This course introduces you to the entangled histories of religion and race in America. These two key concepts, religion and race, are not stable categories, but rather change, shift, and develop in light of historical and cultural contexts. This semester, we will track the dynamic relationship between the two from America’s colonial era to today. We will examine the role religion has played in the construction, deconstruction, and transgression of racial identities and boundaries.

Access to and use of religious and political power has greatly shaped how race has been conceived of in American history. In this course, we will look at how racial ideas and identities are formed, expanded, and re-made.

The concept of race itself formed in response to European interactions with newly “discovered” peoples and the desire to categorize the people of the world. In short, the construction of the concept of race was not neutral, nor was its deployment in world history. In this course, we will examine how religion and race work in the interactions and experiences of Africans, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Euro-Americans.

In this course, you will see the boundary between the secular and the religious will dissolve. Constructions of racial identities and the concept of race itself cannot be divorced from religion, especially in American history.

The Florida State University

This course is also part of the Liberal Studies Area IV (Humanities and Fine Arts). The Liberal Studies Program at Florida State University has been designed to provide a perspective on the qualities, accomplishments and aspirations of human beings, the past and present civilizations we have created, and the natural and technological world we inhabit. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for Liberal Studies Area IV, Humanities and Fine Arts, and in combination with your other Liberal Studies courses, provides an important foundation for your lifelong quest for knowledge.

Additionally, this course will help you further develop your reading and writing skills, your presentation skills, and your critical thinking skills.
Course Objectives

1. For students to learn about the history of religion and race in American culture.

2. Using primary and secondary sources, to investigate the dynamic interplay between religion, race, and politics in American history.

3. For you to understand the complex interactions between religious belief and practice and the rich historical, political, cultural, social, economic, and intellectual context in which religious people inhabit and live their religion.

4. For students to be able to critically read, historically contextualize, and interpret arguments about religious history and religious studies.

5. For you to enhance and develop your analytical and writing skills. A group project also helps you develop your presentation skills (something you will need in any job).

Course Texts


"The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line."
- W.E.B. DuBois

In addition to going to the campus bookstore, consider checking out Amazon.com, Half.com, or Abebooks.com for used copies of the texts. Additional readings will be uploaded to the Course Library on the Blackboard site.

Important Notes:

- I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. All violations of the FSU Academic Honor Code will be reported to the Dean.

- A hangover is not an excusable absence. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

- When tallying your final letter grade for the course, I will use the standard Florida State University grading scale. A: 93-100; A-: 90-92; B+: 88-89; B: 83-87; B-: 80-82; C+: 78-79; C: 73-77; C-: 70-72; D+: 68-69; D: 63-67; D-: 60-62; F: below 60
Course Requirements and Grading

1) Weekly Reflection Papers: Almost every week, you will write a one page (double-spaced) reflection and bring it to class. These reflection papers should be your thoughts about and reactions to your reading. The short paper can be engage one or more of the readings for that week. These will each be worth 50 points, and you will write 8 reflection papers in all. There are 11 due dates for reflection papers listed on the syllabus; you get to skip 3 of those.

2) Two Exams: There will be both a midterm and a final exam for this class. The exams will consist of two parts: an in-class and a take-home. You will receive a study guide 3 class periods before the exam (roughly a week and a half), that (in addition to being a study guide) will have an essay prompt. On the day of the exam, you will bring to class a hard copy of your 750 word essay responding to the prompt. The in-class portion will be identification and short answer. Each exam is worth 200 points apiece (100 for in-class, 100 for take-home).

3) Historical Turning Points Paper: This will be a 1000-1200 word paper in which you identify the three events, persons, or groups/communities that you think represent the main watershed moments or turning points in Blum and Harvey's The Color of Christ. For example, you could pick a pivotal moment in a historical player’s life or the creation of a new technology. For each of the events, persons, or groups you choose, explain how your selection illuminates a key moment in the narrative. To do so, be able to demonstrate how the narrative changes with that event, person, or group. This paper will be worth 200 points.

