
RELS 298 SPECIAL TOPICS: GLOBAL EVANGELICALISM

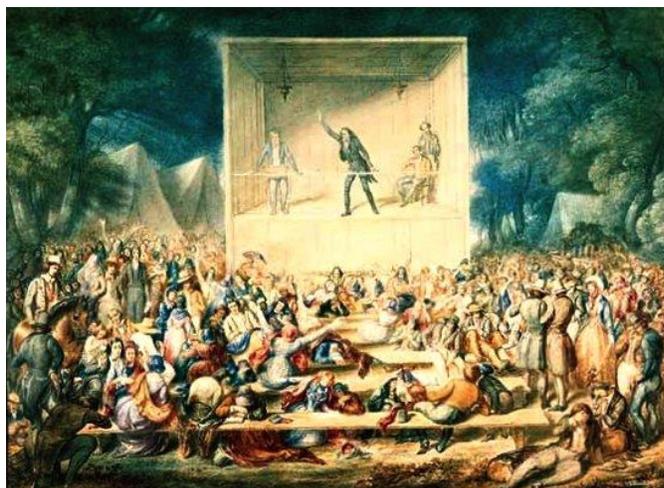
Instructor: Lenny J. Lowe, Ph.D.

Email: lowelj@cofc.edu

Phone: 843-953-8033 (Office); 419-889-8749 (Cell)

Office Location: 4A Glebe 102

Office Hours: T/TH 9:30 am – 11:30 am



Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to one of the most dominant religious traditions across the Americas today – Evangelicalism. Yet, scholars and adherents alike often debate the history of this movement and even the name itself. This lack of consensus is directly related to the variety of forms that contemporary Evangelicalism can take, but it can also mask some of the important and illuminating continuities. In this course, we will trace some of the movement’s historical origins and then delve deeply into the rich diversity of modern Evangelicalism as a truly global movement.

Required Texts:

Melani McAlister, *The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

*All other readings will be provided on OAKS.

SPECIFIC COURSE GOALS

- Students will be able to recognize and articulate the various contingencies that shape religion – political, historical, economic, cultural, etc.
- Students will be able to identify the context and events that shape contemporary Evangelicalism
- Students will be able to describe the significant shifts within Evangelicalism as a movement
- Students will be able to describe the global character of evangelicalism and how that perspective changes how we understand the religious movement.
- Students will be able to think critically and analytically about contemporary evangelical communities and demonstrate that capacity through original writing.
- Students will demonstrate a critical-empathetic approach to encountering basic cultural and religious differences.

GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

- 1) Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted or valued in various expressions of human culture. (Evaluated through Writing Project #2)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

- 1) Students recognize and explain the major theoretical perspectives and key issues of debate in the academic study of religion. (Evaluated through Writing Project #1)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The nature of our course requires participation, and participation requires your actual physical presence as much as is possible. To that end, I expect that you will be present and on time always. I will take attendance daily at the start of the class session, and students absent more than 6 times will be dropped from the course. In instances of extraordinary or emergency situations, please simply talk to as soon as you can about the situation and provide documentation if it is reasonable to do so.

ACCESSIBILITY

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of CofC. If any student requires assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me during office hours or by appointment as early as possible in the semester, and be sure to visit the Center for Disability Services to obtain proper documentation prior to our meeting. More information can be found at <http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu>

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Religious observances will be accommodated in accordance with the Student Attendance Policy. Some care has been given to avoid obvious conflicts with prominent religious holidays. However, if you need to be absent for any given class for a specific observance please submit requests in writing to me by the end of the second week of the semester so that we can agree upon accommodations.

