

**Northwestern College**  
**Historical Perspectives in American Experience:**  
**FOLLOWING JESUS IN AMERICA**

History 120HP-01, Fall Semester 2013  
(4 Credits)

**Professor:** Douglas Firth Anderson

**Class Period:** T/Th, 9:25-10:55 a.m.

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**Class Location:** VPH 119

**Office hours:** MWF, 2:10 p.m., or by appointment

**Student Assistant:** Sarah Kaltenbach

**Course Writing Tutors:** Hana Spangler, Brody Van Roekel, & Cassandra Westpfahl

**Course materials and grades available on MyNorthwestern Blackboard**

Professor's Web page: <http://buffalodoug.wordpress.com>

## **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

### Summary description:

The United States of America is a nation state created out of North American lands colonized, purchased, and/or conquered. It was also created out of diverse peoples, some here before the nation state was launched, and many more who were born or transplanted (willingly or unwillingly) to the U.S. since then.

In 1776, the Continental Congress issued the Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed, among other things: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ...." Although the Declaration was written by well-off English-speaking white men, dreams of happiness were not limited to them. The various people of what became the U.S. all had such dreams—individual and collective, personal and social. If dreams have to do with intentions, hopes, and aspirations, many dreams were at play over the centuries of America's formation and development. As Catholic intellectual historian Eugene McCarragher has put it, "Whether true or errant, our loves make us what we are; so if we are what we desire, however corruptly, history is the record of our loves in all their magnificent and ignoble forms."<sup>1</sup> For some in America, their dreams were tentatively fulfilled; for others, they were elusive; for still others, illusive; for many, dreams frustrated or defeated transposed into nightmares. Overall, arguably, America's history is one in which dreams have been, and still are, tested and contested.

Among the dreams that have been a part of America's historical experience are those of following Jesus. Following Jesus has mattered to many—although not all—Americans over time. Paradoxically, while the importance of following Jesus has been affirmed by virtually all Christians, what following Jesus might, or should, actually look like has been less than clear. This paradox shouldn't be surprising, though, since Christianity is centered in the paradoxical (and historical) life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, who is God incarnate. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian Christians: "[W]e proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called . . . Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24 NRSV). This course is a historical

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene McCarragher, "On a Certain Blindness in Historians," *Fides et Historia* 44 (Winter/Spring 2012): 57.

exploration of some of the beliefs and practices of Americans concerning Jesus. Within an overview of major developments, important institutions, and key events, the course will focus on five individuals as case studies: Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (c.1488-c.1560); John Woolman (1720-1772); Frederick Douglass (1818-1895); Charles A. Eastman (1858-1939); Dorothy Day (1897-1980). Key themes in the course will include religion as a major thread in American history, Christianity as both a set of social institutions and structures and also as lived religion, and the varied appropriations of Jesus throughout America's historical experience.

#### Historical Perspectives Courses in Integrative General Education:

This course is part of an IGE curriculum that collectively fulfills the three main IGE goals:

1. Integrate faith and learning.
2. Connect knowledge across disciplines.
3. Connect knowledge to life outside the academy.

More particularly, this course meets the Category Objectives for Historical Perspectives courses in Integrative General Education (IGE) at Northwestern College. After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. describe how historical context shapes events and our understanding of events.
2. evaluate the nature and reliability of historical evidence.
3. develop a thesis-based argument using properly cited evidence.
4. demonstrate familiarity with a body of historical knowledge.
5. articulate how faith obliges Christians to pursue historical truth while acknowledging preconceptions, ideologies, and myths.
6. describe an approach to history based on the belief that God acted through the incarnation to redeem people made in God's image.

Further, Historical Perspectives courses are writing intensive.

#### Course objectives:

The particular objectives of this Historical Perspectives in American Experience course are keyed to the three IGE goals and six Historical Perspective objectives. After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. analyze primary documents in their historical context in order to understand the documents' historical significance.
2. evaluate the nature and reliability of different sorts of texts as historical evidence, syntheses, or re-presentations.
3. write thesis-based arguments drawing on assigned primary and secondary course materials, with proper footnotes in Chicago style form.
4. demonstrate familiarity with the broad outlines of American Christianity in the context of American history from colonial era until contemporary times.
5. show engagement with varied historical expressions of Christian faith and life in ways that take the past seriously on its own terms while also noting that faith and life change over time and locale due to many factors.
6. show engagement with following Jesus in America as a tradition not only of the dead but also of the living.

