MEDIA AND RELIGION IN AMERICAN HISTORY

"The image—which is pagan and expressive of nature's sex and violence—was outlawed by Moses in favor of the word. That's where our troubles began."

— Camille Paglia

"Moses smartly chose the right communications strategy. . . . Just as writing is portable speech, Moses' God is a portable God, which is fitting for a people setting forth on a long journey."

— Neil Postman

THE COURSE

HON 322R • 2 cr. • Spring 2016

Prereq: Membership in the University Honors Program

2:10 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays • January 11 to April 29

Jischke Honors Building, Room 1155

Catalog description: "Interdisciplinary seminars on topics to be announced in advance. Offered on a satisfactory-fail basis only."

General education: U.S. Diversity

THE INSTRUCTOR

Andrew D. Pritchard, Ph.D., Esq.

Office hours: 9 to 11 a.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and 2 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays (213 Hamilton Hall)

Contact: The best way to communicate with me is to come to office hours. For simple questions, email to apritch@iastate.edu is best; my office phone is 515-294-8824. Please note that I check email only at prescheduled times, and I am not always available outside business hours.

If you wish, you may connect with me on LinkedIn. I will not respond to requests for contact via other social media, nor will I meet with you anywhere off campus.

THIS SYLLABUS

This syllabus sets the assignments, deadlines, and expectations for this course. Your continued participation in class indicates you have read it, understand it, and intend to abide by it, including points I do not highlight on the first day of class.

I welcome questions about any point in the syllabus — *before* it becomes a problem.

The syllabus is subject to change at any time. Any changes will be announced in class.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

All readings will be provided through Blackboard or email. An alphabetical list of readings is included at the end of the syllabus, in case you want to read more from these sources.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

This course is a discussion seminar, not a lecture course. Our purpose is not to memorize particular facts but rather to critically evaluate the interaction of religions and media throughout American history and apply our insights to contemporary life. There will be few lectures, if any. The quality of this class will depend on your thorough preparation, careful thought, insightful questions, and perceptive contributions to our discussion.

Lecture course	Discussion seminar
The semester plan is set from the first day.	The course evolves to meet the group's interests.
The instructor tells students what information to learn.	The instructor uses his or her knowledge to facilitate discussion.
Class depends on a structure to ensure all topics are covered.	Class depends on the preparation, enthusiasm, and maturity of its participants.
Students prepare assignments to submit to the instructor.	Students prepare insights and questions to submit to all other participants.
Students are graded on exams that show their acquisition of knowledge.	Students are graded on thoughtful participation and understanding the process of examining complex ideas.

Discussion leaders

Along with actively participating in discussion of the readings, the other assignment for this course will be to take your share of class periods joining me in leading and facilitating discussion. The number of students in the class will determine how many times you serve in this role, but you will have at least two class meetings to serve as discussion leader.

The job of the discussion leaders is not to give a presentation or summary of the readings. Rather, their job is to lead the seminar through an analysis of the readings, providing probing questions that lead to a deeper reading of the texts and a lively discussion.

Each discussion leader should bring to class:

❍ A one- to two-page summary of the most important ideas, historical events, or lines of argument presented in the readings.

❍ At least five substantive questions, observations, or discussion topics to lead other seminar participants to a deeper understanding of the readings.

Good discussion questions are open-ended (not yes-or-no), allow for numerous ways of constructing an answer, and lead to answers that provoke further questions. For example:

> ***Bad discussion question:*** Who was the first author to be considered a "best seller"? (The answer is Martin Luther, according to most media historians, and as soon as someone finds that sentence in the readings, the discussion is over.)

Acceptable discussion question: Why was Luther uncomfortable with how much money people were paying for his writings? (We'll have to analyze or synthesize information from the readings to get an answer.)

Fruitful discussion question: Was Luther right to worry that profit motive would diminish the quality or usefulness of media products? (Now we have to think! We'll need to extrapolate from the 16th-century media environment to others, and we'll have to debate how "quality" in media should be measured. We'll also have to consider alternatives to profit-driven media, including the drawbacks to limiting media production to people with income from other sources.)

Discussion leaders also will have responsibilities during class, beyond reading the questions they have prepared. These include:

❍ Posing follow-up questions or hypothetical examples to draw out the significance of what other seminar participants have said.

❍ Moderating disagreement among participants to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of differing positions. (Debate is good! But it takes careful discussion to learn something more than that we have different opinions.)

❍ Encouraging participation by students who have not said much that day.

Grades

This course is available pass-fail only. Satisfactory completion of the course will be based on fulfilling your role as discussion leader, submitting acceptable summaries and discussion questions, and consistently participating in discussion in a thoughtful and productive way that enhances everyone's learning. In keeping with Honors Program policy, more than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

CLASSROOM POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Preparation and attendance expected

According to ISU Policy 10.4.1, attendance in classes is expected. You are responsible to come to class prepared, having done the readings and thought about their application. A discussion seminar such as this will require considerably more time for readings than a lecture class based around a textbook.

