

AMERICAN DENOMINATIONS - HIST 6335

INTERNET

FALL 2015

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Seminary Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to provide quality theological education for students in the discipline of theological and historical studies. Lessons learned from the past inform the present and provide guidance for the future.

Core Value Focus, and Curriculum Competencies Addressed

The core value focus we will emphasize this semester is **mission focus**. The course will specifically address the following curriculum competencies:

Theological and Historical Heritage – comprehensive overview of the formation and development of Christian denominations in America

Disciple Making – use the people from our past to model Christ-like behavior

Servant Leadership – use the people from our past to model servant leadership

Spiritual and Character Formation – model Christian character in relating to those in the Christian family with whom we disagree

Biblical Exposition – demonstrate the biblical foundation for each denomination

Worship Leadership – examine the variety of worship styles and practices used by American Christians

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the various Christian denominations existing in the United States. The history, polity and theology of each denominational family (Lutheran, Methodist, etc.) will be studied. Current denominational trends and future viability will be discussed.

Student Learning Outcomes

In order to understand and interpret Christian theological heritage for the church, students, by the end of the course, should:

1. Be able to apply their knowledge and understanding of the distinctive characteristics of different Christian denominations in America to the process of interpreting Christian theological heritage for the church.

2. Value the ideas, individuals, movements, and institutions that form denominational diversity in America.
3. Be able, with the help of resources, to accomplish the following:
 - Practice the historical method and historiography in order to interpret American Christian heritage for the local church.
 - Distinguish between different polity structures.
 - Articulate and defend the varying denominations' positions on specific theological issues.
 - Place individuals, movements, and ideas in their proper context in American Christian history.

Web-Based Learning

Web-based courses are, by nature, a different kind of learning experience than courses taught in the traditional classroom. Because of this structure, this web-based course is more reading and writing intensive than traditional classroom courses. Rigorous study of the deep things of God can be a rewarding experience for anyone who participates in it, but it also calls for extra diligence and integrity in completing the work. This reality does not mean that a web-based course cannot be successful in equipping you, the student, for effective, God-honoring ministry. It simply means utilizing a different strategy. Internet courses allow room for independent learners to thrive—to work at a responsible pace, to engage in student-led discussions, and to take ownership of the learning of course content. Note that your instructors are praying for your success.

Required Texts

[R] Rhodes, Ron. *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations*. Updated and expanded. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2015.

[H] Hamilton, Adam. *Christianity's Family Tree: What Other Christians Believe and Why*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.

Recommended:

Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark. *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. Second Edition, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Mead, Frank S., Samuel S. Hill and Craig D. Atwood. *Handbook of Denomination in the United States*. 12th edition. Nashville: Abingdon Press: 2005.

House, H. Wayne. *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Oden, Thomas C. *Turning Around the Mainline: How Renewal Movements are Changing the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Requirements

A. Book Review: Each student will write a review of either *The Churching of America, 1776-2005* or *Turning Around the Mainline*. Books will be assigned after the first week of class. The review will be written as though for an academic magazine or journal. It should:

- 1) include bibliographical information (see above),
- 2) identify each book's main thesis or purpose,
- 3) give a brief summary of the contents,
- 4) include an evaluation of the work's strengths and weaknesses,
- 5) compare and contrast the texts with each other.

All quotations and direct references to sections in the book should be indicated by page numbers within parentheses. Citations or paraphrases from other sources should be noted and documented using either footnotes or endnotes. Reviews should be 2-3 pages in length, single-spaced.

Due September 14.

B. Worksheets: Students will complete fifteen (15) worksheets, each worth 10 points. One worksheet will cover each of the denominational families (except Fundamentalists/Bible). The worksheet consists of two (2) parts. The first part is a general description of the denominational family's beliefs, structure and worship style. The second part provides detailed information on the three (3) largest groups within the denominational family. See the sample worksheet to use as a guide. Submit the worksheets in the appropriate unit in the Assignment area.

Worksheets may be submitted early, but must be completed before 11.59 pm (Central Standard Time) on the date below. All due dates are **Mondays**.