## REQUIRED READING

- Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar Núñez. *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition*. Introduction by Ilan Stavans. Revised and annotated translation by Harold Augenbraum. New York: Penguin Books, 2002; original publication 1542. ISBN 9780142437070
- Charleston, Steve. "The Old Testament of Native America." In *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada*, 68-80. Edited by James Treat. New York: Routledge, 1996. ON BLACKBOARD
- Day, Dorothy. *Loaves and Fishes*. Introduction by Robert Coles. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997; original publication 1963. ISBN 9781570751561
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself with Related Documents*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Edited by David W. Blight. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003; original publication 1845. ISBN 9780312257378
- Eastman, Charles A. *From the Deep Woods to Civilization*. Introduction by Raymond Wilson. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1977; original publication 1916. ISBN 9780060914134
- Fea, John. *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. ISBN 9780664235048
- Prothero, Stephen. *American Jesus: How the Son of God Became a National Icon*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. ISBN 9780374529567
- Woolman, John. *The Journal of John Woolman and Plea for the Poor*. Introduction by Frederick B. Tolles. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998; original publication 1774. ISBN 9781579101466

## COURSE OUTLINE OF DAILY TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

<b>CLASS # &amp; DATE (TTh)</b>	<b>CLASS TOPIC and/or ASSIGNMENT DUE</b>	<b>READING TO BE DONE for class day</b>
1. Aug. 20	Course Introduction I: Introductions and Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in-class handout</li> </ul>
2. Aug. 22	Course Introduction II: Historical Method & Integrative Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fea, xxi-xxvii</li> </ul>
3. Aug. 27	First Encounters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charleston, on Blackboard</li> <li>• Cabeza de Vaca, pp. ix-xxv</li> </ul>
4. Aug. 29	Following Jesus on Pilgrimage I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabeza de Vaca, 1-54</li> </ul>
5. Sept. 3	Following Jesus on Pilgrimage II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabeza de Vaca, 55-108</li> </ul>
6. Sept. 5	Colonies, Mostly British	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fea, pp. 3-107</li> </ul>
7. Sept. 10	Following Jesus in Simplicity I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woolman, Chaps. I-IV</li> </ul>
8. Sept. 12	HISTORICAL WRITING/ Following Jesus in Simplicity II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woolman, Chaps. V-VIII</li> </ul>
9. Sept. 17	Following Jesus in Simplicity III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woolman, Chaps. IX-Plea</li> </ul>
10. Sept. 19	Early Encounters in film	
11. Sept. 24	ESSAY 1 FIRST DRAFT DUE TO INSTRUCTOR/ No class meeting	
12. Sept. 26	Revolution & Independence I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fea, pp.108-168</li> </ul>
13. Oct. 1	Revolution & Independence II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fea, pp. 171-246</li> </ul>

14. Oct. 3	MIDTERM	
15. Oct. 8	American Jesus I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prothero, Introduction &amp; Chap. 1</li> </ul>
16. Oct. 10	American Jesus II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prothero, Chaps. 2 &amp; 6</li> </ul>
17. Oct. 17	ESSAY 1 FINAL DRAFT DUE/ Following Jesus in Liberation I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Douglass, pp. 1-79</li> </ul>
18. Oct. 22	Following Jesus in Liberation II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Douglass, pp. 79-178</li> </ul>
19. Oct. 24	Following Jesus from Civilization I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastman, pp. v-91</li> </ul>
20. Oct. 29	ESSAY 2 FIRST DRAFT DUE TO TUTORS/ Following Jesus from Civilization II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eastman, pp. 92-195</li> </ul>
21. Oct. 31	American Jesus III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prothero, Chaps. 3 &amp; 5</li> </ul>
22. Nov. 5	Following Jesus in film I	
23. Nov. 7	ESSAY 2 DUE/ Following Jesus in film II	
24. Nov. 12	American Jesus IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prothero, Chaps. 4 &amp; 7</li> </ul>
25. Nov. 14	Following Jesus in Love I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day, pp. ix-74</li> </ul>
26. Nov. 19	Following Jesus in Love II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day, pp. 75-150</li> </ul>
27. Nov. 21	Following Jesus in Love III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day, pp. 151-221</li> </ul>
28. Nov. 26	STUDY DAY/ No class meeting	
29. Dec. 3	ESSAY 3 DUE/ No class meeting	
30. Dec. 5	American Jesus V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prothero, Chap. 8 &amp; Conclusion</li> </ul>
<b>Dec. 11 (W.), 10:30-12:30 p.m., FINAL</b>		

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **I. TWO ESSAY EXAMS on course material will constitute 40% of the course grade.**

1. Two exams, a midterm and a final, will be given in class per the daily outline in the syllabus (e.g., Oct. 8 and Dec. 11). (On late assignments, see Course Miscellany, section 2.)
2. The *midterm* will constitute 15% of the course grade.
3. The *final* will constitute 25% of the course grade.
4. For each exam there will be a study sheet distributed a week ahead of the exam.

