

CHRISTIANITY & DEMOCRACY
RELS 4700/6700, Fall 2008

Instructor: Vincent Lloyd
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Office Hours: 12-1.30, Mondays and Wednesdays, and by appointment

Overview:

We will examine the complex relationship between Christianity and democracy in theory and in practice. Is there a necessary link between Christianity and democracy? Do democratic values sometimes conflict with Christian commitments? Must religious commitments be set aside when citizens participate in democratic deliberation? Our investigation will begin by looking at the perspective offered by theorists and theologians and will proceed to two case studies. First, we will look at the civil rights movement, probing the role of Christians, Christian commitments, and Christian values. Second, we will turn our attention to South Africa. What role did Christianity have in the colonial encounter, what role did it play in the anti-apartheid movement, and what role does it play in contemporary South African politics? The course will conclude by examining one recent “political history” of religion and by exploring contemporary reconfigurations of the “Heavenly City” and the “Earthly City.”

Objectives:

By the end of the course the student should be able to:

- 1) Identify important theorists for the study of Christianity and political theory, describe the theories they advance, and offer critiques of those theories
- 2) Identify and evaluate a variety of strategies for writing the history of religion and politics.
- 3) Identify and discuss key issues regarding the relationship between Christianity and democracy

Grading:

25%: Reading Responses

By 11am Mondays, e-mail the instructor and classmates in your small group a 1-2 page reflection on the readings (please include it in the body of the e-mail or as a pdf attachment). You are welcome to be creative and/or informal, and to relate the readings to your own experiences, current events, other readings, etc., but be sure to explicitly engage with the assigned texts (citing specific passages or pages is encouraged). Don't worry if you are having trouble understanding the week's reading: focus on a few paragraphs, read them slowly and repeatedly, and explicate.

25%: Two 5pp Book Reviews (undergraduates) / In-Class Presentation (graduate students)

Undergraduates and graduate students will choose one book from the syllabus other than the four textbooks and will write a review that outlines the book's contents, puts the book in dialogue with other texts we are reading, and makes an argument. Due 9/17 and 10/22. Graduate students' in-class presentations will be on Wednesdays and will last 15-20mn. They should not explicate, they should argue. They should focus on the assigned readings but also make reference to supplementary texts.

50%: Final Take-Home Exam (undergraduates) / Final 16-20pp Paper (graduate students)

The take-home exam for undergraduates will consist of three questions, each requiring a 3-4pp response, distributed one week before the last day of class and due at noon one week later (12/10). Graduate student papers will also be due 12/10. There will be two paper-writing workshops held for graduate students.

Textbooks for Purchase:

- 1) John De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 25th Anniversary Edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005)
- 2) Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008)
- 3) Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. O. Burge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999)
- 4) James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage, 1992)

Recommended, Especially for Graduate Students:

(all are on reserve at the library)

- 5) Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)
- 6) William Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)
- 7) Davis Houck and David Dixon (eds.), *Rhetoric, Religion, and the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006)
- 8) James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 20th Anniversary Edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999)

Other Readings:

Are available through the GSU library's "e-reserves" (go to <http://www.library.gsu.edu/services/> and click on "Find Course Reserves" from the left column; the password is xmh8gz6nF). You must bring a paper copy of the readings to class during the relevant week.

Absences:

Note that *you* are responsible for finding out what happened in class when you were absent. If there was in-class participation activity, you may contact the instructor to be assigned an alternative activity. If you miss an examination due to illness or other extreme circumstances, contact the instructor as soon as (medically) possible. From the undergraduate catalog: "The resources of the university are provided for the intellectual growth and development of its students; it is expected that students should attend class regularly. Georgia State University institutional policy requires that professors report the absence of a veteran student as soon as it is known that the student will not be returning to class. Generally, this should be reported after one week of absences and no later than two weeks of nonattendance by a student."

Schedule:

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

→ indicates required readings; ►► indicates recommended supplementary readings

August 18, 20

Two Cities

→Augustine, *City of God* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 634-637

→John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” in *The Puritans in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 81-92

→Martin Luther King, Jr., “I See the Promised Land” in *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* ed. J. M. Washington (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1986), 279-286

▶▶ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*; Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State*; Leo Strauss, “Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections”; Jean Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics*; *Polygraph 19/20: Cities of Men, Cities of God*

August 25, 27

Two Bodies

→Ernest Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3-41

→James Baldwin, “Notes of a Native Son” in *Notes of a Native Son* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 85-114

▶▶ Shakespeare, *Richard II*; Baldwin, *Go Tell It On the Mountain*; Lawrie Balfour, *The Evidence of Things Not Said: James Baldwin and the Promise of American Democracy*; G. Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Oliver O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*