Absences will be considered excusable if they occur because of military duty, mandatory court appearance, officially representing the university, severe illness, or extreme and unavoidable family emergency. You must request that an unforeseeable absence be excused within *72 hours* after it occurred.

More than two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the semester.

Phones, iPods, laptops, tablets, and other devices

Use of these devices is prohibited unless our discussion requires us to use them. Devoting attention to electronic devices instead of your peers and the conversation is rude and unproductive. It also is an unprofessional habit that will not serve you well in your career field.

Food and drink

Aside from light snacks, food is not permitted during class. Beverages must be in closed, spill-proof containers to minimize the risk of damaging the classroom.

Disruption of class

At all times, I expect you to join me in showing professionalism toward your colleagues in this class. Disagreement is terrific; disrespect is not. Candid and detailed critiques of your colleagues' work will be encouraged; denigrating them personally is prohibited and may result, after one warning, in action to suspend your enrollment in the class.

Any student whose language, behavior, or use of electronic devices distracts other students from the day's learning objectives or in any way interferes with the orderly functioning of the course may be warned once, then required to leave for the rest of the class meeting.

Repeated disruptions or any act in violation of the criminal law will result in action to expel the student from the course, with a failing grade for the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. This class will follow Iowa State University's policy on academic dishonesty. Anyone suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students Office. Resources about academic honesty are available at www.dso.iastate.edu/ja/academic/misconduct.html.

All work must be original

That means all coursework you submit must be:

❍ your original authorship, not anything you have copied, borrowed, purchased, stolen, or otherwise acquired (except, of course, properly acknowledged or cited material).

❍ original to this class, not papers or presentations you have used elsewhere.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students with disabilities

Iowa State University is committed to assuring that all educational activities are free from discrimination and harassment based on disability status. All students requesting accommodations are required to meet with staff in Student Disability Resources (SDR) to establish eligibility. A Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form will be provided to eligible students. The provision of reasonable accommodations in this course will be arranged after timely delivery of the SAAR form to the instructor. Students are encouraged to deliver completed SAAR forms as early in the semester as possible. Retroactive requests for accommodations will not be honored. SDR, a unit in the Dean of Students Office, is located in room 1076, Student Services Building or at www.dso.iastate.edu/dr. Contact SDR by at disabilityresources@iastate.edu or at 515-294-7220 for additional information.

Harassment and discrimination

Iowa State University strives to maintain our campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff, and students that is free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and harassment based upon race, ethnicity, sex (including sexual assault), pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or status as a U.S. veteran. Any student who has concerns about such behavior should contact his/her instructor, Student Assistance at 515-294-1020 or dso-sas@iastate.edu, or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance at 515-294-7612.

Religious accommodation

If an academic or work requirement conflicts with your religious practices and/or observances, you may request reasonable accommodations. Your request must be in writing, and your instructor or supervisor will review the request. You or your instructor may also seek assistance from the Dean of Students Office or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance.

Contact information

If you are experiencing, or have experienced, a problem with any of the above issues, email academicissues@iastate.edu.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Subject to announced changes

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
Jan. 13	Using media to learn and practice a religion	✢ Horsfield, "Media" ✢ Grimes, "Ritual and the Media"
Jan. 20	Religious and secular are one in the early American press (1630-1790)	✢ Williams, "Evangelism and the Genesis of Printing in America" ✢ Sloan, "The Origins of the American Newspaper" ✢ Copeland, "Religion and Colonial Newspapers"
Jan. 27	Interpreting media technologies as divine gifts for spreading religion	✢ Schultze, "Praising Technology: Evangelical Populism Embraces American Futurism" ✢ Underwood, "Foundations of Sand: Technology Worship and the Internet"
Feb. 3	Publishing on the frontier: Evangelism and community-building (1790-1890)	✢ Nord, "The Evangelical Origins of Mass Media in America, 1815-1835" ✢ Balik, "'Scattered as Christians Are in This Part of Our Country': Layfolk's Reading, Writing, and Religious Community in New England's Northern Frontier, 1780-1830" ✢ Huckins, "Religion and Western Newspapers, 1860-1990"
Feb. 10	Mainstream journalism turns religion into the "social gospel" (1830-1920)	✢ Tripp, "The Origins of the Black Press" ✢ Humphrey, "Religious Newspapers and Antebellum Reform" ✢ Underwood, "Muckraking the Nation's Conscience: Journalists and the Social Gospel"
Feb. 17	Religion, media, and public controversies	✢ Olasky, "Journalists and the Great Monkey Trial" ✢ Vinson and Guth, "'Misunderestimating' Religion in the 2004 Presidential Campaign" ✢ Lott, "Jesus Christ, Superstar: The Passion of the Press"
Feb. 24	Journalists and religion	✢ Hoover, "Approaches to Understanding" and "The Source of the Problem?" ✢ Silk, "Topoi in the News" ✢ Underwood, "'I Will Show You My Faith by What I Do': A Survey of the Religious Beliefs of Journalists and Journalists' Faith Put Into Action"
March 2	The religious press offers an alternative (1830 to present)	✢ Hatch, "The Sovereign Audience" ✢ Longinow, "The Foundations of Evangelical Publishing, 1900-1942" ✢ Waters, "Vibrant but Invisible: A Study of Contemporary Religious Periodicals"
March 9	Electronic media and the spiritual peril of images (1873 to present)	✢ Morgan, "Image" ✢ Lindvall, "The Brazen Serpent" ✢ Postman and Paglia, "Two Cultures — Television Versus Print"