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

If the instructor determines the student's actions are related to misunderstanding, it will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student's file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no

collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

YOU SHOULD:

- 1) Come to class regularly, on time, and prepared. Preparation means reading, *to the best of your ability and with strategy and attention*, all materials prior to the class meeting. Additionally, you should have thought critically about the materials and be ready with questions.
- 2) Put away all possible distractions including but not limited to: *cell phones, cell phones, cell phones, and cell phones*. Laptop computers will be provisionally permitted for taking notes, accessing readings, and saving trees.
- 3) Engage in discussion with classmates and professor in a way that is, affirmative, open, and above all, respectful. The classroom is a safe place to ask questions and express ideas, so never hesitate. However, words matter, and we are surrounded by differences. So, think carefully before you speak, and cultivate a curious, thoughtful, respectful way of engaging in the classroom.
- 4) Turn assignments in on time. In extraordinary circumstances, please contact me in advance or as soon as possible.

I WILL:

- 1) Always be on time (even if just barely), prepared, and happy to see you.
- 2) Patient, empathetic, energetic, and interesting.
- 3) Concerned about your academic success and also your personal well-being and happiness.
- 4) Fair in my policies and respectful of your time and energy.
- 5) Available throughout the semester at most times of the day (notice...not the night, though maybe) to sit with you, listen to you, and help you with whatever you need.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Our course will utilize an alternative style of grading, commonly called "Specifications Grading." In this model of grading, each assignment will come with clear "specifications." If those specifications are met and if the assignment is turned in on time, then it is marked as **complete**. You will receive qualitative feedback, but you will NOT receive individual grades on assignments.

Your final grade will be determined on the basis of the number of complete and incomplete assignments. Our total list of assignments can be found below:

<u>Writing Projects</u>	<u>Project Revisions</u>	<u>Discussion Threads</u>	<u>Reading Response Qs</u>
#1 -Survey and Report #2 -Media Analysis #3 -Reflection Essay	Optional re-writes of Writing Projects 1-3	10 Semi-formal posts	10 posted questions or connections

The Grading Chart below is a guide for how to earn the final grade you desire:

FINAL GRADE EARNED	# of Complete Writing Projects	# of Project Revisions	# of Complete Discussions	# of Reading Responses
A (95%)	3 of 3	3 of 3	10 of 10	10 of 10
A - (90%)	3 of 3	2 of 3	10 of 10	10 of 10
B+ (88%)	3 of 3	1 of 3	10 of 10	10 of 10
B (85%)	3 of 3	0 of 3	10 of 10	10 of 10
B- (80%)	3 of 3	0 of 3	9 of 10	9 of 10
C+ (78%)	3 of 3	0 of 3	8 of 10	8 of 10
C (75%)	3 of 3	0 of 3	7 of 10	7 of 10
C- (70%)	3 of 3	0 of 3	6 of 10	6 of 10
D+ (68%)	3 of 3	0 of 3	5 of 10	5 of 10
D (65%)	2 of 3	0 of 3	4 of 10	4 of 10
D- (60%)	1 of 3	0 of 3	3 of 10	3 of 10
F	0 of 3	0 of 3	2 of 10 or fewer	2 of 10 or fewer



Grace Coin: Each student will receive 3 magical “Graces” at the beginning of the course. **Each Grace Coin** can be redeemed to submit a) a late assignment for credit or b) a redo for an “incomplete” assignment. (Note: **Grace Coins** cannot be redeemed after the final class period, so plan accordingly).

Starting “B”: Each student will start with an 85% B, and you will only move up or down as assignments are completed (or not). Most of you will stay at this “B” for most of the semester, because you can only climb with revisions.

WRITING PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

*Note: Full “Specifications” will be available for each assignment. The following are general descriptions but SHOULD NOT be used as the final list of specifications.

Project #1 – “Survey and Report”

Imagining themselves as journalists for a national newspaper, students will interview no less than 10 individuals spanning a diverse range of demographic groups to investigate the popular understanding of the word “evangelical” in Charleston. Students will present the results of this research in a brief analytical essay (1000 -1200 words) in the form of a newspaper article.

Project #2 – “Media Analysis”

Students will write an analysis based on piece of popular media (film, book) produced by Evangelicals for Evangelicals or for evangelism, paying close attention to the themes and questions raised in the course. The analysis should be between 1000 and 1200 words.

