



# Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

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## CHS 620: HISTORY OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY II - BLOCK - SEMESTER II, 2010-2011

### ***Essential Information***

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available at [http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential\\_Information](http://support.nts.edu/index.php/Essential_Information). Additional technical support information can be found at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose and Master of Divinity Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

### ***Instructor Information***

Professor: Harold E Raser, PhD

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Office Hours: Monday and Thursday, 9:00 a.m.  
to 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or  
by appointment

### ***Catalog Description***

Examination of modern American Christianity in light of the significant issues, persons, and movements of the Civil War and post-Civil War period.

### ***Course Narrative & Rationale***

The purpose of this course is to expose students to the main person, ideas, movements and events that have shaped Christianity in North America (principally the United States) since the early 1800s.

Continuities and discontinuities between North American Christianity in this period and the broad stream of Christian history that precedes it are examined so that the distinctive nature of American Christian experience and practice (which arises in part from this time period) may be identified and evaluated.

In addition, the significant developments that began in the nineteenth century that have dramatically altered society and culture in the United States are carefully explored so that the continuities and discontinuities of “modern” and “post-modern” American Christianity with earlier form of American Christianity may be recognized and understood. A variety of primary and secondary sources for studying and understanding the history of Christianity in North America are introduced for reading, research, and reflection.

This course directly addresses the concern expressed in the goals and objectives of all NTS degree programs that students gain an understanding of the history of the Christian faith, and an understanding of the contemporary environment in which Christians live out their faith today.

### **Course Outcomes**

1. Students will learn the broad outlines of the story of Christianity in North America (mainly the United States) during this time period (demonstrated through examinations, critical reflection essays on assigned reading, contribution to class discussion, and semester research project).
2. Students will develop the ability to tell this story accurately and with critical insight into historical processes (demonstrated through examinations, critical reflection essays on assigned reading, contribution to class discussion, and semester research project).
3. Students will gain insight into the dynamic, ongoing interaction between Church and world, Christianity and culture which characterizes the life of the Church in history (demonstrated through examinations, critical reflection essays on assigned reading, contribution to class discussion, and semester research project).
4. Students will develop the ability to use the story as a resource for understanding the context and shape of contemporary Christian life in the United States (demonstrated through examinations, critical reflection essays on assigned reading, contribution to class discussion, and semester research project).
5. Students will acquire resources to enter into a critical and fruitful conversation with Christians from the past in order to be able to appropriate the historical heritage of the church as a resource for responsible and faithful Christian life and ministry in the present and future (foundations of this are demonstrated through all assigned work in the course; fruition of this can be demonstrated only in future ministry over time).

### **Required Texts & Course Materials**

1. *Religion in American Life: A Short History*, Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer (Oxford University Press, 2003).
2. *A Documentary History of Religion in America Since 1877*, Edwin S. Gaustad and Mark A. Noll, editors (Eerdmans, third edition, 2003).
3. *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, Donald W. Dayton (Hendrickson, 1988).
4. *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, Walter Rauschenbusch (Book Jungle, 2009).
5. *Christian America and the Kingdom of God*, Richard T. Hughes (University of Illinois Press, 2009).

### **Course Assignments & Requirements**

1. Regular attendance and consistent participation in class discussions and other learning activities. Students are expected to attend class regularly and be prepared to fully participate in class activities - especially scheduled class discussions of assigned reading (see the "Course Calendar" portion of the syllabus). Students that miss more than 20% of classes, or who are consistently poorly prepared for class discussion may have their final grade in the class significantly reduced. (Outcomes 1-5)
2. Completion of all assigned reading and submission of a written critical reflection essay approximately 1,000-1,250 words in length for each reading assignment (a total of 5 written critical reflection essays). (Outcomes 1-5)

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CRITICAL REFLECTION ESSAYS

Each of the critical reflection essays referred to above ought to be approximately 1,000 to 1,250 words in length. The essays should include a brief summary of the content of the reading, but their main purpose is not summarization. Their main purpose is to interact critically with the content of the assigned book (or books, articles, etc.). Expected content would include: noting the author or authors' thesis (or theses) concerning the material presented; highlighting the most important ideas, developments, or persons discussed in the book(s) and some indication why you consider these the most important; discussion of the *implications* of the information presented by the assigned material for understanding the history of Christianity in the United States; discussion of the *implications* of the information presented by the assigned material for understanding Christianity in the US *today*; discussion of your own personal reactions to the material presented in the assigned reading, questions it raises for you, and ways in which the material challenges, confirms, confuses - or generally affects your understanding of American Christianity.

