Few concepts have proved more difficult to define than religion, but most students of the subject would agree that religious traditions commonly include rituals and other practices, aesthetic and emotional experiences, and a body of ideas typically expressed as beliefs. Proceeding chronologically, this course focuses on those expressions of religion that have been articulated as beliefs during the course of American history from the first English colonial settlement to the present and on the interaction of those beliefs with the broader currents of American culture.

Theology is the term often used to describe the systematic expression of religious beliefs. It is clearly possible, however, to discuss religious beliefs outside the context of formal theology, and it is at least arguable that some of the most influential beliefs in American history received their most vivid and forceful expressions outside the purview of theological discourse. Accordingly, while much of our attention in this course will focus on the works of theologians and clergy—the religious "professionals," as it were—we shall also deal with religious strategies that a widely disparate group of other thinkers (e.g., scientists, artists, and other influential lay people) have deployed in attempting to account for the nature of the cosmos, the social order, and human experience. Most of the people with whom we'll be dealing were committed proponents of Christianity or Judaism, but the course lectures and readings will also occasionally move outside those traditions to include others, as well. In addition, the question of the role of unbelief in American history will receive attention.

Undergraduate Students

Assigned Work:

The written work in this course consists of a MIDTERM EXAMINATION, tentatively scheduled for March 7, a RESEARCH PAPER (see below), and a FINAL EXAMINATION on Monday, May 7, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. One half of the final examination will deal with material presented after the midterm examination, and the other half will be "comprehensive" in the sense that it will require students to draw on material addressed throughout the entire course.

Grades:

The following formula will be used to compute the course grade:

Midterm Examination 30%
Research Paper 30%
Final Examination 40%
Students must complete all assigned work in order to pass the course.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend class regularly and are responsible for all material covered in class. Attendance on days when class discussions are scheduled is especially important.

Required Reading:

Charles Sheldon, In His Steps (Digireads.com Publishing)
William Peter Blatty, The Exorcist (Harper), ISBN 9780061007224

Other readings, hereafter abbreviated as BL, will be posted on the course website: http://blackboard.bu.edu.

Students should use the editions of the books that have been ordered for the course at the Boston University Barnes and Noble Bookstore. This will facilitate discussions by ensuring that everyone will be referencing the same page numbers.

Paper:

Undergraduate students are required to write a paper analyzing the religious thought of an important American who has made religion a central concern. A list of suggested names appears at the end of the syllabus. This list is intended to be suggestive rather than comprehensive. It should be noted that some people on the list (e.g., Woody Allen and Annie Dillard) might well not spring to mind as “religious thinkers.” Nevertheless, they are included because they have made religious themes central to their work.

Students who wish to choose an individual not on the list should secure the approval of the instructor in writing by FEBRUARY 10 (the easiest way to do this is to send an email with the suggested topic to the instructor or to write the topic on a sheet of paper and submit it to the instructor).

The essay, which should be based on an examination of a meaningful sample (e.g., two or three books or the equivalent) of the person’s work, ought to demonstrate an understanding of both the person’s ideas and how those ideas relate to the intellectual/cultural/social context in which that person wrote.

The paper should be 6-8 typed, double-spaced pages in length. All students are required to SUBMIT TWO COPIES of their papers. One copy will be returned to the student. The paper is DUE APRIL 6.

Papers are welcome at any point in the semester up to and including the due date. Late papers are not accepted except in cases of serious and unforeseeable misfortune.

IMPORTANT: The penalties for plagiarism and other academic misconduct can be—and properly should be—very severe. Students should consult the University Academic Conduct Code (bu.edu/academics) if they are unsure of official standards.

All ideas, as well as quoted or closely paraphrased material within a paper, must be clearly attributed to the source from which they are taken. Feel free to check with the instructor if you have any questions about this.
Graduate Students

Assigned Work:

The written work for graduate students consists of a PARTIAL AND TENTATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY of sources that will be used for the research paper (see below), a RESEARCH PAPER (see below) and a FINAL EXAMINATION on Monday, May 7, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Graduate students are invited but are not required to take the midterm examination.

Grades:

The course grade for graduate students who opt to take the midterm examination (on March 7) will be based on the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Graduate Reading Seminars</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The course grade for graduate students who do not choose to take the midterm examination will be based on the following formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Graduate Reading Seminars</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students must complete all assigned work in order to pass the course.

Required Reading:

In addition to reading the works assigned to undergraduates (see above), graduate students should read the following secondary works:

- E. Brooks Holifield, Theology in America, chs. 1, 7-26
- James Turner, Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America
- Joel Carpenter, Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism

Graduate students will meet with the instructor every couple of weeks to discuss these secondary works. The schedule for the discussions will be determined at the first meeting of the course.