Project #3 – “Testimony”

Embracing the evangelical genre of “testimony,” students will reflect upon their intellectual growth and struggles in the course. This reflection will be presented in an 800 word essay to be presented semi-formally on the final class day.

INTRODUCTIONS

Week 1

January 9 – Introductions and Syllabus
Reading: Syllabus (on OAKS)

January 11 -- Defining Terms: Religion? Evangelicalism?
Reading: Balmer pp. 1-7 (OAKS); McAlister pp. 1-16

Week 2 ~American Emergence~

January 14 -- “Age of Revivals”
Reading: Balmer pp. 9-26 (OAKS)

January 16 -- “Post- to Pre-“: A Change in Perspective
Reading: Balmer pp. 27-42 (OAKS)
***Reading Response #1 Due by 12 noon**

January 18 -- “Constructing a Subculture”: Evangelicals and Society in the 20th Century
Reading: Balmer pp. 43-58 (OAKS)

****Discussion Post #1 Due by Sunday (1/20) night at 11:59pm**

Week 3

January 21 -- MLK JR DAY **NO CLASS**

January 23 -- “The Religious Right and Personal Politics”
Reading: Balmer pp. 59-76 (OAKS)
***Reading Response Due by 12 noon**

January 25 – Where do we go from here? *To the Ends of the Earth!*
Reading: Balmer pp. 77-84 (OAKS)

****Discussion Post #2 Due by Sunday (1/27) night at 11:59pm**

GLOBAL NETWORKS: MISSION AND MONEY

Week 4 ~Evangelicals and Movement~

January 28 – History: Moving Evangelicals

January 30 – Complications: “Humanitarianism, NGOs, and Evangelism”
Reading on OAKS:

- Melani McAlister, "What's Your Heart For? Affect and Internationalism in the Evangelical Public Sphere." *American Literary History* 20:4 (2008) 870-895.
- Julie Hearn, "The Invisible NGO: US Evangelical Missions in Kenya." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 32:1 (2002) 32-60.
- **Reading Response Due by 12 noon**

February 1 – Futures: "Spiritual Warfare and Beyond"

Reading on OAKS:

- Elizabeth McAlister, "From Slave Revolt to a Blood Pact with Satan: The Evangelical Rewriting of Haitian History." *Studies in Religion* 41:2 (2012) 187-215.

****Discussion Post #3 Due by Sunday (2/3) night at 11:59pm**

Week 5 ~ Evangelicals and Global Networks~

February 4 -- Mission, Tourism, or Economy – How Does "the gospel" move?
NO READING – Lecture: Early Evangelical Networks

February 6 -- Cultivating a Global Imagination

Reading: McAlister pp. 17-29

***Reading Response due by 12 noon**

February 8 -- The Ends of the Earth: The Idea of Missions

Reading: McAlister pp. 30-52

****Discussion Post #4 Due by Sunday (2/10) night at 11:59pm**

Week 6 ~Stranger Things~

February 11 -- Revolutionary Problems

Reading: McAlister pp. 53-69

February 13 – Times of the Gentiles

Reading: McAlister pp. 70-84

***Reading Response due by 12 noon**

February 15 -- Defining "Kingdom Work"

Reading: McAlister pp. 85 – 102

****Writing Project #1 Due by Sunday (2/18) night at 11:59pm**

Body Politics & the Politics of Bodies

Week 6: ~Evangelicals and Women~

February 11 – History: Women's Suffrage to Women's Suffering

Reading on OAKS:

- Anne Braude, "Women's History IS American Religious History," in *Retelling U.S. Religious History*, Thomas Tweed, ed. (Berkeley: UC Press, 1997) 87-107.

February 13 – Complications: Submission and Domesticity

Read on OAKS:

- R. Marie Griffith, *God's Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1997) 139-168.
- **Reading Response due by 12 noon**
-

February 15 – Futures: “#MeToo and Evangelicals?”

