

HIST6235 AMERICAN DENOMINATIONS
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Disclaimer: This syllabus is intended to give the student a general idea of the content, format, and textbooks used for this class. The professor will submit a full syllabus at the beginning of the class which will contain a course schedule and the instructor's information.

Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Purpose of the Course, Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies Addressed

The purpose of this course is to provide quality theological education for students in the discipline of theological and historical studies. The core value focus of the course will emphasize spiritual vitality. The course will specifically address the competencies of Christian theological heritage, disciple making, servant leadership and spiritual and character formation.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the various Christian denominations existing in the United States. The history, polity and theology of each denominational family (Lutheran, Methodist, etc.) will be studied. Current denominational trends and future viability will be discussed.

Objectives

- to learn about the people and events important to the different Christian denominations in America
- to understand and appreciate the denominational diversity in America
- to distinguish between different polity structures
- to interpret contemporary issues in Christian life in light of their historical roots
- to develop the ability to think historically and critically, placing individuals, movements, and ideas within their proper context

Required Texts

[R] Rhodes, Ron. *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2005.

[H] Hamilton, Adam. *Christianity's Family Tree: What Other Christians Believe and Why*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.

Recommended:

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. Second Edition, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Mead, Frank S., Samuel S. Hill and Craig D. Atwood. *Handbook of Denomination in the United States*. 12th edition. Nashville: Abingdon Press: 2005.

House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Oden, Thomas C. *Turning Around the Mainline: How Renewal Movements are Changing the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Netiquette Statement on Appropriate Online Behavior

Each student is expected to demonstrate appropriate Christian behavior when working online on the Discussion Board. The student is expected to interact with other students in a fashion that will promote learning and respect for the opinions of others in the course. A spirit of Christian charity will be expected at all times in the online environment.

Requirements

A. Worksheets: Students will complete fifteen (15) worksheets, each worth 10 points. One worksheet will cover each of the denominational families (except Fundamentalists). See the sample worksheet to use as a guide. Submit the worksheets in the appropriate unit in the Assignment area.

B. Discussions: There will be four discussions. Three will be graded, each worth 15 points. Each student will participate in four (4) threaded discussions. During the time the unit containing the interactive discussion required, you will enter the discussion at least three times: once near the beginning of the unit and twice toward the end as you respond to your classmates' comments (see above for unit completion dates). Your initial comments express your opinion on the topic. You must then respond to **at least** two (2) people, but **not more** than five (5) in any one discussion. This means that for each discussion you will have a minimum of 3 entries and a maximum of 6 entries. Each posting should be about a paragraph in length.

There must be **at least** two days time span between your initial comments and your response to your classmates. Be sure to plan accordingly so that you leave enough time to respond before the end of the unit. Failure to do so will affect your grade.

You will be graded on your contributions to the discussion **and** on your interaction with what other students have said. It is **EXTREMELY** important that students remember to use courtesy when critiquing the ideas of their fellow students. Speak truth, but only in love and let your conversations be characterized by grace. The first interactive discussion will not be graded. This will allow you to become familiar with the program. The others are worth 15 points each. The graded discussions will be on the following topics:

Unit 1 (not graded): Please describe yourself. Please include your educational background (where you went to school, major), current degree plan, desire for future ministry, and information about your family (married/children/unique experience growing up, etc.). Include only information that you feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Unit 2 (graded): What are the advantages and disadvantages of the three different polity styles?

Unit 3 (graded): Is it appropriate to fellowship with pastors and congregations of other denominations (e.g. community Thanksgiving service, pulpit exchanges,

ministerial alliance)? Why or why not?

Unit 4 (graded): What is the future of denominations in the US? Include a consideration of mainline and evangelical components within denominations.

C. Worship Service Evaluation: Each student will attend two (2) worship services from a polity tradition different from his/her own. The student will write a 2-3 page singlespaced description of the service. This will include a detailed order of worship, the activities/participation of the worshipers and the student's impressions of the service. Each evaluation is worth 30 points. The first evaluation is due **June 30** and the second one is due **July 23**. Submit your evaluations in the Worship Evaluation folder in the Assignment area.

D. Book Review: Each student will write a review of a book of Roger Finke and Rodney Stark's *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. The review will be written as though for an academic magazine or journal. It should:

- 1) begin with a brief description of the author,
- 2) identify the book's main thesis or purpose,
- 3) give a brief summary of the contents,
- 4) include an evaluation of the work's strengths and weaknesses.