September 3

Political Theology

→Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 36-52

→William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 9-20; 112-122

▶▶ William Cavanaugh, “A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House”, *Modern Theology* 11:4 (1995), 397-420; Chantal Mouffe (ed.) *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*; Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*; Agamben, *State of Exception*; Davis et al., *Theology and the Political*

September 8, 10

The Democratic Tradition

→Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* 1-18; 92-117

→William Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 34-71; 264-281

▶▶ Hauerwas and Coles, *Christianity, Democracy, and the Radical Ordinary*; Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Sphere: Religion and Democracy in America*; Cornel West, *Democracy Matters*; Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*; John Dewey, *A Common Faith*; Patrick Deneen, *Democratic Faith*

September 15, 17

Christianity & Civil Rights I

→Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer*, 3-81

→Fannie Lou Hamer in *Rhetoric, Religion, and the Civil Rights Movement*, 784-793

►► Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876*; Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*; Rosetta Ross, *Witnessing and Testifying: Black Women, Religion, and Civil Rights*; Aldon Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement*; George Shulman, *Race and Redemption in American Political Culture*

Book Report #1 Due.

September 22, 24

Christianity & Civil Rights II

→Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer*, 82-151

→David Chappell, *A Stone of Hope: Prophetic Religion and the Death of Jim Crow*, 87-130

►► Paul Harvey, *Freedom's Coming*; Curtis Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion*; Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*; Richard Wood, *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America*

September 29, October 1

Christianity & Civil Rights III

→Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer*, 152-204

→James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 1-39

►► James Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power*; Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*; J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account*; Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*; Daniel Boyarin: *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*

October 6, 8

Christianity & Apartheid I

→John De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 1-100

→David Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia), 73-115

►► Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (volumes 1 and 2); Donald Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel, and Ulster*; Elphick and Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*

October 13, 15

Christianity & Apartheid II

→John De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 101-183

→Desmond Tutu, *Crying in the Wilderness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 3-11, 61-63

→Desmond Tutu, "Without Forgiveness There Really is No Future," in *No Future Without Forgiveness* 255-282

►► Cochrane, et al. (eds.), *Facing the Truth: South African Faith Communities & the TRC*; Adam Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa*; Clifton Crais, *The Politics of Evil: Magic, State Power, and the Political Imagination in South Africa*; Charles Wannamaker, "Right Wing Christianity and the Bible in South Africa"

October 20, 22

Christianity & Apartheid III

→John De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 184-260

→James Cochrane, "Religious Pluralism in Post-Colonial Public Life," *Journal of Church and State* 42.3 (2000), 443-465

▶▶ John De Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy: A Theology for a Just World Order*; Franklin Gamwell, *Politics as a Christian Vocation*; Kristine Deede Johnson, *Theology, Political Theory, and Pluralism: Beyond Tolerance and Difference*

Book Report #2 Due

October 27, 29

Political History of Religion I

→Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World*, Chapters 1-2

→Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in *Essays in Sociology*, 267-301

▶▶ Jose Casanova, *Public Religion in the Modern World*; Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*; Pippa Norris, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*; Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*

November 3, 5

Political History of Religion II

→Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World*, Chapters 3-4

→Charles Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002), 91-124

▶▶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*; Mark Lilla, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West*; Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular*; Hent de Vries, *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*

November 10, 12

Political History of Religion III

→Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World*, Chapter 5

→John Milbank, "On Complex Space" in *The Word Made Strange* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 268-292

▶▶ Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*; Catherine Pickstock, "Liturgy, Art, and Politics"; William Connolly, *Why I Am Not a Secularist*; John Milbank, "The Gift of Ruling: Secularization and Political Authority," *New Blackfriars* 85.996 (2004), 212-238; Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*

November 17, 19

The Rainbow Sign

→Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World*, Chapter 6

→Neibuhr Brothers' Debate on War and Peace in *The Christian Century* (1932)

▶▶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*; H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism*; H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*; Eugene McCarragher, *Christian Critics*; Stanley Hauerwas, *With the Grain of the Universe*, Chapters 4 and 5; John Milbank, "The Poverty of Niebuhrism" in *The Word Made Strange*

November 24

The Problem with Grace

→Film: Lars von Trier, *Manderlay*

→Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (selections)

▶▶ Clarence E. Hardy, *James Baldwin's God*; Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*; Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity*; Lars Von Trier, *Dogville*, *Dancer in the Dark*, *Breaking the Waves*; Vincent Lloyd, "Law, Grace, and Race"; Jeffrey Stout, "Race and Nation in Baldwin and Ellison" in *Democracy and Tradition*

December 1, 3

Three Cities?

→Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (selections)

→Gillian Rose, "Athens and Jerusalem: A Tale of Three Cities," *Social & Legal Studies* 3 (1994), 333-348

▶▶ Gillian Rose, *Mourning Becomes the Law*; Andrew Shanks, *Against Innocence: Gillian Rose's Reception and Gift of Faith*; Charles Mathewes, *A Theology of Public Life*; Charles Mathewes, *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition*; Eric Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love*