Unit 1 - September 21

Unit 2 - October 19

Unit 3 - November 16

Unit 4 - December 14

C. Discussions: There will be four discussions. Three will be graded, each worth 15 points. Each student will participate in four (4) threaded discussions. During the time the unit containing the interactive discussion required, you will enter the discussion at least three times: once near the beginning of the unit and twice toward the end as you respond to your classmates' comments (see above for unit completion dates). Your initial comments express your opinion on the topic. You must then respond to **at least** two (2) people, but **not more** than five (5) in any one discussion. This means that for each discussion you will have a minimum of 3 entries and a maximum of 6 entries. Each posting should be about a paragraph in length.

There must be **at least** two days time span between your initial comments and your response to your classmates. Be sure to plan accordingly so that you leave enough time to respond before the end of the unit. Failure to do so will affect your grade.

You will be graded on your contributions to the discussion **and** on your interaction with what other students have said. It is **EXTREMELY** important that students remember to use courtesy when critiquing the ideas of their fellow students. Speak truth, but only in love and let your conversations be characterized by grace. The first interactive discussion will not be graded. This

will allow you to become familiar with the program. The others are worth 15 points each. The graded discussions will be on the following topics:

Unit 1 (not graded): Please describe yourself. Please include your educational background (where you went to school, major), current degree plan, desire for future ministry, and information about your family (married/children/unique experience growing up, etc.). Include only information that you feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Unit 2 (graded): What are the advantages and disadvantages of the three different polity styles?

Unit 3 (graded): Is it appropriate to fellowship with pastors and congregations of other denominations (e.g. community Thanksgiving service, pulpit exchanges, ministerial alliance)? Why or why not?

Unit 4 (graded): What is the future of denominations in the US? Include a consideration of mainline and evangelical components within denominations.

D. Worship Service Evaluation: Each student will attend two (2) worship services from a polity tradition different from his/her own. The student will write a 2-3 page single-spaced description of the service. This will include a detailed order of worship; the activities and participation of the worshipers (active participants or passive observers); and the student's impressions of the service. What elements drew you into worship? What elements distracted you? Each evaluation is worth 30 points. The first evaluation is due **October 26** and the second one is due **December 7**. Submit your evaluations in the Worship Evaluation folder in the Assignment area.

D. Research Paper: Each student will write a paper describing the historical development of a denominational family within the United States that is different from the one of which you are a part (e.g. a Baptist cannot write about Baptists). Post the subject of your paper in the "Research Paper" area in Blackboard. Duplication of topics will not be allowed and topics will be available on a first come/first served basis. The instructor will assign topics if one has not been chosen by **September 14**. Since fundamentalism encompasses multiple denominations, it will not be one of the options. Your report should be 12-15 pages in length. You will also prepare a flow chart timeline of your denomination's development. Include mergers and splits. See example. All written reports **must** have a title page, table of contents, bibliography, footnotes or endnotes, be double spaced, and follow Turabian, sixth edition, for style. However, **do not** use chapters to separate sections of your paper (chapters require a new page for each new chapter and the project is not long enough to justify this). Use section headings instead. Projects will be graded on clear organization, spelling, and grammar as well as content. **Due November 23.**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

History	20 points
Summary of Doctrine	20 points
Denominational structure/organization	20 points
Ministry and missions focus	20 points
Timeline	10 points
Form/Grammar	10 points

Late Work

- A. **Worksheets:** No late worksheets will be accepted.
- B. **Interactive Discussions:** Failure to adequately participate in the threaded discussions and to do so in a timely manner will affect the amount of points awarded.
- C. **Book Review and Research Paper:** A late review or paper will be assessed an initial **10 point penalty**. For each calendar day after the due date an **additional 10 point penalty** will be assessed.
- D. **Plagiarism:** New Orleans Baptist Seminary maintains high academic standards and is not tolerant of plagiarism. If you copy another author's work and present it as your own, you will be caught, and the penalty could be failure on that assignment or the course or expulsion from the Seminary.

