READINGS IN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY TO 1860

G. K. Chesterton called the United States a “nation with the soul of a church.” Perhaps at the end of this course we will understand what he meant.

Readings

Each week everyone will read the core assignment. Students are responsible for obtaining the core readings by hook or by crook. Beginning in the second week, each person will select their own secondary reading. Generally, you will be free to choose the work that most interests you, but some “volunteers” may be sacrificed to ensure coverage across the topics.

All core readings have been placed on two-hour reserve at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library for the semester. Secondary readings are not reserved. Most monographs and journals can be found in the Library’s collection [WHS]; if there is no indication, assume WHS. Other journals can be found at Memorial Library. An increasing number of journals and, for that matter, books, are available online. You can find electronically accessible journals and books in the online catalog. Hard copies of items not in WHS can be found elsewhere on campus [indicated as C = College Library, Helen C. White Hall; CLC = in my possession; E = Ethnic Studies Collection, Helen C. White Hall; Eb = Ebling Library, Health Sciences Learning Center; G = Geography Library, Science Hall; I = Internet via MadCat; L = Law School Library, Law School; M = Memorial Library; RR = Reading Room, Wisconsin Historical Society Library; UGR = 1191 Collection, Helen C. White Hall]. I have tried to identify the location of all items, but, ultimately, finding them is your responsibility.

Written Assignments

You will write three papers, 7-8 pages, typed, double-spaced. You must choose one of the first two paper options, and one of the second two. Everyone must write the final essay. You need advert only to course readings but may include any relevant materials. If you wish to write on a different topic, please discuss your proposal with me.

Paper 1, Option 1: Due Monday, October 2 - Explain what, if anything, Protestantism contributed to laying the foundations of the American national state.

Paper 1, Option 2: Due Monday, October 23 - Analyze the extent of religious toleration that may have existed in revolutionary-era America.

Paper 2, Option 1: Due Monday, November 13 - Evaluate evangelicalism’s role in the Anglo-American public sphere in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Paper 2, Option 2: Due Monday, November 27 - Assess to what degree, if any, the notion of “religious pluralism” might extend to include cultural and racial as well as denominational and ecclesiastical categories.

Final Paper: Due Monday, December 18 - Explain the relationship between religion and the political culture in the mid-nineteenth-century United States.
Paper Format


Rewrite Policy

You may rewrite either or both of the first two assigned papers (time constraints prohibit rewriting the final one), but only after talking with me about such details as the new due date and the kinds of changes to be made. You must inform me of your decision to rewrite a paper by the Friday following the class session at which I first return the original version. You will ordinarily receive one week to rewrite, but I will be flexible about negotiating extensions for good cause. The old draft (plus any separate sheet of comments) must accompany the new version. Rewriting cannot lower your grade (nor can changing your mind about handing in a revised paper), but it does not by itself guarantee a higher one; you must substantially rework the essay, following my comments and initiating your own improvements too.

Grading

Simplicity itself. The papers and class discussion each count 25%.

Incompletes

The Gendzel Protocol governs the assigning of Incompletes: in fairness to those students who turn their work in on time, I will not grant an Incomplete for reasons other than Acts of God or other extraordinary disasters (covered in the “Proclamation,” p. 17 infra). You may have an Incomplete without penalty only in such cases; in all other instances, an Incomplete carries a grade penalty of ½-step.

Academic Conduct Statement

I expect you to conform to the highest standards of academic integrity and conduct; for the University’s policy on such matters, see http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/. For help in understanding what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the Writing Center’s site, http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html.

Disability Statement

This course is set up include persons with disabilities. Please let me know if you need accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments to enable your full participation. I will attempt to maintain confidentiality of the information you share with me.

I. INTRODUCTION

SEPT. 6 - ONE EMPIRE UNDER GOD

Core reading: Carla Gardina Pestana, Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World
SEPT. 13 - BIBLE V. CHRISTENDOM

Core reading: Mark Noll, *In the Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492-1783*

Secondary Reading:

Overview

Alec Ryrie, “‘Protestantism’ as a Historical Category,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 26 (2016), 59-77 [I]

The Bible in Politics and Culture

James P. Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution*, 45-72
Paul D. Hanson, *A Political History of the Bible in America*, 31-60 [I]
Daniel L. Dreisbach, “The Bible and the Political Culture of the American Founding,” in Daniel L. Dreisbach and Mark David Hall, eds., *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic*, 144-73

