



**ERSKINE**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*For Christ and His Church*

## **Syllabus**

### **DC 941Z – The Changing Face of the American Church**

Online

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Welcome to DC941Z, The Changing Face of the American Church. While I am not able, given the nature of this course, to welcome you warmly in person, it is my heart's desire that this on-line experience will be a significant and profitable part of your seminary education. If you are on campus at the same time I am, please stop by my office in Bowie Divinity Hall and allow me the pleasure of meeting you in person. When you need me, I will do my best to be available. Feel free to contact me using my cell phone or by Email. I will endeavor to serve you to the best of my ability. Be assured that you will be in my prayers as we undertake this course together. Following are answers to some frequently asked questions.

1. **Attendance/On-Time Policy:** Attendance and on-time participation for both class and assignment responses is a vital part of the learning process for this class. There will be weeks when your attendance is noted by an Email interaction with me or other class members, a completed assignment, or other forms of communication. If no student input occurs during a week of the term, the student is considered absent. Absences for any/all reasons should not exceed 25% of total class time. Students will be held responsible for all academic work required during their absence regardless of the reason. It is wise, therefore, to make sure in advance of an absence that another student is recording necessary materials for you.
2. **Microsoft Word** Times New Roman 12 pt with a one-inch margin on all sides is the only acceptable format for written submissions.
3. **Student's name** must be printed on all written assignments **and** in the title line for all Email attachments.
4. **High speed Internet access** will be necessary for meeting the online components of this course.

#### **Course Description**

This course examines the Church in post-World War II American culture. Students evaluate the influences upon the Churches in a rapidly changing environment.

*Elective. Three Hours.*

## Course Learning Outcomes by Module

1. Identify specific areas of change that occurred in the American Protestant Church since World War II (Module I) **DMIN SLO 1b**
2. Study and evaluate the changing ethnic make-up of the American Protestant Church. (Module II) **DMIN SLO 1c**
3. Evaluate changes that have occurred in the Evangelical branches of the American Protestant Church since World War II. (Module III) **DMIN SLO 1c**
4. Analyze and strategize regarding potential change currents that will impact the future of the Evangelical Church in North America. (Module IV) **DMIN SLO 1b and 1c**

## Required Reading

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required materials. As a convenience the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://seminary.erskine.edu/resources/bookstore/>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, etc.) and check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. A portion of sales at Amazon will be credited to the Student Body Association on all orders placed with Amazon through the Erskine bookstore portal.

### Module I:

Chaves, Mark. *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011.

### Module II:

Nees, Thomas G. *The Changing Face of the Church: From American to Global*. Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1997.

### Module III, Module IV:

Stone, Jon R. *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 1999.

Read these texts as noted in the modules below. Not only are you expected to read the texts, you are expected to use them to complete the modules and to weave the contents of the texts into your written assignments for each of the modules.

## Course Concepts by Module

Each module contains written lecture materials (including PowerPoint slides). Read the material first to get an overview of the subject matter introduced and explored in each module. When you feel you are ready to write your paper for each module, be sure to integrate what you learned from this material into the body of your paper. Each paper should include the elements explained in each module plus integration of course concepts and your own ministry experience.

## Course Assignments by Module

In addition to the course requirements set out in the four modules below, each student is required to interact with the professor and other students via the Internet. Each student is expected to give a thoughtful response in light of the course readings and lectures. Each student posts at least one response to another student's post or a post from the professor. This student makes at least two posts per module over the length of the course. Your posts receive assessment on the basis of depth of analysis, mastery of course concepts, and general cohesion (i.e., does it all hold together and make sense?)

### Module I – An Overview of American Religion

Read *American Religion*. When you are finished reading, click through to the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey hosted by the Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life (<http://religions.pewforum.org/>). Find the religious that most closely represents your church read through the two sections entitled “Beliefs and Practices” and “Social and Political Views.” Using the questions found in both survey sections, create your own survey for the members of your congregation. Distribute the survey to as many members of your congregation as you can, asking for their response, both negatively and positively. Then tabulate their responses. After you have finished, write a 2 to 3 page analysis of your findings comparing them to the findings of the Pew website and Mark Chaves's research published in *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*. Make special note of what your findings tell that surprised you, troubled you, and encouraged you. And what you propose to do with the results. All work for Module One should be completed within the first month of the semester. **CLO 1**