### **II. THREE ESSAYS will constitute 45% of the course grade.**

1. There will be three essays: #1 on Cabeza de Vaca and Woolman (Sept. 24 /Oct. 17), #2 on Douglass and Eastman (Oct. 29/Nov. 7), and #3 on Day (Dec. 3).
2. Each essay will constitute 15% of the course grade, for a 45% total for the three.
3. For each essay there will be a handout distributed at least a week ahead of the due date.

### **III. DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS (DAs) will constitute 12% of the course grade.**

1. Between 10 to 15 *discussion assignments* (DAs) will be given on some aspect of the assigned reading or in-class material.
2. DAs will pose a problem or ask a question about the assigned reading or other class material.
3. DAs will *sometimes be given one or more class sessions ahead; at other times assignments will be made in class for completion during class time.*
4. DAs are due *at the end of the class for/in which the DA was assigned.*
5. *Late DAs will not be accepted*, unless the reason for lateness has to do with a legitimate, excusable conflict (e.g., approved field trip, illness, co-curricular activity, family emergency).
6. DAs may be *handwritten*, but they must be *legible* and be *clearly labeled* with the student's name, DA #, date, and RSC box # at the beginning of each assignment.
7. Unless specified otherwise, each DA is *worth 5 points: 1* for meeting the *formal specifications*, including clarity and neatness; *2* for *accuracy and/or relevance* in engaging the material; *2* for *thoughtfulness and/or insight* in addressing the question/task.
8. Following the first one or two, *the DAs will be graded by the instructor's student assistant.*

### **IV. CLASS PARTICIPATION will constitute 3% of the course grade.**

1. Class participation is a portion of the grade based on the instructor's estimation of the integrity of each student's engagement with the course material and the classroom environment.
2. Normally, regular attendance and the handing in of completed assignments when due will be taken as at least adequate or sufficient for fulfilling this part of the course grade.
3. Factors that could give the instructor pause about a student for this portion of the grade include (but are not limited to):
  - frequent absences.
  - frequent lateness in attending class or excuses for the failure to complete assignments or to complete them when due.
  - frequent in-class indications that could give the impression that a student has done little to no work with the assigned materials.
  - persistent in-class demeanor or behavior that could give the impression that a student has little respect for themselves, others, and/or the task(s) at hand.
4. When appropriate, the instructor is prepared to be flexible with occasional student scheduling problems, but the instructor must be consulted. "Exceptions" are not an entitlement.

## **COURSE MISCELLANY**

### **1. Laptops, Smart phones, cellphones, and other electronic-digital devices**

1. The classroom is primarily a place for learning. Learning demands attentiveness. For learning's sake, turn off all electronic devices that might otherwise distract you or others.
2. Using laptops is fine for note taking. If one or more laptops prove to be distracting, however, the instructor reserves the right to forbid their use in class.
3. During exams, no electronic-digital devices, please!

## **2. Late Assignments**

1. All assignments are due as stated in the syllabus or announced in class.
2. They are to address the assignments current for this course, not assignments from a previous version of this course, lest they be subject to the equivalent penalty for late papers (see #4 below).
3. *Extensions* due to illness, approved field trips, regularly scheduled games or performances, or other reasons outside the control of the student can be made, but *it is up to the student to petition the instructor for such legitimate extensions.*
4. *Papers:* If a paper is handed in late up to a week after it was due and without a legitimate extension, it will normally receive a penalty of at least one full grade down from whatever score the work merits apart from the penalty. If a paper is over a week late and without a legitimate extension, it will not be accepted.
5. *Final:* A final can only be rescheduled through application to the Registrar's Office; a [Final Exam Change form](#) is linked to the Registrar's Form webpage. Travel plans are not a legitimate reason for rescheduling finals. All material must be in to the instructor by the scheduled period; no materials will be accepted thereafter.
6. *DAs:* Late DAs will not be accepted, unless the reason for lateness has to do with a legitimate, excusable conflict (e.g., approved field trip, illness, co-curricular activity, emergency).

## **3. Academic Honesty**

1. It is expected that all reading and written work done in and for the course will be done with integrity. That is, reading and writing as assigned is to be done with honest single-mindedness by each student, without undue reliance on others to do the work, and without deceit about the work's timeliness, authorship, and sources. Integrity of this sort is not easy or convenient; it does not provide shortcuts or guarantee an "A." Yet it is the best path to growth in wisdom, and wisdom is the fruit of education most to be savored.
2. Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism, as defined in the Student and Faculty Handbooks.
3. Academic dishonesty, will, when duly determined, lead to a "0" score for the assignment involved and the filing of a report with the Office of the Provost, per the Student and Faculty Handbooks.