****Discussion #5 Due by Sunday (2/18) night at 11:59pm**

Week 7

~“Fitness”: Health and Wealth~

February 18 – History: Divine Healing, New Thought, and Jesus Christ Scientist

Reading on OAKS:

- Heather D. Curtis, “The Global Character of Nineteenth Century Divine Healing” in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* edited by Candy Gunther Brown (New York: Oxford, 2011) 29 – 43

February 20 – Complications: Muscular Christianity and the Biopolitics of Evangelicalism

Reading: TBD

***Reading Response due by 12 noon**

February 22 – Futures: Health, Wealth, and New Media

Reading: TBD

****Discussion #6 Due by Sunday (2/25) night at 11:59pm**

Week 8

~Global Bodies~

February 25 – Slave Morality or Marks of Faith: The Status of Suffering Bodies in Evangelicalism

Read: McAlister, pp. 105-116

February 27 – Evangelicals and Raced Bodies

Read: McAlister, pp. 117-143

***Reading Response Due by 12 noon**

March 1 – Evangelicals and Demonic Bodies

Read: McAlister, pp. 144-158

****Discussion #7 Due by Sunday (3/3) night at 11:59pm**

Week 9

~Global Agendas~

March 4 – The Idea of “Religious Freedom”: A historical perspective

March 6 – Persecution Imagined and Real

Read: McAlister, pp. 159-175

***Reading Response Due by 12 noon**

March 8 – Evangelical Interventionism
Read: McAlister, pp. 175-193

****Discussion #8 Due by Sunday (3/11) night at 11:59pm**

Evangelicals, Emotion, and Performance

~Affections~

Week 10

March 11 – An Evangelical History of the Affections

March 13 – The Idea of “Authenticity” in Evangelical Discourse
Reading: TBD

March 15 – Megachurch Aesthetics: “You look like a youth minister.”
Reading: TBD

****Discussion #9 Due by Sunday (3/24) night at 11:59pm**

SPRING BREAK (March 17-March 23rd)

Week 11

~Authenticity and Performance~

March 25 – Theorizing Performance
Reading on OAKS:
• Richard Schechner, “What is Performance?”

March 27 – Performance and Persuasion
Reading on OAKS:
• Birgit Meyer, “Aesthetics of Persuasion: Global Christianity and Pentecostalism’s Sensational Forms” in *South Atlantic Quarterly* 109:4, Fall 2010.

****Reading Response Due by 12 noon***

March 29 – Pentecostals and Music
Reading on OAKS:
• Lenny J. Lowe, “After God is Music” (excerpts)
• Ashton Crawley, “Let’s Get it On! Performance Theory and Black Pentecostalism” in *Black Theology* 6.3 (2008) 308-329.

****Media Analysis Paper Due Sunday (3/31) by 11:59pm**

Week 12

~ Film Break ~

April 1 TBD (Hell House, Jesus Camp, or...?)

April 3 Film Continued

April 5 Discussion and Analysis

Week 13 ~Globalizing Emotion~

April 8 – Pity Porn and Evangelical Missions
Reading on OAKS: TBD

April 10 – The Emotional Call
Read: McAlister, pp. 195 - 212

April 12 – Evangelicals and Iraq
Read: McAlister, pp. 213 - 230

*****Discussion #10 Due by Sunday (4/14) night at 11:59pm***

Week 14

April 15 – Money and Affect on the Global Scene
Read: McAlister, pp. 231 - 246

April 17 – Sex and HIV/AIDS in Africa (and Elsewhere)
Read: McAlister, pp. 247-267

April 19 – Hope and Justice
Read: McAlister, pp. 268 - 285

Week 15

April 22 – Conclusions
Read: McAlister, pp. 286-290

April 23 – Evals, Goodbyes
*****Reflection Paper Due by end of day (2/23) at 11:59pm***