Hermeneutics and Authority

Lisa M. Gordis, *Opening Scripture: Bible Reading and Interpretive Authority in Puritan New England*, 145-86
David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America*, 17-46
J. Michael Lee, *The Erosion of Biblical Certainty: Battles over Authority and Interpretation in America*, 25-51
Eran Shalev, *American Zion: The Old Testament as a Political Text from the Revolution to the Civil War*, 15-49

Religion and Print Culture

**SEPT. 20 - FREE MARKET, FREE CONSCIENCE**

**Core reading:** Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America*

**Secondary reading:**

**Overviews**


**Churches and States**


Derek Davis, *Religion and the Continental Congress*, 151-73


James H. Hutson, *Church and State in America: The First Two Centuries*, 47-93 [WHS, C]


Monica Najar, *Evangelizing the South: A Social History of Church and State in Early America*, 115-36


**Establishment and Disestablishment**


Steven K. Green, *The Second Disestablishment: Church and State in Nineteenth-Century America*, 53-77


**Religious Markets**


II. NEW ENGLAND WAYS

SEPT. 27 - THE PUBLIC SQUARE ON THE HILL

Core reading: David D. Hall, A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England

Secondary Reading:

Overviews

Puritanism and Civil Authority

Stephen Baskerville, Not Peace but a Sword: The Political Theology of the English Revolution, 96-130 [M]
Carla Pestana, The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution 1640-1661, 123-56
Richard J. Ross, “Puritan Godly Discipline in Comparative Perspective: Legal Pluralism and the Sources of ‘Intensity’,” American Historical Review 113 (2008), 975-1002
Michael Winship, Godly Republicanism: Puritans, Pilgrims, and a City on a Hill, 183-205
John Witte, Jr., The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism, 277-320

Puritanism, Church Discipline and Ecclesiastical Authority

Theodore Dwight Bozeman, To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism, 120-50
Francis Bremer, Lay Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism, 69-86
James Cooper, Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts, 23-45
Richard Gildrie, The Profane, the Civil, & the Godly: The Reformation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679-1749, 133-56
J. S. Maloy, The Colonial American Origins of Modern Democratic Thought, 86-113
Timothy L. Wood, Agents of Wrath, Sowers of Discord: Authority and Dissent in Puritan Massachusetts, 1630-1655, 87-110
David A. Weir, Early New England: A Covenanted Society, 172-90
OCT. 4 - PROTESTANT SAINT

Core reading: Catherine Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in North America*

Secondary Reading:

**African Americans**


James F. Cooper, Jr., “Cuffee’s ‘Relation’: a Faithful Slave Speaks Through the Project for the Preservation of Congregational Church Records,” *New England Quarterly* 86 (2013), 293-310


**Evangelicalism**


**Religion and Economic Activity**


Benjamin L. Carp, “Fix’d almost amongst Strangers”: Charleston’s Quaker Merchants and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism,” *William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser.*, 74 (2017), 77-108

Katherine Carté Engle, *Religion and Profit: Moravians in Early America*, 95-134

Michael Hoberman, “‘Under Their Captivity & Dispersion’” [Jewish merchants in colonial Boston], *Early American Studies, An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 10 (2012), 600-29

Frank Lambert, *Pedlar in Divinity*: *George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals*, 52-94


**Women and Religious Experience**

Leslie J. Lindenauer, *Piety and Power: Gender and Religious Culture in the American Colonies, 1630-1700*, 21-42

Janet Moore Lindman, *Bodies of Belief: Baptist Community in Early America*, 156-78


Bryce Traister, *Female Piety and the Invention of American Puritanism*, 1-28


III. PLURALISM AND TOLERATION

OCT. 11 - WITHIN ONE, MANY


Secondary reading:

Overviews


The Development of Religious Toleration


Pluralism and Religious Rivalry


Paul Harvey, *Bounds of Their Habitation: Race and Religion in American History*, 11-42 [C]


Religious Liberty and Toleration in Early Modern Atlantic World


Andrew R. Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America*, 209-43

Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe*, 333-60 [C]


OCT. 18 - CATHOLICS CAN TOO BE AMERICANS

Core reading: Maura Jane Farrelly, Papist Patriots: The Making of an American Catholic Identity

Secondary reading:

Anti-Catholicism


The Catholic Church and the Republic

Patrick W. Carey, People, Priests and Prelates: Ecclesiastical Democracy and the Tensions of Trusteeism, 154-89
Emily Clark Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society, 1727-1834, 225-57
John Gjerde, Catholicism and the Shaping on Nineteenth-Century America, 61-95
John T. McGreevey, Catholicism and American Freedom, 19-42