4) Group Curating Project: In groups of 4 or 5, you will construct an interactive presentation of race and religion in American history. Your presentation will be presented as a pitch to a museum to do an exhibit on the topic. Your exhibit plan will need some sort of narrative flow and clear organization. This can be done by focusing on particular themes (even just one theme). A powerpoint, including images and video clips, is encouraged for the presentation. More guidelines will be provided later in the semester. This project will be worth 200 points per person.

5) Class Participation: Being a 3000 level course, the success of the class relies in large part on you. The least boring and most effective way to learn is to participate fully in the process. Since you will spend time reflecting upon the readings in advance of class, you should come prepared to discuss the reading and the additional course material presented in class. This will be worth 200 points. Excused absences will not count against your participation grade.

10 Reflection Papers: 400 points
2 Exams: 400 points
Turning Points: 200 points
Curating Project: 200 points
Participation: 200 points

1400-1260 points: A range
1259-1120 points: B range
1119-980 points: C range
989-840 points: D range
839 and below: F

“A fully functional multiracial society cannot be achieved without a sense of history and open, honest dialogue.” - Cornel West
**Student Responsibilities**

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

1) **Come to class, on time, and stay for the entire meeting.** Make-up accommodations will only be offered for excused absences. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

2) **Complete assigned readings,** in their entirety, on schedule. You should complete assigned readings by the start of the class meeting.

3) **Contribute to class discussions.** You should come to class with questions and comments, prepared to participate in a lively discussion.

4) **Complete all assignments, in a timely manner.** I will allow extensions for in distressing cases of family emergencies and extreme illness. Otherwise late papers will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late, starting immediately after the deadline. In other words, if your paper is due at the beginning of class at 8am and you turn it in at to my office hours after class, you are already a day late. Mark deadlines and important dates in your calendar, iPhone, etc.

5) **Obey the FSU Honor Code.** Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic violations. The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “... be honest and truthful and ... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University” (Florida State University Academic Policy, found at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy.) The policy of the Department of Religion is that all violations of the FSU honor code, even first offenses, will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment and will be reported to the Office of the Dean of the Faculties. Additional sanctions may be imposed by FSU as part of the procedure for resolving academic honor allegations.

6) **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 hold weekly office hours and am available via email. Please contact me if you have questions about readings, lectures, or topics raised in class discussions.

**Course Policies**

Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in The Florida State University Bulletin and the Student Handbook. The Academic Honor System of Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community.

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy: Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should: 1. Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC). 2. Bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done within the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request for students requiring accommodations.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact: the Student Disability Resource Center at sdrcenter@admin.fsu.edu, (850) 644-9566 (voice); (850) 644-8504 (TDD), http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/
Course Policies
Lastly, this is a course in religion at a public, state institution. Thus, it is 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 scholars—as historians, anthropologists, and sociologists—in order 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. 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. If your personal religious commitment is causing you to have difficulties doing this, please feel free to discuss it with me privately.

Furthermore, students will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times, both in and out of the classroom. 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 and understanding.

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and subject to change with advance notice.

Course schedule

Important: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed.

Week 1: Course Introduction
Tuesday: Syllabus; Class Expectations
Thursday: Introduction to the Study of Religion
  Reading: “Religion, Religions Religious, ” by Jonathan Z. Smith and “Fetish” by Bruno Latour, both on blackboard

Week 2: Key Concepts: Race and Religion
Tuesday: Where does “race” come from?
  Reading: “Whiteness as Property,” by Cheryl I. Harris (The Harvard Law Review), on blackboard
Thursday: How do we study religion and race?
  Reading: “Prologue” and “Introduction” in Color of Christ; “Anchoring Religion in the World,” by David Chidester, on blackboard