March 23	Religions adopt recordings, radio, and television (1889, 1922, and 1947 to present)	✢ Schultze, "Converting to Consumerism: Evangelical Radio Embraces the Market" ✢ Rosenthal, "'Turn It Off!' TV Criticism in the *Christian Century* Magazine, 1946-1960" ✢ Romanowski, "Evangelicals and Popular Music: The Contemporary Christian Music Industry"
March 30	Religion as a mass-market commodity	✢ Thompson, "Consecrating Consumer Culture: Christmas Television Specials" ✢ Moore, "Spirituality That Sells: Religious Imagery in Magazine Advertising" ✢ Pritchard, Fudge, and Hu, "Rational Choice in Religious Advertising: American Religions Adapt to the Spiritual Marketplace"
April 6	Religion in the media of popular entertainment	✢ Knight, "Re-Mythologizing the Divine Feminine in *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Secret Life of Bees*" ✢ Hulsether, "Like a Sermon: Popular Religion in Madonna Videos" ✢ Dans, "Portraying Christians in Film"
April 13	The "electronic church" and individual religiosity (1995 to present)	✢ Peterson, "The Internet and Christian and Muslim Communities" ✢ Bowler and Reagan, "Bigger, Better, Louder: The Prosperity Gospel's Impact on Contemporary Christian Worship" ✢ Campbell, "Religion and the Internet: A Microcosm for Studying Internet Trends and Implications"
April 20	Depicting non-Christian, non-Western, and "fringe" religions	✢ Whitfield, "The Jewish Contribution to American Journalism" ✢ Iwamura, "The Oriental Monk in American Popular Culture" ✢ Neal, "'They're Freaks!' The Cult Stereotype in Fictional Television Shows, 1958-2008" ✢ Powell, "Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism Since 9/11"
April 27	Individuals and institutions: The battles to control religious symbols	✢ Hoover, "Audiences" ✢ Loomis, "Spiritual Students and Secular Media" ✢ Schultze, "Praising Democracy: Embracing Religion in a Mass-Mediated Society"

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF COURSE READINGS

Shelby M. Balik, "'Scattered as Christians Are in This Part of Our Country': Layfolk's Reading, Writing, and Religious Community in New England's Northern Frontier, 1780-1830," *The New England Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (December 2010): 607-640.

Kate Bowler and Wen Reagan, "Bigger, Louder, Better: The Prosperity Gospel's Impact on Contemporary Christian Worship," *Religion and American Culture* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 186-230.

Heidi A. Campbell, "Religion and the Internet: A Microcosm for Studying Internet Trends and Implications," *New Media and Society* 15, no. 5 (August 2013): 680-694.

David Copeland, "Religion and Colonial Newspapers," in William David Sloan, ed., *Media and Religion in American History* (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2000), 54-67.

Peter E. Dans, "Portraying Christians in Film," in *Christians in the Movies: A Century of Saints and Sinners* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 1-14.

Ronald L. Grimes, "Ritual and the Media," in Stewart M. Hoover and Lynn Schofield Clark, eds., *Practicing Religion in the Age of the Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 219-234.

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_____, "Audiences," in David Morgan, ed., *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 31-43.

_____, "The Source of the Problem?" in *Religion in the News: Faith and Journalism in American Public Discourse* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998), 52-66.

Peter Horsfield, "Media," in David Morgan, ed., *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 111-122.

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Carol Sue Humphrey, "Religious Newspapers and Antebellum Reform," in William David Sloan, ed., *Media and Religion in American History* (Northport, AL: Vision Press, 2000), 104-118.

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Kenneth D. Loomis, "Spiritual Students and Secular Media," *Journal of Media and Religion* 3, no. 3 (2004): 151-164.

Jeremy Lott, "Jesus Christ, Superstar: The Passion of the Press," in Paul Marshall, Lela Gilbert, and Roberta Green Ahmanson, eds., *Blind Spot: When Journalists Don't Get Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 129-142.

Rick Clifton Moore, "Spirituality That Sells: Religious Imagery in Magazine Advertising," *Advertising and Society Review* 6, no. 1 (2005).

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