

# **History of Religion and Society in Urban America**

**Spring 2008**

## **Chicago Semester**

Instructor: Cynthia P. Stewart

Meeting Time: Friday, 10:15am to 12:15pm (a little longer during field trips)

Room: Chicago Semester, Calder Room

Email: [cynthias@chicagosemester.org](mailto:cynthias@chicagosemester.org)

Phone: (773) 844-8398 (cell); 773 821-9213 (home – no calls after 9pm);

Office Phone/Hours: (312) 922-3243 x20 - Please call or email me to schedule an appointment.  
You are always welcome to stop by my office!

**For persons with Disabilities:** Chicago Semester will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Student can alert us in the “Additional Information” portion of the Application Form prior to their coming, or they can notify the Director privately, if necessary. Students should also alert their instructor(s) during the first two weeks of class, so that accommodations can be made. For further assistance, contact Cynthia Stewart

### **Course Description:**

This seminar will examine the role of religious institutions and how they engage social problems in urban America. We'll focus on the 20<sup>th</sup> century to present and consider a range of issues from race, class, gender, etc. We'll use Chicago as the religious history hub. The seminar includes lectures, discussions, field trips, congregational visits, as well as reading and writing assignments.

### **Course Objectives:**

At the completion of this course, students should be able:

1. To articulate the social responsibility of urban religious institutions and their role in social change.
2. To critically examine texts which strengthen sociological, theoretical, and practical understandings of urban religious context
3. To facilitate conversations with urban practitioners and their contexts that will enhance practical wisdom in urban religion
4. To practice field research skills through site visits, data gathering, situational analysis, reflection, discovery of more generalized principles, and discussion of real cases
5. To reflect critically on religious institutions in an ever-changing urban environment

### **Evaluation:**

There will be several assignments including:

1. Class Participation – church visits, discussions, attendance (20%)
2. A (5) page paper from List A, with (15 min.) oral presentation (10%)
3. A (5) page paper from List B, with (15 min.) oral presentation (10%)
4. (5) Reflection papers on site visit (30%)
5. A (10) page final paper (30%)

### **Class Attendance and Discussion**

Half of the class will have an experiential dimension to it. These are important for this particular class and will include visits to churches, and conversations with guest speakers. I expect everyone to be in class every week (except in genuine crises, of course). The instructor must be notified in advance for any excused absences. Students are expected to attend the full class period and be present physically, mentally and spiritually. Habitual lateness will affect your grade. Any class assignments missed by an unexcused absence will be recorded as zero. Because this course only meets once a week, if you have more than two unexcused classes, you will fail the course. (No warning will be given.)

It is expected that all students will actively participate in the class discussions. Classroom presentations and discussions are based on the assumption that the student has completed the assigned reading and any assignments due that day.

### **Required Texts:**

Kniss, Fred, Numrich, Paul, Sacred Assemblies and Civic Engagement, How Religion Matters for America's Newest Immigrants, (Rutgers University Press, 2007)

Lowell Livezey, Public Religion and Urban Transformation: Faith in the City (Religion, Race, and Ethnicity), (NYU Press, 2000).

Daniel L. Pals, Eight Theories of Religion, (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Selected Essays from: The Encyclopedia of Chicago

Essays and/or articles to be handed out during the course of the term and others TBD by instructor or guests.

### **Recommended Books:**

James K. Wellman, The Gold Coast Church and the Ghetto: Christ and Culture in Mainline Protestantism, (University of Illinois Press, 1999).

Patel, Eboo, Acts of Faith, The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation, (Beacon Press, 2007)

### **Papers and Projects**

**Papers and projects are due on the date listed in the syllabus at the beginning of the class session.** They are to be emailed as Word document attachments to [cynthias@chicagosemester.org](mailto:cynthias@chicagosemester.org). All papers and projects are considered late after the class session has begun and 5% of the total points will be automatically subtracted from the student's grade. All papers are to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Correct grammar and spelling is essential! Students are responsible to keep copies of all papers turned in, whether on disk or hard copy, until the final course grade is received.