Most reading assignments include reading in more than one text or source. Students should thus make an effort to interact to some extent with *each* of the sources assigned.

3. Completion of two written examinations. One will be given about mid-semester and the second will be given during final exam week at the end of the semester. These examinations will be largely essay in form and specific instructions concerning preparation for them will be given in class by the instructor after the beginning of the semester. (Outcomes 1-5)

4. Completion of a semester research project which may be chosen from the following two options:

A. A "critical essay" based on the reading of a substantial selection (or selections) from the published work of a person influential in the history of Christianity in North America during the time period covered by the course. This gives one an opportunity to **do concentrated research on one particular important person** - to explore their personal biography, to understand the ideas they embraced and propagated, and to assess their role in and impact upon American Christianity. Choice of the person and appropriate selections of their published work should be done in consultation with the professor. Representative work of the person chosen should be read carefully, together with appropriate secondary sources, and then reported on in an essay approximately 2500-3000 words in length. Part of the essay should be an exposition of the work (or works) read in your own words. Part of the essay should be a critical appraisal of the person's work. This section should consider such matters as: how the person and their work fit into the historical context to which they belong; the degree to which their work is (or is not) a competent and faithful expression of Christian truth; the most important ways the author and his/her ideas and work influenced Christianity in the United States; the relevance (if any) of this person and their work for today.

B. A research paper on some aspect of the history of Christianity in the United States in the period of the mid nineteenth-century to the present. **This gives one an opportunity to investigate a broad topic in some detail.** One might investigate: a particular event or the interrelationship between several historical events; a particular matter of doctrine or practice; the rise of a particular religious movement or group; the details of the development of a particular religious movement or denomination within a defined period of time; analyze some issue of contemporary church life or ministry in relation to the historical period covered by the course; etc. Choice of a suitable topic should be done in consultation with the professor. Research should be reported on in an essay approximately 2500-3000 words in length.

Either option should include a bibliography and should consistently follow one of the standard forms for theses and term papers. The most current Turabian style manual is always an excellent choice.

Please see the list of “Some Possible Topics for Term Projects” at the end of the syllabus for some thought starters for this assignment. (Outcomes 1-5)

### Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	38
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0
Reading	56
Writing	25
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	24
Exams & Quizzes	6
TOTAL	149

### Method for Submitting Assignments

All written assignments should be submitted on the course site on NTS Moodle. There is a clearly marked link for each of the class assignments where completed work may be posted, and accessed and evaluated by the instructor. **All critical reflection papers on the assigned reading are due by 1:00 p.m. Central Time of the day on which the assignment is due. The semester research project is due by 11:59 p.m. Central Time of the day on which this assignment is due.**

### Form and Style Expectations

There is no mandatory “style sheet” for this class. Students are, however, expected to *consistently* follow one of the standard forms for theses and term papers. The most current Turabian style manual is always an excellent choice.

### Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

### Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

As stated above, all critical reflection papers are to be submitted on the course site on NTS Moodle by no later than 1:00 p.m. Central time of the day on which the assignment is due. The semester research project is to be submitted on the course site on NTS Moodle no later than 11:59 p.m. Central Time of the day on which the assignment is due. Late work is reduced ½ letter grade for every three days (or portion thereof) overdue. **Missed exams may not be made up at another time unless arrangements are *made in advance* with the professor, and for an exceptionally urgent reason.**

### Course Grading

For all written work, the following criteria are employed in evaluation and grading: 1) “**A**” quality work - is superior in every way - writing is clear, essentially without error in syntax, grammar, spelling, word usage, etc. - content evidences very careful reflection, insight, and original thought; 2) “**B**” quality work - is above average - writing is generally clear, with few errors in syntax,

grammar, spelling, word usage, etc. - content evidences careful preparation and meets the minimum expectations of the assignment; 3) **“C” quality work** - average - writing is adequate, but may have errors - content is adequate - meets the minimum expectations of the assignment, but lacks insight and originality; 4) **“D” quality work** -- below average - writing is poor, marred with excessive errors - content evidences lack of insight or lack of understanding of the assigned material; 5) **“F” quality work** - failure to do satisfactory work - work evidences haste, lack of careful preparation, lack of basic understanding of the assigned material.

