

Bialecki, Jon (Reed College) - American Christianity: History and Culture

ANTHROPOLOGY 358

AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY: HISTORY AND CULTURE

18:10-19:30 Tu Th VOLLUM 116

Professor Jon Bialecki

Elliot 100a,

jbialeck@reed.edu

Office Hours TBA

Course Description:

This course will ask to what degree American Christianity is a religious, social, and cultural phenomenon that, while perhaps not sui generis, has distinctive traits that mark it as a properly bounded anthropological research object in and of itself. Suffering from neglect due to anthropology's traditional disinterest in Christianity as an ethnographic object, and also due to the lack of status previously conferred on 'domestic fieldwork,' in the past North American Christianity has not been thought through as fully by anthropologists as it possibly could have been. In part as a corrective measure to this oversight, in part as a reaction to the increased visibility that religiously-informed conservative political movements have enjoyed over the past thirty years, and in part as a realization of the importance that American Christianity has had on Christian practice worldwide, anthropologists have recently begun to produce a more thorough documentation of North American Christian life; this anthropological work has been supplemented by sociological ethnographies, as well as by historians who have either been influenced by anthropological approaches, or who have taken cultural material as their object. This conference will survey this literature, addressing topics that will include language use, the American Apocalyptic Imaginary, Christian subjectivity, and finally the distinctive relationship between politics and religion in the American public sphere that has marked the last quarter of the twentieth century, and which promises to be a force in the twenty-first century as well. Prerequisite: Anthropology 211 or

consent of instructor. Conference.

NOT ASSIGNED, BUT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED:

Robbins, Joel 2003

What is a Christian? Notes toward an anthropology of Christianity. *Religion* 33(3):191-199.

Robbins, Joel 2007

Continuity Thinking and the Problem of Christian Culture: Belief, Time, and the Anthropology of Christianity. *Current Anthropology* 48(1):5-38.

CHRISTIANITY OVER THE LONGUE DURÉE

September 2nd (Wk1, D1)

Heclo, Hugh, Mary Jo Bane, Michael Kazin, and Alan Wolfe

2007 *Christianity and American democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. (pg. 1-144).

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

McLoughlin, William G.

1978 *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fogel, Robert William

2000 *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark

1992 *The Churching of America, 1776-1990*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

EARLY AMERICAN CHRISTIAN SENSORIUM & SUBJECTIVITY

September 4th (Wk1, D2)

Schmidt, Leigh Eric

2000 *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2).

September 9th (Wk2, D1)

Taves, Ann

1999 *Fits, Trances, and Visions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Part One

[Chapters 1-3]).

EARLY PENTECOSTALISM

September 11th (Wk2, D2)

Wacker, Grant

2002 Heaven Below. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. (SECTION).

September 16th (Wk3 D1) Wacker, Cont. (SECTION).

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Anderson, Robert

1979 Visions Of The Disinherited: The Making Of American Pentecostalism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cox, Harvey

1995 Fire From Heaven. New York: Da Capo Press. Dayton, Donald 1987 Theological Roots of Pentecostalism. Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press.

Sánchez-Walsh, Arlene M.

2003 Latino Pentecostal identity : evangelical faith, self, and society. New York: Columbia University Press.

Synan, Vinson

1997 The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

CATHOLIC PRESENCE

September 18th (Wk3 D2)

Orsi, Robert

1998 Thank You, St. Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Hopeless Causes. New Haven: Yale University Press (SECTION).

September 23rd (Wk4 D1)

Orsi, cont (SECTION).

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Bane, Mary Jo

2007 Democracy and Catholic Christianity in America. In Heclo, Hugh, Mary Jo Bane, Michael Kazin, and Alan Wolf, Christianity and American democracy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Orsi, Robert

1985 *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880- 1950*. New Haven: Yale University Press

McAlister, E. 1998

The Madonna of 115th street revisited: Vodou and Haitian Catholicism in the age of transnationalism. In *Gatherings in diaspora: religious communities and the new immigration* (eds) S. Warner & J.G. Wittner. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

September 28th (Wk4 D2)

Frederick, Marla Faye

2003 *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

September 30th (Wk5 D1)

Frederick, cont.

EVANGELICALS AND FUNDAMENTALISTS

October 2nd (Wk5 D2)

Harding, Susan

2001 *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (CHAPTER TWO ONLY).

Stone, Jon R.