Papers:
Graduate students are required to write a research paper dealing with some aspect of the history of religious thought in America. The paper should be 18-20 typed, double-spaced pages in length. The topic should be approved by the instructor by FEBRUARY 10. As a preliminary step, graduate students are required to submit a partial and tentative list of the sources they plan to use in writing the research paper. This bibliography is DUE IN CLASS MARCH 9. The research paper is DUE APRIL 27.

Students are required to SUBMIT TWO COPIES of each of their papers. One copy will be returned to the student.

IMPORTANT: The penalties for plagiarism and other academic misconduct can be—and properly should be—very severe. Students should consult the University Academic Conduct Code (bu.edu/academics) if they are unsure of official standards.

All ideas, as well as quoted or closely paraphrased material within a paper, must be clearly attributed to the source from which they are taken. Feel free to check with the instructor if you have any questions about this.

**Reading Assignments, Discussion Sections, and Written Assignments**

**Week 1**

Jan. 18 Introduction to the Course

Reading: John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (BL)

**Week 2**

Reading: Michael Wigglesworth, “God’s Controversy with New England” (BL); Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (BL)

**Week 3**

Reading: Jonathan Edwards, selection from *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (BL); Ebenezer Gay, “Natural Religion as Distinguished from Revealed” (BL)

Feb. 3 DISCUSSION: Readings assigned in Weeks 1-3

**Week 4**

Reading: Freeborn Garretson, “Substance of the Semi-Centennial Sermon . . .” (BL); William E. Channing, “Unitarian Christianity” (BL)

Feb. 10 Deadline for getting names not on the list approved for undergraduate research paper; Deadline for getting approval of graduate student research topics
Week 5

Reading: Nathaniel W. Taylor, *Concio ad Clerum* (BL); Charles G. Finney, selection from *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (BL)

Week 6

Feb. 20 UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY
Feb. 21 SUBSTITUTE MONDAY SCHEDULE

Reading: Charles Hodge, selection from *Systematic Theology* (BL); Theodore Parker, "A Discourse of the Transient and Permanent in Christianity" (BL); Orestes Brownson, selections from "The Church and Its Mission" (BL)

Week 7

Reading: “The Life and Religious Experience of Jarena Lee . . .” (BL); Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address” (BL)

Week 8

March 5 DISCUSSION: Readings Assigned in Weeks 4-7

**March 7 MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

Reading: Charles Sheldon, *In His Steps*

Spring Break: March 10-March 18

Week 9

Reading: John Augustine Ryan, “The Church and the Workingman” (BL); Robert G. Ingersoll, “Why I Am An Agnostic” (BL); Borden P. Bowne, selection from *Personalism* (BL); A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, “Inspiration,” 225-244 (BL)

Week 10

Reading: Theodore Munger, “The New Theology” (BL); William James, selection from *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (BL)

Week 11

April 4 DISCUSSION: Readings Assigned in Weeks 8-10
April 6  UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE

Reading:  Mary Baker Eddy, “Science and the Senses” (BL); John Ireland, “The Church and the Age” (BL); J. Gresham Machen, selection from Christianity and Liberalism (BL); Shailer Mathews, selection from The Faith of Modernism (BL)

Week 12

Reading:  “Pittsburgh Platform” (BL); Abraham Cahan, The Rise of David Levinisky

Week 13

April 16  UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY

April 18  DISCUSSION: Readings Assigned in Weeks 11-12

Reading:  “World’s Parliament of Religions, 1893” (BL); Carl F. H. Henry, selection from Christianity Today (BL); Humanist Manifesto (BL); Selections dealing with Vatican II and Humanae Vitae (BL); Paul Tillich, selection from Systematic Theology (BL)

Week 14

April 27  GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH PAPERS ARE DUE

Reading:  Martin Luther King, selection from Strength to Love; Tim LaHaye, selection from The Battle for the Mind (BL); William Peter Blatty, The Exorcist

Week 15

April 30  DISCUSSION: Readings Assigned in Weeks 13-14

May 2  REVIEW SESSION

FINAL EXAMINATION:  MONDAY, MAY 7, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Lecture Topics