**FINAL GRADES IN THE COURSE WILL BE BASED ON THE FOLLOWING WEIGHTING OF ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. Regular attendance and consistent informed participation in class discussion and other learning activities **counts 15%** of the final grade.
2. The reading reports (5) together **count 40%** of the final grade.
3. The two exams together **count 25%** of the final grade.
4. The semester research project **counts 20%** of the final grade.

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies, which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

Date	Topic	Assignment
Feb. 1	I. The Inherited Tradition: the Shape of Christianity in Pre-Civil War 19 <sup>th</sup> Century America	
Feb. 8-15	II. The Churches, Minority Religions, Reform and Civil War (Tu, Feb. 15 - Discussion and Critical Reflection Essay #1 Due)	Text, 227-262 Documents (Moodle) Dayton, ALL
Feb. 22- Mar. 1	III. The Churches and the New Face of Post-Civil War America	Text, 263-278 Ga/Noll, 1-13, 35-52 168-76, 252-63, 278-84 Hughes, 1-30
Mar. 1-8	IV. The Great Transition: from Civil War to World Power	
	A. Intellectual Challenges to Christian Faith - And Some Responses (Tu, Mar 8 - Discussion and Critical Reflection Essay #2 Due)	Text, 279-309 Ga/Noll, 322-90 Hughes, 30-49

**MARCH 9-15 EXAM #1 AVAILABLE ON NTS MOODLE**

March 15-Apr. 5	B. The Churches and the Nation: Complacency, Conscience, and Critique (Tu, Apr. 5 - Discussion and Critical Reflection Essay #3 Due)	Text, 310-345 Ga/Noll, 87-141 Rauschenbusch, ALL
<b>MARCH 21-25</b>	<b>READING AND RESEARCH WEEK (NO CLASSES)</b>	
April 5-19	V. Christianity in “Modern America:” Pluralistic Society and the Churches’ Responses	
	A. Challenges to White Protestant Ascendancy	Text, 346-362 Ga/Noll, 391-418, 535-558 Hughes, 50-104
<b>FRIDAY, APRIL 15</b>	<b>TERM RESEARCH PROJECTS DUE</b>	
	B. Movements of Religious Protest and Re-Vitalization (Tu, April 19 - Discussion and Critical Reflection Essay #4 Due)	Text, 364-384 Ga/Noll, 142-67, 284-98, 419-26, Hughes, 105-135
April 26-May 3	C. The Age of Faltering Crusades, New Spiritual Quests, and Impinging Religious Worlds (Tu., May 3, Discussion and Critical Reflection Essay #5 Due)	Text, 385-459 Ga/Noll, 268-77, 303-21, 445-508, 559-95 Hughes, 136-186
<b>MAY 3-7</b>	<b>EXAM #2 AVAILABLE ON NTS MOODLE</b>	

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### ***POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS***

#### **A. Critical Essay**

- |                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Henry Ward Beecher         | 12. Dwight L. Moody      |
| 2. Antoinette Blackwell Brown | 13. H. Richard Niebuhr   |
| 3. William Newton Clarke      | 14. Reinhold Niebuhr     |
| 4. James Cone                 | 15. Charles Fox Parham   |
| 5. Dorothy Day                | 16. Norman Vincent Peale |
| 6. Mary Baker Eddy            | 17. Charles Taze Russell |
| 7. Harry Emerson Fosdick      | 18. Amanda Berry Smith   |
| 8. James Cardinal Gibbons     | 19. Reuben A. Torrey     |
| 9. Washington Gladden         | 20. Benjamin B. Warfield |
| 10. Martin Luther King, Jr.   | 21. Ellen G. White       |
| 11. J. Gresham Machen         | 22. Mary Daly            |

## **B. Research Papers**

1. Theological Assessments of the Civil War
2. Abraham Lincoln as a Religious Thinker
3. The New Shape of Revivalism in Post-Civil War America
4. The Churches and Urban America
5. The Impact of African-American Churches in Twentieth Century American Christianity.
6. The Theological Roots of American Protestant Liberalism
7. The Place of Roman Catholicism in the History of American Christianity
8. The Church of the Nazarene as a Twentieth Century American Religious Movement
9. Women and the Churches in Post-Civil War America
10. A Critical Assessment of the Social Gospel Movement
11. Cults, Sects, and New Religions: the Changing Face of Religion in Modern America
12. "Post-Christian America:" Fact or Fiction?
13. The American Churches and the Civil Rights Movement
14. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in the United States – an Appraisal