All quotations and direct references to sections in the book should be indicated by page numbers within parentheses. Citations or paraphrases from other sources should be noted and documented using either footnotes or endnotes. Reviews should be 2-4 pages in length, single-spaced. **Due July 26.**

E. Bonus Reading: This year we will be endeavoring to read through the Bible together. As an added incentive, students who participate in this can earn up to 5 bonus points. At the end of the semester, students will report how much of the Summer Semester Bible Reading Plan they have completed (in 20% increments).

Late Work

A. Interactive Discussions: Failure to adequately participate in the threaded discussions and to do so in a timely manner will affect the amount of points awarded.

B. Book Review: A late review will be assessed an initial **10% penalty (5 points)**. For each calendar day after the due date an **additional 5 point penalty** will be assessed.

C. Plagiarism: New Orleans Baptist Seminary maintains high academic standards and is not tolerant of plagiarism. If you copy another author's work and present it as your own, you will be caught, and the penalty could be failure on that assignment or the course or expulsion from the Seminary.

Submission of Assignments

A. Worksheets, Book Reviews and Worship Evaluations should be submitted the Assignments area. Your work **must** be posted as a .pdf document. [WordPerfect can save a document in .pdf and you can download a program from the [Software Downloads to be used in NOBTS Blackboard Courses](#) link that will work for MS Word documents (MS Works is not acceptable)]. Posting your paper in .pdf format preserves your margins and spacing. Failure to post your paper in a .pdf format will result in a **5 point penalty**.

B. Discussion Threads will be conducted on Blackboard. Go to the Discussion Board to add your threads. Click on a thread to respond to it.

Please do not send your assignments to me as email attachments unless I request you to do so or

unless there is a compelling reason. You may send me an email announcing that you have submitted an assignment, but, if you follow the correct procedures, I will find it. I enjoy hearing from my students, but my Inbox fills up pretty quickly with attachments, and then I have to shift them over to the proper location.

American Denominations Bibliography

- Ahlstrom, Sydney E. *A Religious History of the American People*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972.
- Askew, Thomas A. and Richard V. Pierard. *The American Church Experience: A Concise History*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004.
- Blankman, Drew and Todd Augustine, eds. *Pocket Dictionary of North American Denominations*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Brumbaugh, Martin Grove. *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America*. 2d Edition. Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1907.
- Clark, Elmer T. *The Small Sects in America: An Authentic Study of Almost 300 Little-Known Religious Groups*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965.
- Good, Merle and Phyllis. *20 Most Asked Questions about the Amish and Mennonites*. Lancaster, PA: Good Books, 1979.
- Hamilton, Adam. *Christianity's Family Tree: What Other Christians Believe and Why*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.
- Handy, Robert Theodore. *A History of the Churches of the United States and Canada*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Hudson, Winthrop S. and John Corrigan. *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.
- Janzen, Rod. *The Prairie People: Forgotten Anabaptists*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999.
- Langton, Edward. *History of the Moravian Church: The Story of the First International Protestant Church*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956.
- Leith, John H., ed. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*. 3d ed. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982.
- Marty, Martin E. *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.
- Mead, Frank S., Samuel S. Hill and Craig D. Atwood. *Handbook of Denomination in the United States*. 12th edition. Nashville: Abingdon Press: 2005.
- Melton, J. Gordon, ed. *Nelson's Guide to Denominations: The Primary Resource for Understanding and Navigating America's Christian Organizations*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007.
- Nelson, E. Clifford. *Lutheranism in North America, 1914-1970*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1972.
- Noll, Mark A. *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1992.
- Noll, Mark A., Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, David F. Wells, and John D. Woodbridge,

eds. *Eerdman's Handbook to Christianity in America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1983.

Oden, Thomas C. *Turning Around the Mainline: How Renewal Movements are Changing the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.

Olmstead, Clifton E. *History of Religion in United States*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1960.

Piepkorn, Arthur Carl. *Profiles in Belief: The Religious Bodies of the United States and Canada*. 3 Volumes. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.

Sweet, William Warren. *The Story of Religion in America*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930. Enlarged Reprint, 1939.

Toews, Paul, ed. *Mennonites & Baptists: A Continuing Conversation*. Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1993.

Vandeman, George E. *What I Like About . . .* Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1986.

Wentz, Richard E. *American Religious Traditions: The Shaping of Religion in the United States*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.