### Module Two: “The Church’s Changing Ethnic Face Since 1945”

Read and analyze *The Changing Face of the Church: From American to Global*. Consider this book a case study on the Church of the Nazarene denomination and how it is attempting to change in light of the ethnic diversity of the American culture. Conduct independent research on two different levels: 1. Using some material set out in the text and adding some thoughts and findings of your own, write a 1 or 2 page summary of the changing ethnic makeup of the United States (or the country where you feel called to minister); 2. Do a regional ethnic survey of the county where your current church is located. Report what ethnicities are represented and what percentage of the total county population they represent. Now write a 2 to 3 page summary of these findings, which compares your local data with national data in the USA. You should complete all work for Module Two before proceeding to Module Three. **CLO 2**

### Module Three: The Changing Face of the American Evangelical Church Since 1945

Read *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism: The Postwar Evangelical Coalition*. Now, focus on one era from the book (e.g., Chapter Three: 1880-1930; Chapter Four: 1940-1960 and New Evangelicalism; Chapter Five: 1940-1965 and Checking the Drift Toward Liberalism;

Chapter Six: 1965-1990). Taking one of these chapters as your jumping off point, write an evaluation of the relationship between the American cultural landscape during that time period and the changes that took place in American Evangelicalism. What connections or influences can you identify that shaped the direction Evangelicalism took during that time period, in your opinion. Your analysis should be between 2 and 4 pages long. You must complete this Module III assignment before proceeding to Module Four. **CLO 3**

#### **Module Four: The Future face of the Evangelical Church to 2045**

Use the chart found on page 36 in *On the Boundaries of American Evangelicalism*, entitled “Webber’s Fourteen Categories of Protestant Evangelicalism,” select one of the 14 categories and write a 3-4 page analytical paper. In this paper you should identify the changes that are reported to have taken place in this particular sector of American Evangelicalism since World War II. Identify the social, cultural, theological, demographic, numerical, and other forces that shaped the changes that took place. Explain what we can learn from the experience of this particular sector and what you see on the horizon for this group. You should complete all work for Module IV by no later than August 1, 2016. **CLO 4**

#### **Recommended websites**

Online students have access to Erskine Library. You can access online services at <http://www.erskine.edu/library/>. Though you may wish to check out books via interlibrary loan, the online database has a number of articles and resources available for download. As an Erskine Seminary student, you have access to the ATLA Religion database, which has 500,000 citations of articles and books. Subjects covered include: Biblical studies, Theology, Church History, Pastoral Care, Ethics, etc. About 150,000 of these records have full text articles attached. You can access the online database by logging into your account using your student identification number.

#### **General Institutional Information About Assignments**

All written work is expected to be the student’s own unless credit for the ideas, words, etc. of others is clearly identified as to its source. Plagiarism in sermons costs pastors their jobs. Plagiarism in class will not be tolerated and penalties will be assigned in keeping with the Seminary’s Catalog.

Students are strongly encouraged to review provisions of the Seminary’s Catalog, particularly those governing registration for, and withdrawal from, classes, class attendance, grades (including incompletes), academic conduct, and expectations for written assignments.

All written work must conform to the latest edition of the Turabian manual of style and typed in twelve-point type, Times New Roman (or similar), normally double-spaced, with one-inch

margins. Some reflection papers (which do not use footnotes) may be single spaced. See syllabus requirements for each assignment.

Turabian, Kate L., et. al. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Eighth ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013. (464 pp., ISBN 978-0226816388)

Click [here](#) for a video tutorial on formatting a document in Turabian style.

Additional writing guidelines are available in the [Sample Paper and Writing Aids](#) folder found on the Seminary's web site. Here you will find sample papers for several courses, a "Seminary Research Paper Template," a Bibliography sample, footnote samples, and more.

Students who may need more assistance are encouraged to make use of the [Write Here Center](#) (Click Here) for improved writing skills.

Students may find the [Erskine Theological Seminary Writing Rubric](#) (Click Here). Scroll down to the Writing Assessment Rubric and download.

All written work presented is expected to be the student's own unless credit for the ideas, words, etc. of others is clearly identified. Plagiarism in sermons costs pastors their jobs. Plagiarism in class will not be tolerated and penalties will be assigned in keeping with the Seminary's Catalog.

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### **Grading Criteria for all Modules**

Grades for written assignments will be assigned based on clarity, thoroughness, and thoughtfulness, correctness of grammar and style, and adherence to instructions. Final grades will also depend heavily on class participation and timeliness of submitted assignments. The Seminary's grading scale is published in the *Catalog*. In general, student work will be evaluated using the following scale:

- A Creative, clear, thorough, demonstrating that the student went well beyond expectation.
- B. Consistently competent and complete, with, at most, minor errors or deficiencies.
- C. Adequate but uninspired, marred by notable omissions and/or errors.
- D. Weak, superficial, unclear, incomplete, falls short of expectation.
- F. Inadequate, confused, with major omissions and/or errors.

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