Catholicism in Anglo-America

Carol N. Abromaitis, “Catholicism in Maryland in the Seventeenth Century,” Recusant History, 29, 3 (2009), 355-364
Robert Emmett Curran, Papist Devils: Catholics in British America, 1574-1783, 246-74 [WHS, I]
Jerome De Groot, English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century, 169-208 [I]
Antoinette Sutto, Loyal Protestants and Dangerous Papists: Maryland and the Politics of Religion in the English Atlantic, 1630-1690, 159-74 [I]
T. J. Tomlin, A Divinity for All Persuasions: Almanacs and Early American Religious Life, 127-39
IV. RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE REPUBLIC

Oct. 25 - AN AMERICAN (THEOLOGICAL) TRAGEDY

Core Reading: Mark A. Noll, America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln

Secondary reading:

Edwards, Edwardsianism and the New Divinity

Joseph Conforti, Jonathan Edwards, Religious Tradition, & American Culture, 62-86
George M. Marsden, Jonathan Edwards: A Life, 459-71

Evangelicalism

Randall Balmer, The Making of Evangelicalism: From Revivalism to Politics and Beyond, 9-26
Donald Matthews, Religion in the Old South, 81-135
George A. Rawlyk, The Canada Fire: Radical Evangelicalism in British North America, 1775-1812, 102-23
W. R. Ward, The Protestant Evangelical Awakening, 296-355 [M]

Religion, Democracy and Republicanism

Dustin Gish and Daniel Klinghard, “The Mutual Influence of Biblical Religion and Enlightenment Reason at the American Founding,” in idem, Resistance to Tyrants, Obedience to God: Reason, Religion, and Republicanism at the American Founding, 1-17
Sandra M. Gustafson, “Between Cicero and Augustine: Religion and Republicanism in the Americas and Beyond,” in Stephanie Kirk and Sarah Rivett, eds., Religious Transformations in the Early Modern Americas, 252-64
Nathan O. Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity, 17-46
Benjamin Lynerd, Republican Theology: The Civil Religion of American Evangelicals, 101-28
Ellis Sandoz, Republicanism, Religion, and the Soul of America, 1-52 [I]

Theology and Theologians

Paul Conkin, The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America, 210-49
Bruce Kuklick, Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey, 66-79
David F. Holland, Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America, 89-126
Peter Thuesen, Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine, 100-35
NOV. 1 - DOUBTING THOMASES

Core Reading: Eric Schlereth, *Age of Infidels: The Politics of Religious Controversy in the Early United States*

Secondary reading:

**Evangelicals, Deists and Prophets**

Susan Juster, *Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution*, 57-95
Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, 239-93

**Religion and Politics**

Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation*, 147-75
Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America*, 252-77
Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy*, 84-120

**Skepticism, Atheism, and Secularism**

John Lardas Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America*, 1-47
James Turner, *Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America*, 73-113
V. RELIGION AND RACE

NOV. 8 - WHOSE GREAT SPIRIT?

Core Reading: Linford D. Fisher, *The Indian Great Awakening: Religion and the Shaping of Native Cultures in Early America*

Secondary reading:

Missions

James Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 131-78
Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*, 27-68
Laura M. Chmielewski, *The Spice of Popery: Converging Christianities on an Early American Frontier*, 211-42
Nicholas P. Cushner, *Why Have You Come Here?: The Jesuits and the First Evangelization of Native America*, 149-69
Kathryn N. Gray, *John Eliot and the Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay*, 89-120

Native Beliefs and Christianity

Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*, 111-24
Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*, 189-236
Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters*, 1492-1800, 106-42
David J. Silverman, *Red Brethren: The Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians and the Problem of Race in Early America*, 30-69
NOV. 15 - THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK

Core Reading: Plantation Church: How African American Religion Was Born in Caribbean Slavery

Secondary reading:

African American Religion

Allen Dwight Callahan, The Talking Book, 1-20
Valerie C. Cooper, Word, like Fire: Maria Stewart, the Bible, and the Rights of African Americans, 91-110 [WHS, M, I]
Daniel L. Fountain, Slavery, Civil War and Salvation: African American Slaves and Christianity, 1830-1870, 68-92
Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South, 185-236
Ann Taves, Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James, 76-117

Black Churches

Dee E. Andrews, The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture, 123-54
Julius Bailey, Down in the Valley: An Introduction to African American Religious History, 53-86
Janet Duitsman Cornelius, Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South, 69-102
John Ernest, A Nation Within a Nation: Organizing African-American Communities before the Civil War, 53-81 [I]
J. Gordon Melton, A Will to Choose: The Origins of African American Methodism, 35-62
Richard S. Newman, Freedom’s Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers, 158-83
Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South, 151-210

