

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

HIS 360W
CID#: 4555
American Religious History
Credit Hours: 3.0
Fall Semester 2007

Instructor: Dr. Tom Cox

Classroom and Class Time: LDB 205, Tues./Thurs., 9:30 a.m.-10:50 a.m.

Office and Office Hours: AB4 473, Tues. 3:00-4:30 p.m., 9:30-11:00 a.m. Wed. or by appointment

Contact Info: Phone: 936-294-4804, FAX: 936-294-3938, thc001@shsu.edu

Course Description: The United States has a fascinating and diverse religious history. Founded by a variety of denominations and religious groups, America has emerged in the past two centuries to become the most religiously diverse nation in the world. Although we live in a secular age, millions of Americans either hold deep religious beliefs or maintain an active interest in religious issues. Religious issues such as the words "In God We Trust" on coins or prayer in school continues to generate intense public controversy. Please be warned, this is not a theology or philosophy course, although we will be drawing heavily on these disciplines. We will instead examine the interaction of religious groups and social forces in the unfolding of American history.

Course Objectives: Throughout this semester, our course goals are to:

- Increase your knowledge of American religious history from the colonial era to the present.
- Continue to sharpen your critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills.

Readings: The following book is required reading for the course. Copies may be purchased at the Barnes and Noble Campus Bookstore, Bearkat Books, Kampus Korner or on-line through websites such as amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com:

Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America* (any edition)

In addition, the professor will post additional weekly assigned readings under the assignment section of Blackboard. It is the students responsibility to download, print off, and read this material by the dates specified on the class schedule. As we will be holding a number of class discussions on important religious topics, completing the assigned weekly readings is necessary if you hope to do well in this course.

Attendance: Just as you undoubtedly expect me to keep my lectures to the point and grade your assignments on time, so to I expect you to attend class regularly and promptly complete assignments. Attendance will be taken during each class. As life can get complicated at times, you may miss up to four (4) classes without penalty. If you feel that you will be absent for longer periods of time then please discuss the matter with me as soon as possible. I will require documentation for long-term absences from class.

Exams: You will have three in-class exams for this course. Each exam will consist of short answer/identification terms and one out of two possible essays. Students are required to take exams on assigned days. I will allow makeup exams only for exceptional, documented circumstances. All makeup exams will be given at the same time on Thurs., Dec. 13, the last day of finals week.

Grading: The final grade for this course will be based on class attendance and participation (20%), three in-class exams (20% each), and two reaction papers (10% each). If applicable, extra credit will be factored into the final grade on a case-by-case basis. My grading scale is as follows: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D = 60-69, F = 59 or lower. Pluses and minuses will be dropped on your final grade for the course.

Academic Honesty: In accordance with Sam Houston State University's Academic Policy Statement 810213, "all students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials." See <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty> for more information.

Keeping On Top of Assignments: Before each Tuesday's class, I will post lecture outlines, key terms, study questions, and course updates for the upcoming week in the announcement and assignment sections of Blackboard. It's a good idea to consult Blackboard's announcement and assignment sections periodically for updates and changes to the semester schedule.

Americans with Disabilities Act: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If the student has a disability that may affect adversely their work in this class, then he or she needs to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how they can best be helped. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. See <http://www.shsu.edu/~vafwww/aps/811006.html> and http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf for more information.

Religious Holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

Visitors in the Classroom: Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not he/she will be allowed to remain.

Instructor Evaluations: Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

Assignments: Students will need to complete two 5-6 page reaction papers based on the assigned readings. You will also be given an optional extra credit paper, also based on the assigned readings, due the last day of class before the final exam. All SHSU rules for plagiarism apply to these assignments.

The professor will post specific assignment information including the grading system to be used, the types of citation required, etc. on Blackboard throughout the semester.

Required Supplies: Students are required to bring pens or pencils and notebooks to class for note taking and exams. Students are also required to buy the textbook stated above for the class and to secure copies of the additional, on-line readings for the course specified on Blackboard.

Classroom Conduct: Classes tend to run more smoothly if students and professors observe a few basic ground rules. Laptops and other internet devices are not permitted in class. Please arrive to class on time and stay for the entire class. I reserve the right to count you absent for repeated tardiness, leaving early, or generally disrupting class by talking, sleeping, listening to music, eating, drinking, text messaging, reading materials for other classes, etc. Particularly difficult students may be advised to drop, find their final grades lowered, or even given failing grades for the course. The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline can be found at <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>

Running Into Problems: Over the course of the semester, you may run into problems that range from falling behind in the course to medical or family related emergencies. If you find yourself in such a situation, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may address the matter directly. I am also available during office hours or by appointment for help, tutoring, or advice as needed. For more general help, consider visiting the SAM Center, the Reading Center, or the Writing Center if you are having trouble with note taking, completing assignments, or studying for exams.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Lecture Topic</u>	<u>Assignments and Exams</u>
Week 1: Aug. 21, 23	Foundations of Faith	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 1
Week 2: Aug. 28, 30	Colonial Precedents	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 2 <i>Reaction Paper assignments posted, Mon. Aug. 27</i>
Week 3: Sept. 4, 6 (<i>No class on Sept. 3, Labor Day</i>)	Puritans and Pilgrims	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 3
Week 4: Sept. 11, 13	Hodgepodge of Faiths	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 4
Week 5: Sept. 18, 20	Great Awakenings	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 5 <i>First Exam, Thurs., Sept. 20</i>
Week 6: Sept. 25, 27	Founders and Religion	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 6
Week 7: Oct. 2, 4	Frontier Faiths	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 7-8
Week 8: Oct. 9, 11	A House Dividing	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 9
Week 9: Oct. 16, 18	Religious Conflicts	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 10
Week 10: Oct. 23, 25	Social Gospel	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 11-12 <i>First Reaction paper due Thurs. Oct. 25</i>
Week 11: Oct. 30, Nov. 1	Many Voices	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 13 <i>Second Exam, Thurs., Nov. 1</i>

Week 12: Nov. 6, 8	Science and Religion	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 14
Week 13: Nov. 13, 15	Politics of Faith	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 15
Week 14: <i>No class Nov. 20-24, Thanksgiving</i>	Thanksgiving Break	
Week 15: Nov. 27, 29	Crusading for Justice	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 16-17 <i>Second Reaction paper due Thurs. Nov. 29</i>
Week 16: Dec. 4, 6	Religious Culture	Gaustad and Schmidt, Chapter 18
Week 17: Dec. 11-15	Final Exams	<i>Final Exam date to be announced</i>