

CULTS, COMMUNES & UTOPIAS IN EARLY AMERICA

RELG 375, Spring Semester 2013
Course Meeting Times: Wednesdays, 4:30–7:10 P.M.
Location: Weinstein Hall, Room 303
Instructor: Douglas Winiarski
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Office Hours: by appointment

Overview

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, the United States witnessed the emergence of a startling array of sectarian and utopian religious experiments. From isolated spiritual seekers and charismatic prophets, to large communities with well-organized spiritual and social hierarchies, all of these new religious movements stood outside the mainstream of American religious life, and yet their unusual beliefs and practices continue to attract the attention of contemporary historians. This advanced seminar surveys what one prominent scholar has called America's "sectarian heyday." Seminar participants will examine the eccentricities of the traveling Vermont Pilgrims, gender relations in Jemima Wilkinson's New Jerusalem, Native American prophetic movements, the visionary world of early Mormonism, socialist experiments at the North American Phalanx, and Charles Brockden Brown's classic gothic novel of murder and religious insanity, *Wieland*. The seminar concludes with a research project involving Boatwright Library's extensive microfilm collection of Shaker manuscripts.

WGSS Credit

Students enrolling in RELG 375 to satisfy requirements for their WGSS major should meet with me during the first week of the semester in order to discuss opportunities for tailoring the course materials to meet their specific academic goals.

BlackBoard

Please note that the information on this paper version of the RELG 375 syllabus is also available on the course BlackBoard website. For the rest of the semester, BlackBoard will serve as the official clearinghouse for all course-related information and resources, including announcements, grade reports, email communications, paper assignments, handouts, slide show presentations, and links to course-related websites. To access this material, look for the link in the upper left corner of the UR homepage (<http://oncampus.richmond.edu>). Please be sure to familiarize

yourself with our BlackBoard website at the beginning of the semester. Contact me immediately if you encounter any difficulties with the login screen.

Course Procedures & Requirements

Although this course has no prerequisites and assumes no prior knowledge of the subject, it nonetheless is an advanced seminar. The reading load is heavy and the research and writing assignments are challenging. I expect that you will spend an average of eight to ten hours per week preparing for each of our weekly seminar sessions. Class attendance is mandatory. I will evaluate the quality of your participation in our discussions after each class using the following scale: 5 (multiple informed/insightful comments), 3 (moderate contributions), 1 (minimal participation), and 0 (absent). Since we meet only once each week, missing even a single class will adversely impact your overall participation grade.

Final grades for the semester will be calculated as follows:

Class Attendance and Informed Participation	35%
Research Assignments (4)	20%
Research Presentation	10%
Research Paper (12 pages)	35%

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase in the campus bookstore, or from major internet distributors such as Barnes & Noble or Amazon. Readings on the schedule of assignments are keyed to author's last name.

1. Brown, Charles Brockden. *Wieland and Memoirs of Carwin the Biloquist*, ed. Jay Fliegelman. New York: Penguin, 1991. ISBN # 0140390790.
2. Hatch, Nathan O. *The Democratization of American Christianity*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989. ISBN #0300050607.
3. Stein, Stephen J. *Communities of Dissent: A History of Alternative Religions in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN #9780195158250.
4. Stein, Stephen J. *The Shaker Experience in America: A History of the United Society of Believers*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. ISBN #0300059337.

In addition, we will be reading scholarly articles and other documents that are available on BlackBoard. You will need to download and print copies of these essays and bring them with you to class.

Disability Accommodations

Students with disabilities for whom accommodations have been formally granted by a University of Richmond Disability Advisor must present a copy of their "Disability Accommodation

Notice” to each professor within the first week of the academic term. Accommodations must be negotiated in advance for each scheduled course assignment. Students should consult with me at least one week prior to any scheduled deadline.

Cell Phones & Laptops

While in class, please disable all cell phones, Blackberries, and other communication devices. In addition, I ask that all students refrain from using iPads and laptop computers, which may create distractions that will disrupt the flow of our discussions.

Grade Scale

Final grades will be assigned based on the following grade scale: A+ (98–100); A (93–97); A– (91–92); B+ (88–90); B (83–87); B– (81–82); C+ (78–80); C (73–77); C– (71–72); D+ (68–70); D (63–67); D– (61–62); F (60 and below).

Class Schedule

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| January 16 | Introduction to the Seminar/Jonestown |
| January 23 | The Sectarian Tradition in American Religious History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stein, <i>Communities of Dissent</i>, pp. ix–146. ▪ Winiarski, ed., “Vermont Pilgrims,” pp. 1–28 (BlackBoard). |
| January 30 | Religion in the Early Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hatch, <i>Democratization of American Christianity</i>, pp. 3–122, 162–189. ▪ Winiarski, ed., “Interview with the Jerkers,” pp. 1–7 (BlackBoard). |
| February 6 | Gender Trouble in Jemima Wilkinson’s New Jerusalem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wilkinson, “Memorandum,” pp. 1–2 (Handout). ▪ Early Reports of the Publick Universal Friend (BlackBoard). ▪ Juster, “Neither male nor female,” pp. 357–379 (BlackBoard). ▪ Brekus, “Women in the Wilderness,” pp. 80–97 (BlackBoard). |
| February 13 | <i>Wieland</i> I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brown, <i>Wieland</i>, pp. 3–105. |

RA #1 (READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING) DUE IN CLASS.

February 20

Wieland II

- Brown, *Wieland*, pp. 106–278.
- “Yates and Beadle Family Murders” (Handout).

