, pp. 1-123

Twelfth Week, April 17: A Contemporary Socio-Psychological Approach II
 Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze* II
 Part II: Part III, Part IV, Epilogue pp. 124-256

Thirteenth Week, April 24, OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION OF COURSE

Final Exam: Monday, May 1, 6-8 pm in classroom

IMPORTANT DATES

Rough Draft of First Paper Due, February 13
 Final Draft of First Paper Due, Friday, February 24
 Midterm examination, March 6, 6 - 7:30 pm
 Spring Break, March 13-19, no class March 13
 Last Day to Drop Courses, Friday, April 7
 Rough Draft of Second Paper Due, April 10
 Final Draft of Second Paper Due, April 24 (last day of class)
 Final Examination, Monday, May 1, 6 - 8 pm

MAP TO HISTORY DEPARTMENT AND OFFICES

```

-----
|           | |           | |           | |           | |E| |====|
|           | |           | |           | |           | |L| |====|
|           | |           | |           | |           | |E| |====|
Dr Monheit's | | 387 < | |           | |           | |           | |V STAIRS {
Office 376  \ /           | |           | |           | |           | |
| XX | | 390 <           | |           | |           | |           | |Third Floor Humanities {
|           | |           | |           | |           | |           | |           | |(South Wing) {
|           | |           | |           | |           | |           | |           | | | |
|           | | 386|385| STAIRS | |           | |           | |           | |
|           | | _/_/_/_ | | | \ | |           | |           | |           | | \ / |
|           | |           | | 354 |History Dept Office| |           | |           | | \ / |
|           | |           | |           | |           | |           | |           | |
-----

```