

# Syllabus for American Church History (CH 605)

Front Range Bible Institute  
(Spring 2016)

## Course Description

The course “American Church History” is a study of the church in America from the time of British colonization until the mid-nineteenth century, with special attention given to the roots and varieties of American evangelicalism. The course will have classroom lectures that are primarily based upon the professor’s notes. Students are encouraged to participate by asking and answering questions and taking notes. Notes will be provided, but the student is encouraged to make additions based upon classroom discussions.

The course will include outside reading, quizzes and exams from the classroom lectures, and a research paper. The paper is a very important tool for the student to gain first-hand acquaintance with and evaluation of American church history. The paper will be aimed at taking the classroom learning and transferring it into a useable student tool for practical ministry purposes.

## Course Objectives:

- To give the student a working knowledge of the major figures and the theologies of the various forms of Christianity in early America
- To equip the student to better understand the current ecclesiastical landscape in America by understanding its roots in the colonial and founding eras.
- To sharpen the student’s ability to utilize Scripture accurately by observing the way early Americans applied the Bible to their context
- To inspire the student to be grateful for our Christian heritage
- To alert students to the particular historical strengths and weaknesses of American evangelicalism
- To deepen the student’s appreciation for how Christ builds his church

## Required Course Materials

- Reading materials
  - Professor’s notes
  - *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* by Mark A. Noll, Eerdmans (244 pages, intro through chapter 9) – **Required reading**
  - *A Documentary History of Religion in America to the Civil War* by Edwin S. Gaustad, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Eerdmans (339 pages through chapter 5.1) – **Required reading**
- Computer
  - All work submitted electronically should be in Microsoft Word documents (.doc).

## Course Requirements

- Attendance at all classes
  - Take notes and participate in class discussion.

- If you know in advance that you will miss a class, please notify the professor ahead of time to obtain an excused absence.
- It may be possible to listen to missed lectures via mp3 recordings.
- **Reading – Due June 14**
  - Certificate level – 500 pages from reading materials list
  - B.B.S. – 600 pages from reading materials list
  - M.B.S. – 900 pages from reading materials list
  - M.Div. – 900 pages from reading materials list
- **Quizzes/Examinations**
  - All students will take periodic quizzes over the material covered in class. These will be unannounced and at the discretion of the professor.
  - There will one mid-term exam and one final exam.
- **Research paper – Due June 7**
  - All students will complete a paper of original historical research on a topic of the student's choosing.
  - The professor must approve the topic.
  - Paper requirements
    - Certificate level – 5 page (double spaced)
    - B.B.S. – 10 page (double spaced)
    - M.B.S. – 20 page (double spaced)
    - M.Div. – 20 page (double spaced)

#### Course Grading Criteria

- 10% Attendance and participation
- 30% Reading
- 30% Quizzes/Examinations
- 30% Paper

#### Course Schedule

Date:	Requirements and Lecture Topic:
Apr 5	Introduction to course English and European Background Anglicanism in Virginia
Apr 12	Pilgrims Puritans in New England
Apr 19	New England Puritans (continued)
Apr 26	Deadline for paper topic selected and approved Minority Groups in New England Christianity in the Middle and Southern Colonies

May 3	Mid-term exam The Great Awakening
May 10	The Revolutionary Era and Separation of Church and State
May 17	Unitarians and Rational Religion
May 24	The Second Great Awakening
May 31	Methodists and Baptists
June 7	Papers due Explosion of Democratic Religion
June 14	Final Examination Reading Reports Due

#### SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

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*Bay Psalm Book*.

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Coke, Thomas, and Francis Asbury. *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America*.

Mather, Cotton. *Magnalia Christi Americana: or the Ecclesiastical History of New-England*.

*The Cambridge Platform* (1648). Available at  
[http://www.americanphilosophy.net/cambridge\\_platform.htm](http://www.americanphilosophy.net/cambridge_platform.htm).

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Winthrop, John. *A Model of Christian Charity*.

### General Histories of America Relating to This Period

Bailyn, Bernard. *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600-1675*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

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Morgan, Edmund S., ed. *Not Your Usual Founding Father: Selected Readings from Benjamin Franklin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.

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Wood, Gordon S. *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

#### Religious and Church History in the Colonial Era

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[www.pilgrimhallmuseum.org](http://www.pilgrimhallmuseum.org)

[www.prdl.org](http://www.prdl.org) – The Post-Reformation Digital Library provides links to the writings of several colonial writers.

The Evans Early American Imprint Collection of the University of Michigan -  
<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/>