February 25

Evening Lecture Event: Witchcraft in Early America

- Richard Godbeer (Department of History, University of Miami) will present a public lecture entitled “‘Your wife will be your biggest accuser’: Reinforcing Codes of Manhood at New England Witch Trials.”
- Location & Time: International Center Commons, Carole Weinstein International Center, 5:30–6:30 P.M.

February 27

Joseph Smith & the Origins of Mormonism

- Watch the first episode of the PBS documentary *The Mormons*, streaming online at <http://www.pbs.org/mormons/>.
- Review Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, pp. 113–122.
- Jessee, “Early Accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision,” pp. 275–294 (Reserve Readings).

Read two of the following essays:

- Bushman, “Visionary World of Joseph Smith,” pp. 183–204 (BlackBoard).
- Givens, “This Great Modern Abomination,” pp. 73–96 (BlackBoard).
- Harper, “Infallible Proofs, Both Human and Divine,” pp. 99–118 (BlackBoard).
- Taylor, “Early Republic’s Supernatural Economy,” pp. 6–34 (BlackBoard).

RA #2 (ANALYZING ARTICLE STRUCTURE) DUE IN CLASS.

March 6

Women in Utopia

- Pitzer, “Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes,” pp. 159–180 (BlackBoard).
- Kolmerton, “Women’s Experiences in the American Owenite Communities,” pp. 38–51 (BlackBoard).
- Clark, “Mother and Her Daughters at the Northampton Community,” pp. 592–621 (BlackBoard).
- Dublin, ed., *Farm to Factory*, pp. 121–153 (BlackBoard).

March 13

Spring Break (No Class)

March 20 Origins of the Shakers/WRHS Orientation

- Stein, *Shaker Experience in America*, pp. 1–38.
- Early Reports of Ann Lee & the Shakers (BlackBoard).

March 27 Western Shakerism & Shaker Theology

- Stein, *Shaker Experience in America*, pp. 40–118.
- Stein, ed., “Candid Statement of Our Principles,” pp. 503–519 (BlackBoard).
- Edmunds, “Thin Red Line,” pp. 2–19 (BlackBoard).
- Speech of the Trout (Class Handout).

RA #3 (SCHOLARS AND THEIR SOURCES) DUE IN CLASS.

April 3 Shakers & the Shawnee Prophet (No Class)

- Andrews, ed., “Shaker Mission to the Shawnee Indians,” pp. 113–128 (BlackBoard).
- Tanner, *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*, pp. 98–99 (Class Handout).

RA #4 (NEEDLES AND HAYSTACKS) SUBMIT BEFORE 4:30 P.M. ON FRIDAY, APRIL 5.

April 10 Mother Ann’s Work at Pleasant Hill

- Stein, *Shaker Experience in America*, 119–237.
- Winiarski, ed. “Mother Ann’s Work at Pleasant Hill,” pp. 1–12 (BlackBoard).

April 17 Research Week #1**April 24 Research Week #2/Student Presentations****BlackBoard Bibliography**

Andrews, Edward Deming, ed. “The Shaker Mission to the Shawnee Indians.” *Winterthur Portfolio* 7 (1971): 113–128.

Bushman, Richard L. “The Visionary World of Joseph Smith.” *BYU Studies* 37 (1997–1998): 183–204.

Brekus, Catherine. A. “Women in the Wilderness: Female Religious Leadership in the Age of Revolution.” In *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740–1845*, pp. 68–113. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Clark, Christopher. “A Mother and Her Daughters at the Northampton Community: New Evidence on Women in Utopia.” *New England Quarterly* 75 (2002): 592–621.

Dublin, Thomas, ed. *Farm to Factory: Women’s Letters, 1830–1860*, 2nd ed., pp. 121–153. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

- Edmunds, R. David. "The Thin Red Line: Tecumseh, the Prophet, and Shawnee Resistance." *Timeline* 4:6 (December 1987–January 1988): 2–19.
- Givens, Teryl. "This Great Modern Abomination." In *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy*, pp. 73–96. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Harper, Steven C. "Infallible Proofs, Both Human and Divine: The Persuasiveness of Mormonism for Early Converts." *Religion & American Culture* 10 (2000): 99–118.
- Jessee, Dean C., ed. "The Early Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision." *BYU Studies* 9 (1969): 275–294.
- Juster, Susan. "'Neither male nor female': Jemima Wilkinson and the Politics of Gender in Post-Revolutionary America." In *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George, pp. 357–379. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Kolmerton, Carol A. "Women's Experiences in the American Owenite Communities." In *Women in Spiritual and Communitarian Society in the United States*, ed. Wendy E. Chmielewski, Louis J. Kern, and Marlyn Klee-Hartzell, pp. 38–51. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1993.
- Pitzer, Donald E. "Brook Farm and the Fourierist Phalanxes: Immediatism, Gradualism, and American Utopian Socialism." In *America's Communal Utopias*, ed. Pitzer, pp. 159–180. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Stein, Stephen J., ed. "'A Candid Statement of Our Principles': Early Shaker Theology in the West." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (1989): 503–519.
- Taylor, Alan. "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780–1830." *American Quarterly* 38 (1986): 6–34.
- Wilkinson, Jemima. "A Memorandum on the introduction of that fatal fever." Jemima Wilkinson Papers, microfilm, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "An Interview with the Jerkers." Unpublished ms., 2000.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "Mother Ann's Work at Pleasant Hill: The Career of Sarah Pool, Spirit Medium." Unpublished ms., 2007.
- Winiarski, Douglas L., ed. "The Vermont Pilgrims: A New Religious Sect in Nineteenth-Century America." Unpublished ms., 2000.