Atlantic Contexts

Ennis Barrington Edmonds, Caribbean Religious History: An Introduction, 65-92 [CLC]
Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830, 149-81
Travis Glasson, Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World, 75-110
Michael A. Gomez, Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South, 244-90
Sylvester A. Johnson, African American Religions, 1500-2000: Colonialism, Democracy, and Freedom, 107-56
Margarite Fernández Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, Creole Religions of the Caribbean: An Introduction from Vodou and Santería to Obeah and Espiritismo, 2nd ed., 155-82 [M]
Jon F. Sensbach, Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World, 69-100
**NOV. 22 - SAVING THE WORLD**

**Core Reading:** Emily Conroy-Kurtz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic*

**Secondary reading:**

**Backgrounds**


Katherine Carté Engel, “The SPCK and the American Revolution: The Limits of International Protestantism,” *Church History*, 81 (2012), 77-103

**Imperialism and Colonialism**


**Missionaries Abroad**


**Religious Others**


Derek Chang, *Citizens of a Christian Nation: Evangelical Missions and the Problem of Race in the Nineteenth Century*, 1-14

Thomas J. Kidd, *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism*, 37-58

**Indian Missions**


Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850*, 127-81

William G. McLoughlin, *Cherokees & Missionaries, 1789-1839*, 239-65

VI. THE NATIONAL RELIGIOUS STATE

NOV. 29 - REPRESSIBLE CONFLICT

Core reading: David Goldfield, America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation, 1-394

Secondary reading:

Overview


Churches and the Sectional Crisis

T. Felder Dorn, Challenges on the Emmaus Road: Episcopal Bishops Confront Slavery, Civil War, and Emancipation, 93-122
Richard J. Carwardine, Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America, 279-318
C. C. Goen, Broken Churches, Broken Nation, 65-107
Samuel S. Hill, The South and North in American Religion, 46-89
William B. Kurtz, Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America, 89-107
George C. Rable, God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War, 11-32
Mitchell Snay, Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South, 181-209

Religion and the Civil War

Terrie Dapp Aamodt, Righteous Armies, Holy Cause: Apocalyptic Imagery and the Civil War, 100-18
Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War, 3-31
Bridget Ford, Bonds of Union: Religion, Race and Politics in a Civil War Borderland, 3-28
Eugene D. Genovese, A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South, 101-21
Steve Longenecker, Gettysburg Religion: Refinement, Diversity, and Race in the Antebellum and Civil War Border North, 131-70 [WHS, I]
Phillip Shaw Paludin, “Religion and the American Civil War,” in Randall M. Miller, et al., eds., Religion and the American Civil War, 21-40
Daniel W. Stowell, Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863-1877, 33-48
Timothy L. Wesley, The Politics of Faith during the Civil War, 8-31 [WHS, I]
Steven E. Woodward, While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers, 199-230

Theological Reflection

Giorgi Areshidze, Democratic Religion from Locke to Obama: Faith and the Civic Life of Democracy, 70-91
Edward J. Blum, “‘To Doubt This Would Be to Doubt God’: Reconstruction and the Decline of Providential Confidence,” in Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser, eds., Apocalypse and the Millennium in the American Civil War Era, 217-52 [WHS, M, I]
Joseph R. Fornieri, Abraham Lincoln’s Political Faith, 133-64
Allen Guelzo, Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President, 311-51
Nicholas Guyatt, Providence and the Invention of the United States, 259-98
Mark Noll, The Civil War as a Theological Crisis, 51-74
Charles Royster, The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans, 264-95
Harry S. Stout, Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War, 167-90
DEC. 6 - LOCAL OPTIONS

Core Reading: Sarah Barringer Gordon, The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America

Secondary reading:

Overviews

Terry L. Givens, et al., “Forum” [on Mormonism, family, American popular culture, gender, and politics], Religion & American Culture, 23 (Winter 2013), 1-29

Politics, Law and Anti-Mormonism

Stephen Cresswell, Mormons & Cowboys, Moonshiners & Klansmen: Federal Law Enforcement in the South & West, 1870-1893 79-132
Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900, 160-209
Terryl Givens, The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy, 76-93
Patrick Q. Mason, The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Post-Bellum South, 102-26
Paul W. Reeve, Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness, 52-74
Christine Talbot, A Foreign Kingdom: Mormons and Polygamy in American Political Culture, 1852–1890, 105-28 [WHS, I]