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Week 3: Colonial Encounters
Tuesday: Native American Religions
  Reading: Chapters 1-6 in Black Robe, “Sublimis Deus” and “El Requerimiento” on blackboard
Thursday: Soldiers, Puritans, Fur Traders, and Priests in the New World
  Reading: Chapters 1-2 in Color of Christ

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Week 4: Age of Rebellions and Revolutions
Tuesday: Toussaint L’Ouverture, Metacom, and George Washington
  Reading: Black Robe, finish
Thursday: The New American Republic
  Reading: Chapters 3-4 in Color of Christ

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Curating Project: Groups selected

Week 5: Slavery and a War about Slavery
Tuesday: Slave Encounters with Protestantism
  Reading: “African-Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel” by Albert Raboteau and “Slave Narratives and Conjure” (excerpts from slave narrative primary sources); both on blackboard
Thursday: Slavery as a Theological Dilemma
  Reading: Chapter 5 in Color of Christ; and A Statement with Regard to the Moorish Prince, Abduhl Rahhahman, on blackboard

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Week 6: Whites and ... Other Whites ...
Tuesday: Immigration and Ethnicity
  Reading: Chapter 6 in Color of Christ

Midterm Study Guide Distributed
Thursday: Anti-Catholicism, Anti-Semitism, and Anti-Mormonism
  Reading: “The Rising Significance of Race” by Jackson Lears, on blackboard

Reflection Paper Due This Week
Important: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed.

Week 7: Chinatown and Midterm
Tuesday: 19th Century Buddhists in America
Reading: “Engaged Habits and Besotted Idolatry” by Laurie Maffly-Kipp, on blackboard

Thursday: Midterm
Reading: None. But, you should probably study and write your take-home essay.

Week 8: Case Study: Black Catholicism
Tuesday: “Minority Within a Minority”
Reading: “A Black Woman’s Letter to Pope Pius IX,” and excerpts from the American Catholic Tribune (black Catholic newspaper), on blackboard

Thursday: New Orleans and Nuns
Reading: None.

Curating Projects: Meetings with instructor to discuss group plan

Week 9: Pre-Civil Rights Racial Violence
Tuesday: Ghost Dances
Reading: “The Ghost Dance Religion” by James Mooney, on blackboard

Thursday: Reconstruction and Jim Crow Segregation
Reading: “The Southern Rite of Human Sacrifice,” by Donald Mathews, from the Journal of Southern Religion

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Week 10: Race and Conservatism
Tuesday: Beginning of Christian Fundamentalism
Reading: Chapter 7 in Color of Christ

Thursday: A Patriotic America
Reading: “Loaves and Fishes” by Dorothy Day and “The Philosophy of Communism” by Archbishop Fulton Sheen, both on blackboard

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Week 11: Black Muslims
Tuesday: The Moorish Science Temple
Reading: “The Rise of Black Ethnics” by Sylvester Johnson, on blackboard

Thursday: Nation of Islam
Reading: “Islamizing the Black Body,” by Edward Curtis, on blackboard

Reflection Paper Due This Week

Week 12: Civil Rights Crusades
Tuesday: God is Red and God is Black
Reading: “Black Theology in American Religion” by James Cone and excerpts from Vine Deloria’s God is Red; both on blackboard

Thursday: Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X
Reading: Chapter B in Color of Christ; and “Hajj Letter” and “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” both on blackboard

Reflection Paper Due This Week
Resources for Race and Religion in US History

The Malcolm X Project at Columbia University

The Gospel Music History Archive at the University of Southern California

Pew Forum, Religion and Race: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective

The Jesuit Relations, presented by Creighton University

Divining America Series, National Humanities Center; Essays by leading scholars on multiple themes, traditions, and communities

Archives of African American Music and Culture, Indiana University Image Collections Online

Civil Rights in Florida, Florida Memory

Pew Forum, Demographics on Race and Religion

African American Digital Collections, Library of Congress

BlackPast.org, online reference guide of African American history

University of North Carolina’s Documenting the American South