The lecture topics for this course often do not fit neatly into fifty-minute segments. Accordingly, students should understand that the topics listed below may be covered during more than a single class session:
The European Background
Religious Thought in British North America, 1607-1730
The First “Great Awakening(s)”
“Enlightened” Christianity
Jonathan Edwards and His Successors
Religious Thought in an Age of Revolution
Calvinism Assailed and Altered
The Evangelical Persuasion
The Centrality of Divine Revelation(s)
The Romantic Impulse in American Theology
Roman Catholicism and Its Opponents, 1775-1860
Slavery and the Sectional Controversy in Religious Perspective
Christian Social Thought, 1870-1920
Intellectual Challenges to the Faith
Philosophies and Mediating Theologies in an Age of Science
Conservative Protestant Thought
Dispensations of the Spirit: The Holiness Movement and Pentecostalism
The “New Theology”
The Efflorescence of “Mind Cure”: Christian Science and New Thought
The Inward Turn in Mainstream Protestant Thought
American Catholicism Confronts Modernity
Varieties of American Jewish Thought
Beyond the Judeo-Christian Tradition
The Rise of Fundamentalism, 1910-1930
Liberal Protestantism and the Neo-Orthodox Critique
Postwar American Religious Thought: From Revivalism to Radicalism
American Catholic Thought, 1920-1970
Christian Metaphysics in Post-World War II America
African American Religious Thought Since 1920
Social Activism in Religious Context Since 1955
Spiritual But Not Religious

IMPORTANT: This syllabus and all class lectures are copyrighted by Boston University and/or the instructor. Students who are enrolled in the course are allowed to share with other enrolled students course materials, notes, and other writings based on the course materials and lectures, but they may not do so on a commercial basis or otherwise for payment of any kind. Any sale or commercial use of notes, summaries, outlines, or other reproductions of lectures constitutes a violation of the copyright laws and is prohibited. Selling or buying class notes, lecture notes, summaries, or similar materials not only violates copyright but also interferes with the academic mission of the University. It is therefore prohibited in this class and will be considered a violation of the student code of responsibility that is subject to academic sanctions.

NOTE: The above schedule (including the dates for discussions and the midterm examination) is subject to revision by the instructor.
A Select List of Subjects for Papers

Francis Ellingwood Abbot
Lyman Abbott
William J. Abraham
Henry Adams
Felix Adler
Archibald Alexander
Ethan Allen
Richard Allen
Woody Allen
Thomas J. J. Altizer
Edward Scribner Ames
John Armstrong
Francis Asbury
Sholem Asch
John Bachman
Isaac Backus
Jim Bakker
James Baldwin
Nathan Bangs
Albert Barnes
Harry Elmer Barnes
Cyrus Bartol
Bruce Barton
John Bascom
Gregory Baum
Catharine Beecher
Henry Ward Beecher
Lyman Beecher
Bernard Iddings Bell
Robert Bellah
Edward Bellamy
Joseph Bellamy
Peter Berger
Daniel Berrigan
Peter Bertocci
Charles Blanchard
William Dwight Porter Bliss
Donald Bloesch
George Dana Boardman
John Elof Boodin
Marcus Borg
Francis Bowen
Borden Parker Bowne
Malcolm Boyd
Anne Bradstreet
Charles Augustus Briggs
Bill Bright
Edgar Sheffield Brightman
Phillips Brooks
Charles Reynolds Brown
Robert McAfee Brown
William Adams Brown
Orestes A. Brownson
John Wright Buckham
Frederick Buechner
Rufus Burrow, Jr.
Horace Bushnell
Abraham Cahan
Daniel Callahan
Alexander Campbell
Joseph Campbell
Tony Campolo
Edward J. Carnell
Anne Carr
John Carroll
Peter Cartwright
Shirley Jackson Case
Lewis Sperry Chafer
Oswald Chambers
William Ellery Channing
Charles Chauncy
Lydia Maria Child
Carol P. Christ
F. Forrester Church
Winston Churchill [novelist]
James Freeman Clarke
William Newton Clarke
Philip Clayton
Albert Cleage
John B. Cobb, Jr.
George Albert Coe
Henry Sloane Coffin
William Sloane Coffin
Robert Coles
James H. Cone
A. Z. Conrad
William Ernest Hocking
Archibald Hodge
Charles Hodge
Peter Hodgson
Thomas Hooker
Alvah Hovey
Mark Hopkins
Samuel Hopkins
Walter Marshall Horton
George Holmes Howison
John Hughes
Frederic Dan Huntington
Anne Marbury Hutchinson

Robert G. Ingersoll
John Ireland

Jesse Jackson
Mahalia Jackson
T. D. Jakes
Henry James, Sr.
William James
Thomas Jefferson
Elizabeth A. Johnson
Phillip E. Johnson
Samuel Johnson
E. Stanley Jones
Rufus M. Jones