1997 *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition*. New York: St. Martin's Press. (SECTION)

October 7nd (Wk6 D1)

Stone, cont. (SECTION)

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Carpenter, Joel A.

1997 *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marsden, George

1980 *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marsden, George

1987 *Reforming Fundamentalism*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing

Company.

October 9th (Wk6 D2)

Ammerman, Nancy

1987 Bible Believers. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. (SECTION).

October 14th (Wk7 D1)

Ammerman, cont.

October 16th (Wk7 D2)

Harding, cont. (SECTION).

October 28th (Wk8 D1)

Harding, cont. (SECTION).

RECOMMENDED READING DURING THIS SECTION:

Crapanzano, Vincent

2000 Serving the Word: Literalism in America from the Pulpit to the Bench. New York: The New Press. (SECTION)

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Ault, James, Jr.

2004 Spirit and Flesh: Life in a Fundamentalist Baptist Church. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Boyer, Paul

1992 When Time Shall Be No More. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Weber, Timothy.

1979 Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillenarianism, 1875- 1925. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CHARISMA AND RENEWAL

October 30th (Wk8 D2)

Csordas, Thomas J. 2001 Language, Charisma, and Creativity: Ritual Life in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. New York: Palgrave. (SECTION)

November 4th (Wk9 D1)

Csordas, cont. (SECTION)

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Csordas, Thomas J.

1994 *The Sacred Self: a cultural phenomenology of charismatic healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

November 6th (Wk9 D2)

Miller, Donald 1997 *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (SECTION)

November 11th (Wk10 D1)

Miller, cont. (SECTION)

Harding, Susan, and Kathleen Stewart

2003 *Anxieties of Influence: Conspiracy Theory and Therapeutic Culture in Millennial America*. In *Transparency and Conspiracy: Ethnographies of Suspicion in the New World Order*. H. G. West and T. Sanders, eds. Pp. 258-286. Durham: Duke University Press.

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Sargeant, Kimon Howland

2000 *Seeker Churches: Promoting Traditional Religion in a Nontraditional Way*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Shibley, Mark A.

1996 *Resurgent Evangelicalism in the United States: Mapping Cultural Change since 1970*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

November 13th (Wk10 D2)

Luhmann, T. M.

2004 *Metakinesis: How God Becomes Intimate in Contemporary U.S. Christianity*. *American Anthropologist* 106(3):518-528.

Luhmann, T.M.

2006 *Learning Religion at the Vineyard: Prayer, Discernment and Participation in the Divine*, Vol. 2006: The Martin Marty Center.

Elisha, Omri

2008 *Faith Beyond Belief: Evangelical Protestant Conceptions of Faith and the Resonances of Anti-humanism*. *Social Analysis* 52(1):56-78.

POLITICAL CONTESTATION

November 18th (Wk11 D1)

Ginsburg, Faye D. 1998 *Contested lives: the abortion debate in an American community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

November 20th (Wk11 D2)

Ginsburg, cont.

November 25th (Wk12 D1)

Erzen, Tanya 2006 *Straight to Jesus: Sexual and Christian Conversions in the Ex-gay Movement*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (SECTION)

DECEMBER 2nd

Erzen, Continued (SECTION)

OTHER RELEVANT WORKS:

Warner, R. Stephan

2005 "The Metropolitan Community Churches and the Gay Agenda: The Power of Pentecostalism and Essentialism" in *A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Gutterman, David S.

2005 *Prophetic Politics: Christian Social Movements and American Democracy*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.

TOWARDS THEORIZING AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY - LANGUAGE

DECEMBER 4th

Meigs, Anna

1995 *Ritual Language in Everyday Life: The Christian Right*. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63(1):85-103.

Shoaps, Robin

2002 'Pray Earnestly': The Textual Construction of Personal Involvement in Pentecostal Prayer and Song. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(1):34-71.

TOWARDS THEORIZING AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY - EXCHANGE

December 9th (Wk14 D1)

Bialecki, Jon

2008 *Between stewardship and sacrifice: agency and economy in a Southern*

California Charismatic church. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 14, 372-390.

Bielo, James S.

2007 'The Mind of Christ': Financial Success, Born-again Personhood, and the Anthropology of Christianity. *Ethnos* 72(3):315-338.

Elisha, Omri

2008 Moral Ambitions of Grace: The Paradox of Compassion and Accountability in Evangelical Faith-Based Activism. *Cultural Anthropology* 23(1): 154-189.