## **4. Grading**

1. We the faculty of the History Department do not believe that "grade inflation" is good for you. Jesus admonishes us to "Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'" (Mt. 5:37); in other words, let grades have integrity as indicators of knowledge and/or competence for a given assignment or course.
2. Therefore, an *A=excellent* or outstanding work; *B=good* work (more than adequate but not excellent); *C=adequate* work (the assignment or the course's requirements have been met, but not with any remarkable quality); *D=inadequate* work (does not fully meet the assignment); *F=failing* work.
3. *Grades for most assignments and for the course as a whole are based on a 100% scale, as follows:*

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 0-59

4. Within the 100% scale for letter grades, + and - will be given on the following scale (exceptions: no A+ or F + or F-):

+ = x7-x9      - = x0-x2

5. *Remember--*grades are NOT a measure of your personal worth; that is already established by God! Grades are measures of the quality of your work for a given assignment and/or course--nothing more and nothing less.

## **5. Advice**

### **A. Time in and out of class**

- *The old wisdom still stands: "you reap what you sow"* (Gal. 6:7b). Sooner or later, what one puts into something is usually directly related to what one receives, whether one is engaging in farming, music, sports, drama, or studying.
- *Reading is central to this class--and reading takes time.* A rule of thumb for humanities courses (history, literature, philosophy, religion) is that spending 2 hours on the class *in addition* to every hour in class usually brings better fruit than spending less than that. That is, for a 3-hour-a-week, 4 credit class, an average of 6 hours per week on the class is a reasonable goal if you wish to do well in the class.
- *If you signed up for this course, I expect you to be in class.* I hope that you are interested in the course (or that I can awaken interest in you for the course), and that you will thus want to come. I will try hard not to waste your time. Apart from this, someone is paying lots of money for you to attend here, and presumably you (and whoever else is involved) are interested in getting your money's worth from your investment. And, the less you are in class, the more you miss opportunities for understanding the course material: discussions; concepts explained; themes noted; issues to ponder; connections to make; additional material presented; explanations of assignments or other things; etc. On the one hand, I do not formally take class attendance. On the other hand, if you are often absent, I do tend to notice. If you are absent a lot, and with no legitimate explanation, then when it comes time for me to total up your work for a course grade, I will have little to no reason to give you any benefit of the doubt.

### **B. Study advice**

- *Spirituality:* Approach your studies with a prayerful attitude. Pray for discipline, for attentiveness, for discernment and understanding. Christ is Lord of all of life, so he is Lord of our learning. Give him the glory with the mind he has given you. We don't think of playing an instrument or playing basketball without practice; why would anyone think that glorifying God with our minds takes any less time--any less prayer and disciplined action?
- *Reading:* Read attentively and intelligently. For history courses, the point of reading is to gain information and to put that information within some context, or thesis, or pattern. Your goal in reading for a history course is to watch for all the cues the author gives you as to 1) what facts are more important than others and 2) how the facts are marshaled into larger patterns that "tell a story" or "make a point."
- *Taking notes is always relevant*—in and on your reading, on lectures, on discussions, on videos. (If you have a photographic memory or already know all the material, then of course taking notes would be pointless . . .)

### **C. Further help**

- You should be able to handle this course with sufficient time and attention. After all, hundreds of other students have. However, if you run into problems, *don't hesitate to ask for help*, from me, my student assistant, folks in the Writing Center.
- In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act, NWC will provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have a documented disability that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact both their instructor and the college disability service provider (John Menning; [john.menning@nwciowa.edu](mailto:john.menning@nwciowa.edu)) to discuss their individual needs and accommodations.

**Prof. Anderson's  
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ESSAY EVALUATION  
Formal & substantive elements**

(Note: NA in boxes below means the element is not applicable to this assignment)

<b>STUDENT NAME:</b>	<b>COURSE:</b>
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Meets	Partial		Does not meet		<b>FORMAL ELEMENTS</b>
					Your paper meets all the <b>formal specifications</b> for the assignment, e.g., typing, header/title page information and form, length, quotation form, notation form, etc., and <b>addresses all the assignment.</b>
Excellent	Good	Ade-quate	Inade-quate	Un-ac-cept-able	<b>SUBSTANTIVE ELEMENTS</b>
					Your paper is <b>well written</b> ; that is, it manifests a welcoming introduction, clear and coherent organization, effective transitions, engaging style, careful spelling, punctuation, and grammar, and a conclusion that sums up generalizations and insights from the discussion.
					Your paper makes an <b>effective argument</b> ; that is, manifests a clear and sustained interpretive claim/thesis that thoughtfully and thoroughly draws on and accounts for relevant evidence in the assigned historical material.
					Your paper is attentive to <b>historical context</b> and the <b>nature and reliability of the relevant sources.</b>
					Your paper shows <b>thoughtful engagement with the theme of following Jesus in America.</b>

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:
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