Kenneth Kantzer
Mordecai M. Kaplan
Gordon D. Kaufman
Catherine Keller
Leander S. Keyser
Henry Churchill King
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Albert Cornelius Knudson
Kaufmann Kohler
David Koresh
Charles Porterfield Krauth
Joseph Wood Krutch
Kathryn Kuhlman
Harold S. Kushner

George T. Ladd
Tim LaHaye
Joseph Le Conte
Ann Lee
James H. Leuba
Edwin Lewis
Joshua Liebman

George Lindbeck
Hal Lindsey
Walter Lippmann
Bernard Loomer
Max Lucado
Halford E. Luccock
Eugene W. Lyman

Richard McBrien
Sally McFague
J. Gresham Machen
Douglas Clyde Macintosh
Francis J. McConnell
James McCosh
Carl McIntire
Aimee Semple McPherson
Howard McQueary
Asa Mahan
James Marsh
Leslie Ray Marston
T. T. Martin
Cotton Mather
Increase Mather
Shailer Mathews
Jonathan Mayhew
Benjamin E. Mays
Bernard Meland
Herman Melville
H. L. Mencken
Thomas Merton
Virgil Michel
Samuel Warley Miles
Samuel Miller
William Miller
Dwight L. Moody
Henry Morris
Charles Clayton Morrison
Walter Muelder
Elijah Muhammad
Edgar Y. Mullins
Theodore T. Munger
John Courtney Murray
A. J. Muste

Clyde Narramore
David Neff
Richard John Neuhaus
Robert C. Neville
John W. Nevin
R. Heber Newton
H. Richard Niebuhr
Reinhold Niebuhr
Andrews Norton
Michael Novak
John Humphrey Noyes

Harold John Ockenga
Flannery O'Connor
Thomas C. Oden
Schubert M. Ogden
Madalyn Murray O'Hair
Roger Olson
Joel Osteen

Thomas Paine
Eliehu Palmer
Phoebe Palmer
Charles Fox Parham
Edwards Amasa Park
Theodore Parker
Francis L. Patton
Nathaniel Paul
Daniel Alexander Payne
Andrew Preston Peabody
Norman Vincent Peale
M. Scott Peck
Charles Sanders Peirce
Walker Percy
Frank Peretti
Elizabeth Stuart Phelps [Ward]
David Philipson
A. T. Pierson
James Pike
W. Norman Pittenger
Alvin Plantinga
Judith Plaskow
Noah Porter
Chaim Potok
Henry C. Potter
J. F. Powers
James Bissett Pratt
George McCready Price
Paul Pruyser

Harry Rimmer
Oral Roberts
Pat Robertson
Josiah Royce
Rosemary Radford Ruether
Rousas John Rushdoony
Charles Taze Russell
John Augustine Ryan

Valerie Saiving
Francis Schaeffer
Philip Schaff
Solomon Schechter
S. Paul Schilling
Samuel Schmucker
Robert Schuller
Charles Schultz
Jacob Gould Schurman
Cyrus Ingerson Scofield
Elizabeth Ann Seton
William G. T. Shedd
Fulton J. Sheen
Thomas Shepard
Benjamin Silliman
A. B. Simpson
Gerald Birney Smith
Hannah Whitall Smith
Henry B. Smith
Joseph Smith
Newman Smyth
Robert E. Speer
John Shelby Spong
Elizabeth Cady Stanton
Edwin Diller Starbuck
Lewis French Stearns
Ezra Stiles
Harriet Beecher Stowe
John Roach Stratton
Augustus Hopkins Strong
Josiah Strong
Moses Stuart
Marjorie Suchocki
Jimmy Swaggart

T. De Witt Talmage
Nathaniel William Taylor
James Henley Thornwell
Howard Thurman
Paul Tillich
Reuben Torrey
Luther Tracy Townsend
David Tracy
Elton Trueblood
Henry McNeal Turner
Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)

John Updike
Thomas C. Upham

Henry P. Van Dusen
Kevin Vanhoozer
Eric Voegelin
Jacob Voorsanger

David Walker
Jim Wallis
C. F. W. Walther
Harry F. Ward
Benjamin B. Warfield
Henry Ware
Susan Warner
Rick Warren
Francis Wayland
Theodore Dwight Weld
Cornel West
John Whitcomb
Andrew Dickson White
Ellen G. White
Walt Whitman
Henry Nelson Wieman
Elie Wiesel
Michael Wigglesworth
H. Orton Wiley
E. O. Wilson
Frances Willard
Samuel Willard
D. H. Williams
Daniel Day Williams
Roger Williams
Garry Wills
Isaac Mayer Wise
Jemima Wilkinson
John Woolman
Frances Wright
George Frederick Wright
Harold Bell Wright
William Kelley Wright

Edward L. Youmans

John A. Zahm