Spring 2-1-2019

HSTA 595.01: ST - Race, Religion and Radicalism in US History

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HSTA 595: Race, Religion, & Radicalism in U.S. History
Spring 2019
Thursday, 2-5 p.m.
Tobin Miller Shearer

This course explores the question “How does one evaluate the interlacing forces of race, religion, and radicalism in U.S. History?” Students will encounter the religious history of Jon Butler, the feminist scholarship of Alice Echols, the labor and race synthesis of Robin D. G. Kelley, and the critical race theory approach of Carolyn René Dupont. We will pursue that question by forming a community of writers in which we will write historical essays and respond to each other through thoughtful letters. We will encounter the following themes: Study of Religion, Slave Religion, Native American Religious Practice, African-American Islam, Latinx Religion, Labor History, Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism, Feminism, The Making of War, The Religious Right and the Evangelical Tradition, and Southern Religion. Students will likewise consider the particular challenges of studying modern American history where race, class, and gender render historical analysis complex. This course will also pay close attention to pedagogy. Students should expect to reflect on the historical content of the course as well as the process of teaching it.

Objectives: students will be able to –
- identify foundational works of race, religion, and radicalism in U.S. History;
- compare and contrast various approaches to the study of these themes in American history;
- discuss the broad historiographical trends in the study of these themes American history;
- write and critique concise, carefully worded, convincing historical essays.

Assignments:
To meet these objectives students will participate in weekly class discussions, write six, 3-4 page essays in response to bi-weekly prompts, and write twelve response letters to your classmates (two every other week). Active participation requires careful reading of assigned materials, informed discussion of weekly themes, and thoughtful response to course questions. Students will also lead a two-hour discussion of one of the assigned texts. Rubrics on all assignments will be provided.

Grading:
Participation – 20%
Discussion session – 10%
Essays – 50%
Letter responses – 20%

Grade scale:
A+ 98-100  A 93-97  A- 90-92  B+ 87-89  B 83-86  B- 80-82
C+ 77-79  C 73-76  C- 70-72  D+ 67-69  D 63-66  D- 60-62  F ≤59

Instructor contact:
I maintain regular office hours that I will post on the course website. You are also welcome to contact me by e-mail. My goal is to respond within 24 hours. In case of emergency, you may contact me by phone as listed on the course website.

Missed deadlines:
My goal is always to encourage your best work in the midst of multiple classroom demands and real life emergencies. Limited deadline extensions can be arranged if the student makes advance contact. Late papers or projects will be marked down a grade/day. Make-up credit for missed classes will not be offered unless they are arranged along with appropriate documentation from medical, athletic, or administrative officials.

Academic honesty:
Stealing someone else’s ideas is the same as stealing someone’s property. Cite others’ ideas in standard footnote or form (in written work and all projects) according to the seven-step footnoting process provided on the course website. Paraphrase whenever possible. In general, a paraphrase uses no more than three of the same words in a sentence as the original source. Failure to conform to these standards will result in failure of the respective assignment and may result in immediate failure of the class. See:
http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode for a full review of the University of Montana’s student conduct code.

Accessibility:
Students with documented disabilities as per University policy (see:
http://www.umt.edu/dss/current/expect_access/ldver.html for more information) will be appropriately accommodated in accordance with counsel from University of Montana Disability Services for Students (DSS).

Grade changes or drops:
Unless in the case of a documented major life emergencies (death of a loved one, extended illness, etc.), this class may not be dropped and grading options may not be changed after the established university deadline.
Schedule and readings:

[All books are on traditional reserve in Mansfield library as hardcopy or electronic book.]

January 10. Week One: Introduction, course overview, in class discussion: What is the relationship between race, religion, and radicalism.

Discussion of primary texts.
Discussion of prayer and religion in U.S. History.

January 17, Week Two: The study of religion: How do we study religion as historians?

Essay #1 on above question due Monday, January 14, at 11:59 p.m.

Writing Center Workshop #1

Required:

January 24, Week Three: Slave Religion

How did oppression change the practice of religion?

Two letters to classmates in response to Essay #1 due by Monday, January 21, at 11:59 p.m.

Discussion Leader #1

Required:

January 31, Week Four: Native American Religious Practice

How do we move past exoticism in the study of Native American religious history?

Essay #2 on above question due Monday, January 28, at 11:59 p.m.

Writing Center Workshop #2

Required:

February 7, reading day, no class

February 14, Week Five: African-American Islam

How has “ummah” (nation-building) changed over time?

February 21, Week Six: Latinx Religion

How have religious and cultural identities interacted in U.S. history?

Essay #3 on above question due Monday, February 18, at 11:59 p.m.

Required:

February 25, Week Seven: Labor History

What are the limits of advocacy history?

Two letters to classmates in response to Essay #3 due by Monday, February 25, at 11:59 p.m.

Discussion Leader #2

Required:

March 7, Week Eight: Civil Rights Movement

How can historians write about issues of oppression without making their subjects into passive victims?

Essay #4 on above question due Monday, March 4, at 11:59 p.m.

Discussion Leader #3

Required:

March 14, Week Nine: Black Nationalism

What was radical about the black freedom struggle?

Two letters to classmates in response to Essay #4 due by Monday, March 11, at 11:59 p.m.
Discussion Leader #4

Required:

March 21, Week Ten: Feminism
What does it mean to be radical and how have those who view themselves as such shaped U.S. history?

Essay #5 on above question due Monday, March 18, at 11:59 p.m.
Discussion Leader #5

Required:

March 28, Spring Break, No Class

April 4, Week Eleven: The Making of War
How do historians build groundbreaking interpretive arguments?

Two letters to classmates in response to Essay #5 due by Monday, April 1, at 11:59 p.m.

Required:

April 11, Week Twelve: The Religious Right and the Evangelical Tradition
How has religion shaped U.S. history?

Essay #6 on above question due Monday, April 8, at 11:59 p.m.
Discussion Leader #6

Required:

April 18, Week Thirteen: Southern Religion
How have religion, race, and radicalism interacted in the 20th century U.S. history?

Two letters to classmates in response to Essay #6 due by Monday, April 15, at 11:59 p.m.
Discussion Leader #7

Required:

April 25, Week Fourteen: Wrap up
Meet for potluck and discussion of what you have learned by taking this class.