Submission of Assignments

- A. **Worksheets and Worship Evaluations** should be submitted the Assignments area. Your work **must** be posted as a .pdf document. [WordPerfect can save a document in .pdf and you can download a program from the [Software Downloads to be used in NOBTS Blackboard Courses](#) link that will work for MS Word documents (MS Works is not acceptable)]. Posting your paper in .pdf format preserves your margins and spacing. Failure to post your paper in a .pdf format will result in a **5 point penalty**.
- B. **Discussion Threads** will be conducted on Blackboard. Go to the Discussion Board to add your threads. Click on a thread to respond to it.
- C. **Research Papers** should be posted in the appropriate area in Groups. Attach your paper by clicking on the Browse button and finding the copy of your paper. Remember to click Submit or the paper will not post properly. This allows the rest of the class to read your paper and learn from your research. I want you all to be able to benefit from the others' research and writing. Your paper **must** be posted as a .pdf document. Posting your paper in .pdf format preserves your margins and spacing. Failure to post your paper in a .pdf format will result in a **5 point penalty**.

Please do not send your assignments to me as email attachments unless I request you to do so or unless there is a compelling reason. You may send me an email announcing that you have submitted an assignment, but, if you follow the correct procedures, I will find it. I enjoy hearing from my students, but my Inbox fills up pretty quickly with attachments, and then I have to shift them over to the proper location.

Possible Points & Grading Scale:

<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>	
Book Review:	40 pts	A = 367-395 pts.
Discussions (3 x 15):	45 pts	B = 336-366 pts.
Worship Evaluations (2 x 30):	60 pts.	C = 304-335 pts.
Worksheets (15 x 10):	150 pts.	D = 276-303 pts.
<u>Project:</u>	<u>100 pts.</u>	F = 275- ↓ pts.
	395 pts.	

Reading Schedule

[R] Rhodes, Ron. *The Complete Guide to Christian Denominations*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2005.

[H] Hamilton, Adam. *Christianity's Family Tree: What Other Christians Believe and Why*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007.

Unit	Due Date	Subject	Reading
[1]	September 21	Eastern Orthodox	R: 7-20; 291-310 H: 11-30
		Roman Catholic	R: 95-113 H: 31-42
		Lutheran	R: 211-37 H: 43-58
		Reformed/Presbyterian	R: 341-76 H: 59-70
[2]	October 19	Mennonite/Anabaptist	R: 237-63
		Episcopal	R: 137-156 H: 71-80
		Congregational	R: 127-36
		Baptist	R: 35-70 H: 81-94
[3]	November 16	Friends (Quakers)	R: 157-170
		Brethren	R: 71-94
		Methodist	R: 263-90 H: 111-130
		Holiness	R: 193-210
[4]	December 14	Christian	R: 113-26
		Adventist	R: 21-34
		Pentecostal	R: 311-40 H: 95-110
		Fundamentalist/Bible	R: 171-92

American Denominations Bibliography

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- Blankman, Drew and Todd Augustine, eds. *Pocket Dictionary of North American Denominations*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- Brumbaugh, Martin Grove. *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America*. 2d Edition. Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1907.
- Clark, Elmer T. *The Small Sects in America: An Authentic Study of Almost 300 Little-Known Religious Groups*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965.
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- Hudson, Winthrop S. and John Corrigan. *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1998.
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- Nelson, E. Clifford. *Lutheranism in North America, 1914-1970*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1972.
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- Noll, Mark A., Nathan O. Hatch, George M. Marsden, David F. Wells, and John D. Woodbridge, eds. *Eerdmans's Handbook to Christianity in America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1983.
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- Olmstead, Clifton E. *History of Religion in United States*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1960.
- Piepkorn, Arthur Carl. *Profiles in Belief: The Religious Bodies of the United States and Canada*. 3 Volumes. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978.
- Sweet, William Warren. *The Story of Religion in America*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930. Enlarged Reprint, 1939.
- Toews, Paul, ed. *Mennonites & Baptists: A Continuing Conversation*. Hillsboro, KS: Kindred Press, 1993.
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