Polygamy and Sexuality

James B. Bennett, “‘Until This Curse of Polygamy Is Wiped Out’: Black Methodists, White Mormons, and Constructions of Racial Identity in the Late Nineteenth Century,” Religion & American Culture, 21 (Summer 2011), 167-94
Richard Lyman Bushman, Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling, A Cultural Biography of Mormonism’s Founder, 437-58
Jesse L. Embry, Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle, 53-71
Lawrence Foster, Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century, 181-225
Lewis J. Kern, An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias—the Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community, 170-89
D. Michael Quinn, Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth-Century Americas: A Mormon Example, 265-89
DECEMBER 13 - MORAL MAJORITY

Core Reading: David Sehat, *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*

Christian Republic

John Fea, *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?: A Historical Introduction*, 3-21
James S. Kabalal, *Church-State Relations in the Early American Republic, 1787–1846*, 151-78
Perry Miller, “From the Covenant to the Revival,” in idem, *Nature's Nation*, 90-120
Ernest Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation*, 91-136

Moral Order

Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., *Earnestly Contending: Religious Freedom and Pluralism in Antebellum America*, 94-119
Joseph S. Moore, *Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ into the Constitution*, 63-87
Jeffrey Thomas Perry, “‘Courts of Conscience’: Local Law, the Baptists, and Church Schism in Kentucky, 1780–1840,” *Church History*, 84 (2015), 124-58

Separation of Church and State

Daniel L. Driesbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation between Church and State*, 25-54
Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 144-89
Nicholas P. Miller, *The Religious Roots of the First Amendment: Dissenting Protestants and the Separation of Church and State*, 133-55
James M. Patterson, “The American Nehemiad, or the Tale of Two Walls,” *Journal of Church and State*, 57 (2015), 450-68
Timothy Verhoeven, “‘An Encouraging Precedent’: The United States and the Separation of Church and State in France, 1832-1905,” *French Historical Studies*, 38 (2015), 447-72 [I]
A PROCLAMATION
Regarding Late Papers

Whereas it may come to pass that one or more individuals, whether through dilatoriness, dereliction, irresponsibility, or chutzpah, may seek respite and suacease from escritorial demands through procrastination, delay, and downright evasion;

And whereas this unhappy happenstance contributes mightily to malfeasance on the part of parties of the second part (i.e., students, the instructed, you) and irascibility on the part of us (i.e., me);

Be it therefore known, understood, apprehended, and comprehended:

That all assignments must reach us on or by the exact hour announced in class, and that failure to comply with this wholesome and most generous regulation shall result in the assignment forfeiting one half of a letter grade each day for which it is tardy (i.e., an “A” shall become an “AB”), “one day” being defined as a 24-hour period commencing at the announced hour on which the assignment is due; and that the aforementioned reduction in grade shall continue for each succeeding day of delay until either the assignment shall be remitted or its value shrank unto nothingness. And let all acknowledge that the responsibility for our receiving papers deposited surreptitio (i.e., in my mailbox or under my door), whether timely or belated, resides with the aforementioned second-part parties (i.e., you again), hence onus for the miscarriage of such items falls upon the writer’s head (i.e., until I clutch your scribbles to my breast, I assume you have not turned them in, all protestations to the contrary notwithstanding).

Be it nevertheless affirmed:

That the greater part of justice residing in mercy, it may behoove us, acting entirely through our gracious prerogative, to award an extension in meritorious cases, such sufferance being granted only upon consultation with us, in which case a negotiated due date shall be decreed; it being perfectly well understood that failure to observe this new deadline shall result in the immediate and irreversible failure of the assignment (i.e., an “F”), its value being accounted as a null set and less than that of a vile mote. And be it further noted, that routine disruptions to routine (i.e., lack of sleep occasioned by pink badgers dancing on the ceiling) do not conduce to mercy, but that severe dislocations brought on by Acts of God (exceedingly traumatic events to the body and/or soul, such as having the earth swallow one up on the way to delivering the assignment) perpetrated either on oneself or on one’s loving kindred, do.

And we wish to trumpet forth:

That our purpose in declaiming said proclamation, is not essentially to terminate the wanton flouting of our didactic intentions, but to encourage our beloved students to consult with us, and apprehend us of their difficulties aforehand (i.e., talk to me, baby), so that the cruel axe of the executioner fall not upon their Grade Point Average and smite it with a vengeance.

To which proclamation, we do affix our seal: