From the founding of the “first American” city of Jamestown to the 1970s mass-suicide of the People’s Temple in Jonestown, this course will provide a thematic and chronological framework for understanding the diversity of Christianities in American history and culture. Christianity has been a dominant force in American history, and it has been a very diverse force. In America, it seems there is no one way to be Christian. During the course, we will investigate the powerful social, cultural, political, and intellectual role religion has played throughout our nation’s past.

Historically speaking, how one is Christian in the United States is closely related to one’s social status. Thus race, politics, and gender are key themes in this course.

This course will equip students with information to analyze arguments about religion in America’s past, present, and future.
**Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Map various themes, trends, texts, and people in American religious history across different time periods.

2. Assess how religion, colonialism, and identity have intersected in American history and culture.

3. Compare and critique how various Christian groups have related to one another and found their place in American culture.

4. Analyze and contextualize primary sources about American religious history and culture.

5. Identify the complex interactions between religious belief and practice and the rich historical, social, political, cultural, economic, and intellectual context in which religious people inhabit and live their religion.

**Student Responsibilities**

As a student enrolled in this course, you agree to do the following:

1) Complete assigned readings, in their entirety, on schedule. Read the “Lecture” posts every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in blackboard.

2) Complete your discussion posts on blackboard. And read the posts of others in your group.

3) Complete the essay exams, in a timely manner. I will allow extensions for in distressing cases of family emergencies and extreme illness. Otherwise late essay exams will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late, starting Saturdays at 5:01 pm. Consult the Turnitin Technology Policy for additional information.

4) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist students in their attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments. I am always available via email.
Requirements and Grading

1) Three Essay Exams: There will be **three essay exams**. Each exam will consist of short essay questions. These will be based off the readings and the “lecture” content. You will receive the questions on a Monday and the essay exams are due by 5:00 pm Saturday, Spokane time. Each exam is worth 100 points.

2) Participation: Sure, this class is online, but that doesn’t mean you won’t participate. We will use the discussion boards in our blackboard course site. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I will post a “Lecture” document which will include text and links to various media (either on the internet or in our blackboard site). It will conclude with questions for you, and you will respond to those questions in the **blackboard discussion forum**. You are required to do **2 posts per week** on 2 different days. One post will need to be original and another should be a response to a classmate’s post. (If you want to do a third, have at it. You won’t get extra points though.) You should be reading the posts of other discussants in your group and be in conversation with their posts. That does not mean copy them. Each post must be at least a paragraph in length (6-8 sentences). In total, your participation is worth 100 points. If you miss a week, you cannot go back and make up missed posts. I consider a week from 12:01 am Sunday to 11:59 pm Saturday, Spokane time.

Grading Breakdown:

- **A**: 372-400 points
- **A-**: 371-360 points
- **B+**: 359-344 points
- **B**: 343-332 points
- **B-**: 331-320 points
- **C+**: 303-292 points
- **C**: 291-280 points
- **D+**: 279-264 points
- **D**: 263-252 points
- **D-**: 251-240 points
- **F**: 239 points and below

A Note on Course Content:

This is a course in religious studies and not confessional in nature; that is, we are not here to promote a particular religious viewpoint or to debate religious “truth.” Rather, we will be engaging religious materials as anthropologists, historians, and sociologists to understand their meanings for the people who have produced and used them.
You may have your own religious commitment; if so, throughout this course you will likely encounter opinions and religious beliefs and activities with which you do not agree. This does not make them unworthy of your study, consideration, and respect. I ask you to imagine yourself in the shoes of someone else whose practices and beliefs may differ from your own and yet carry immense meaning and value for that person.

Furthermore, students will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way. Treat your peers and the subject material with respect.

Course Schedule

Even though we don’t physically meet together in a classroom, I’ve given us a course schedule. Material (videos, additional readings, etc.) will be posted to Blackboard in the “Lectures” section every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. This will be the “in-class” content that goes with the reading. Do the day’s assigned reading before consulting the “in-class” material.

**Week 1: Colonial Christianities**
- **Monday, June 27**: Introduction and Overview
  - Reading: Prologue and Introduction to *Color of Christ*
- **Wednesday, June 29**: Pluralism in the Colonial World
  - Reading: Chapter 1 in *Color of Christ*; and Chapters 1-4 in *Black Robe*
- **Friday, July 1**: Colonial New England
  - Reading: Chapter 2 in *Color of Christ*; and Chapters 5-7 in *Black Robe*

**Week 2: Creating American Christianities**
- **Monday, July 4**: Early American Republic
  - Reading: Finish *Black Robe*; and “Early American Republic” on blackboard
- **Wednesday, July 6**: Second Great Awakening
  - Reading: Chapter 3 in *Color of Christ*; and “Second Great Awakening” on blackboard
- **Friday, July 8**: Slavery and Slave Religion
  - Reading: Chapter 4 in *Color of Christ*; and “Slavery and Slave Religion” on blackboard

**Essay Exam 1 due to blackboard by 5pm Saturday**

**Week 3: Diverse Christianities**
- **Monday, July 11**: Antebellum Spiritual Hothouse, Take 1
  - Reading: Prologue and Chapters 1-2 in *Kingdom of Matthias*
- **Wednesday, July 13**: Antebellum Spiritual Hothouse, Take 2
  - Reading: Chapters 3-4 in *Kingdom of Matthias*
- **Friday, July 15**: Catholic Immigration and Anti-Catholicism
  - Reading: Epilogue of *Kingdom of Matthias*; and “Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism” on blackboard
**Week 4: Diverse Christianities**

Monday, July 18: Urban Reform and Nature  
Reading: Chapter 5 in *Color of Christ*

Wednesday, July 20: Christianity and Health  
Reading: “Christianity and Health” on blackboard

Friday, July 22: The Ghost Dance  
Reading: Chapter 6 in *Color of Christ*; and “Ghost Dance” on blackboard

**Essay Exam 2 due to blackboard by 5 pm Saturday**

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**Week 5: Modern Christianities**

Monday, July 25: American Christians and “Others”  
Reading: ; and “American Christians and ‘Others’” on blackboard

Wednesday, July 27: Christianity and Modernity  
Reading: Chapter 7 in *Color of Christ*; and  
“Christianity and Modernity” on blackboard

Friday, July 29: Cold War Christianity  
Reading: “Cold War Christianity” on blackboard

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**Week 6: Political Christianities**

Monday, August 1: Civil Rights Movement  
Reading: Chapter 8 in *Color of Christ*; and “Civil Rights Movement” on blackboard

Wednesday, August 3: 20th-century Utopias  
Reading: “20th-century Utopias” on blackboard

Friday, August 5: Rise of the Religious Right  
Reading: Chapter 9 in *Color of Christ*

**Essay Exam 3 due to blackboard by 5 pm Saturday**