Plagiarism is academic theft and unacceptable. It is also grounds for failure! Plagiarism is not just copying words straight from the encyclopedia, journal article, or book. Plagiarism can take many forms:

- Having someone else write your paper for you.
- Getting too much help on a paper.
- Copying someone else's words, syntax, or phrasing.
- Passing of another person (a published author, your roommate, an actor on TV, etc. – any other person's thoughts or ideas as your own.
- Failing to document the source – not only of words taken verbatim from another source – but also of another person's thoughts and ideas.
- Failing to document your own work that you used for another assignment.
- Turning in an assignment that you wrote for another class.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur when you do not understand the assignment, do not understand research methodology, or do not have an argument of your own. If that is the case – do not risk your academic career or your own ethos or credibility by plagiarizing or handing in less than honest work. Instead, come see me. Tell me what your difficulty is with and I can help you. That is my job!

### **Writing Assignments**

- **Group A Assignment** – First half of students will write a (5) page paper on a summary of a book of their choice from list A, which will be reported orally to the class. Early in the course, we will agree on which text each of you will choose. **Due March 28th**

- **Group B Assignment** – Second half of student will write a (5) page paper on a summary of a book of their choice from list B, which will be reported orally to the class. Early in the course, we will agree on which text each of you will choose. **Due April 25th**
- **Reflective Paper Assignment** – Each student will write a (3) page reflection paper on each site visit. You will write what struck you the most, as well as the social issues that the site visited is providing ministry. The paper is due one week after the site visit. **See below for dates.**
- **Final Paper** – Each student will write a (10) page paper on a Chicago religious leader; religious institution/organization; or historical 20<sup>th</sup> Century religious movement. The topic must be cleared with the instructor midway through the semester. **Due April 30 for Aquinas graduating Seniors, May 6 for Cornerstone and Northwestern graduating seniors and May 9 for remaining students.**

## Class Itinerary

- 2/4 Introduction to Course and a Sacred Space walking tour of downtown church architecture: St. Peter’s; Loop Synagogue; The First United Methodist Church – The Chicago Temple; and Seventeenth Church of Christ Scientist – **Read Pals, Eight Theories, Chapters 4-8**
- 2/15 Perspective on Religion and Social Justice – **Read: Livezey, Public Religion, Chapter 3: “Place, Race and History: Social Mission of Downtown Churches”**
- 2/22 Visit to Fourth Presbyterian Church, [www.fourthchurch.org](http://www.fourthchurch.org)
- 2/29 Class Discussion: Church visit and reading. **Reflection paper due (Fourth Presbyterian Church) – Students choose book from Reading List. Reading: Kniss, Sacred Assemblies, Chapters 1, 4, 5**
- 3/7 Visit to Chicago Sinai Congregation, Leave CS @9:30am, [www.chicagosinai.org](http://www.chicagosinai.org)  
**Reading: Kniss, Sacred Assemblies, Chapters 10, 11**
- 3/14 Guest Speaker: Dr. Fred Kniss, Loyola University, “Religion and Immigration in Chicago” Read: TBA, **Reflection Paper due (Chicago Sinai Congregation)**
- 3/21 No Class – Easter Break ----- **HAPPY EASTER**
- 3/28 Class Presentation from **Book List A**
- 4/4 Panel Discussion – “Religious Diversity in Chicago”- **Reading to be assigned**
- 4/11 The Black Church Lecture - **Reading to be assigned**

- 4/13 **(Sun)** Church visit to St. Sabina 11:15am Service – [www.saintsabina.org](http://www.saintsabina.org)
- 4/18 Visit to Pacific Garden Mission, - [www.pgm.org](http://www.pgm.org) **Reading to be assigned  
Reflection Paper Due (St. Sabina)**
- 4/25 Class Presentation from **Book List B, Reading to be assigned  
Reflection Paper Due (Pacific Garden Mission)**
- 4/27 **(Sun)** Visit to Buddhist Temple of Chicago, [www.budtempchi.org](http://www.budtempchi.org)
- 4/30 **(Wed)** Final Papers due for **Seniors only** – Aquinas, Hope and Judson ONLY! –  
**Reflection Paper Due (Buddhist Temple of Chicago)**
- 5/2 No Class – Reading, Research and Writing Final Paper Day
- 5/6 **(Tue)** Final Papers due for **Seniors only** – Central, Cornerstone, Dordt, & Northwestern  
ONLY
- 5/9 Final Day of Class – **Final Papers due** for the remainder of the class

**Note: Syllabus is subject to change due to presenter or site visit conflict.**

**History of Religion and Society in Urban America**

**Spring, 2008**

**Book List Sign-Up Sheet**

**March 28, 2008**

**Title of Book, Author**

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |

**April 25, 2008**

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |

