

PD Dr. Stefan Brandt

Office Hours: Thursdays, 16-17, Room 323

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Puritan America?

Religious Fundamentalism, Bible Politics, and the Rhetoric of Redemption — 17th Century to Present

Tue 12.00-14.00

Room 319

First session: Oct 19, 2004

Occasional extra-screenings: Wed 16.00-18.00, R 319

«Puritan America» is intended as a gateway course to the broad field of religion in American culture. The course materials will focus on some of the major themes in American religion, looking both at mainstream, foundation-building religious groups and at groups at the margins of American society who have been overlooked or understudied. The course asks how diverse American groups have used Biblical scripture to cast themselves as God's elect, chosen to create God's Country on American soil. Beginning with Puritanism and the colonial project, we move to the Great Awakening, Quakers, Fundamentalism, and the Religious Right. We will be interested in asking how each religious group fashions both its own identity and that of the U.S. as a whole. Special emphasis will be placed on the question whether the puritan heritage is still alive in modern-day America and in what way various individuals and groups (from critical thinkers such as Emerson and Hawthorne to the neo-Conservatives of the late 20th century) have dealt with this legacy.

Examples will include influential literary works such as Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative of Captivity and Restoration* (1682) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1844), essays such as Ralph Waldo Emerson's «Divinity School Address» (1838), and films such as Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) and Bill Paxton's *FRAILTY* (2001).

The seminar will be held in English. Occasional film screenings will take place Mi, 16-18, R 319 (exact dates to be announced in class).

Credit requirements: Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class (25%), an oral presentation as part of an expert group (20%), and a final paper (40%). There will also be a few quizzes meant as an encouragement to keep track with the assigned reading (15%).

Required reading: A course reader is available in the copy-shop at Königin-Luise-Str.

Relevant texts and books for the seminar can be found in Handapparat 5 in our library.

Seminar papers: The seminar paper will be 17 to 20 pages long. It will make an original argument about one or more of the texts we've been reading, present this argument coherently and logically, and use both close readings of the text(s) and secondary sources to support it. Every paper should include a «works cited» list of at least six secondary sources and make an effort to consult mostly material published after 1980. **The paper is due March 31, 2005.**

! There is no extension of this deadline. Essays handed in later will not be accepted!

SYLLABUS

- 19.10.04 **Introduction**
- 26.10.04 **What Is Puritanism? Its Essences and Attraction**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Perry Miller, «The Puritan Way of Life» (1950)
- Francis J. Bremer, «Puritanism: Its Essence and Attraction» (1995)
- 02.11.04 **John Winthrop's Sodom**
Read and prepare for this session:
- John Winthrop, «A Model of Christian Charity» (1630)
- Michael Warner, «New English Sodom» (1992)
- 09.11.04 **Christian Utopia**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Emory Elliott, «The Dream of a Christian Utopia» (1994)
- 16.11.04 **American Exceptionalism**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Deborah L. Madsen, «Origins: Exceptionalism and American Cultural Identity» (1998)
- Sacvan Bercovitch, «The Myth of America» (1975)
- 23.11.04 **Puritans and Indians**
Read and prepare for this session:
- John Underhill, «News from America; or, A New and Experimental Discovery of New England» (1638)
- Hannah Dustan/Cotton Mather, «A Notable Exploit» (1702)
- 30.11.04 **Captivity and Restoration**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Mary Rowlandson's *Narrative of Captivity and Restoration* (1682)
- Alden T. Vaughan and Edward W. Clark, «Cups of Common Calamity: Puritan Captivity Narratives as Literature and History» (1981)
- 07.12.04 **Bible Politics, Cotton Mather, Bible Politics, and Salem**
Read and prepare for this session:
- Cotton Mather, from: *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1692)
- Allen Carden, «The Biblical Basis of the Puritan Way» (1990)

- 14.12.04 **The Great Awakening**
 Read and prepare for this session:
- Jonathan Edwards, «Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God» (1741)
 - Cedric B. Cowing, «Colonial Religion in the «Glacial Age»» (1972)
 - Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, «Awakening and Enlightenment» (1991)
- 20.12.04-02.01.05 - **Christmas Break** -
- 04.01.05 **The «Fight Against Puritanism»**
 Read and prepare for this session:
- Ralph Waldo Emerson, «The Divinity School Address» (1841)
 - Nathaniel Hawthorne, «The Custom-House» (from: *The Scarlet Letter*) (1850)
- 11.01.05 **In God We Trust: Religion in the 1950s**
 Read and prepare for this session:
- J. Ronald Oakley, «God's Country» (1986)
- Please watch and prepare for this session:
- THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (Cecil B. DeMille, 1956)
- 12.01.05 **Extra-screening: FRIENDLY PERSUASION (William Wyler, 1956)**
 Note: Screening will be on Wednesday, from 16.00–18.00, Room 319
- 18.01.05 **Negotiating Sectarianism I**
 Read and prepare for this session:
- Alden T. Vaughan, «Troublers in Zion», contemporary documents on Anne Hutchinson, Baptists and Quakers» (1972)
- Please watch and prepare for this session:
- FRIENDLY PERSUASION (William Wyler, 1956)
- 19.01.05 **Extra-screening: THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER (C. Laughton, 1955)**
 Note: Screening will be on Wednesday, from 16.00–18.00, Room 319
- 25.01.05 **Negotiating Sectarianism II: The Night of the Hunter**
 Please watch and prepare for this session:
- THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER (Charles Laughton, 1955)
- 01.02.05 **Empires of the Evil: Religious Rhetoric in Times of War**
 Read and prepare for this session:
- Michael Lienesch, «The Evil Empire» and «Armageddon and Beyond» (1993)

08.02.05

The Christian Coalition and the Religious Right

Read and prepare for this session:

- William Martin, «Christian Coalition» (1996)
- Michael Lienesch, «God's New Israel» and «American Jeremiahs» (1993)

09.02.05

Extra-screening: FRAILTY (Bill Paxton, 2001)

Note: Screening will be on Wednesday, from 16.00–18.00, Room 319

15.02.05

Hollywood's New Crusade?

Please watch and prepare for this session:

FRAILTY (Bill Paxton, 2001)