The South is “another land,” in the words of W.J. Cash, a place of “haunted childhood” in the words of Lillian Smith. Its vivid and varied religious life compels description and appraisal. Religion in Southern history is marked by extraordinary homogeneity and by notable diversity. There are many Souths. There is but one South. Here new traditions have been forged. Here older traditions have been extended and renewed.

Here, as elsewhere, religion shapes and in turn is shaped by regional culture—producing distinctive local Christianities (Judaisms, Islams, etc.). Hence our interest in the Southern “mind” and imagination, and in the region’s long cultural isolation, its tragic history, “peculiar” heritage, politics, literature, geography, and weather.

Method of inquiry: eclectic. How different is religion in the South? What are the flavors, who are the players? How has the drama evolved over time? What are the beliefs (and behaviors) of different churches and faiths? How has religious life been affected by race? Does the South have its own “civil religion?” Is the Lost Cause (“Heritage”) a religion?

Learning outcomes: modest understanding of the introduction and development of the denominational and faith traditions in the South; discerning appreciation of the mutual influence of the distinct regional culture and its religious life upon each other – the evolving Southern “mind”

REQUIRED TEXTS:


New text for the course – previously used bulky Encyclopedia is kaput

William Faulkner, Light in August

James Baldwin, The Fire Next Time

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Marion Aldridge and Kevin Lewis, eds., The Changing Shape of Protestantism in the South

Will Campbell, Brother to a Dragonfly

W.J. (Wilbur) Cash, The Mind of the South

James McBride Dabbs, Haunted by God

Alonzo Johnson and Paul Jersild, eds., Ain’t Gonna Lay My Ligion Down
Charles Lippy, ed., *Religion in South Carolina* (one chapter by Lewis)
Flannery O'Connor, "The Displaced Person" and anything else she wrote
Lillian Smith, *Killers of the Dream*
Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*

**REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance expected. Class participation (5%) important. Readings to be completed for discussion on the days indicated. I monitor attendance but will not lower your grade by specific amounts for failure to attend class. You are responsible for the content of class presentations and discussions.

**Quizes** on *Religion* (explained in class) 10% each (20%)
February 5, March 3

**Quizes** on *Light in August* (March 19) and *The Fire Next Time* (April 21)
5% each (10%)

10-page **Paper** (explained in class) 35%
Due April 23

**Final Exam** April 30 30%

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

January 13  Introduction, methods, issues  *Religion*: Native American Religion (100-4)

15  *Religion*: “Religion” (1-19)

20  *Religion*: “Frontier Religion” (69-73), Protestant Episcopal Church (204-6), “Zion, South as” (164-6), “Calvinism” (44-9)


5  **QUIZ:** Film: serpent handlers in Tennessee


26  *Religion:* “O’Connor and Religion” (199-200); Film: “The Displaced Person” (the O’Connor short story)

March 3  **QUIZ:** Cultural perspective introduction: Cash's *The Mind of the South*, Lillian Smith’s *Killers of the Dream*, and C.W. Wilson’s *Baptized in Blood*

5  *Light in August*

**Spring Break**

17  *Light in August*

19  *Light in August*  **QUIZ**

24  *Light in August*

26  **Class cancelled**

31  *Religion:* Fundamentalism (73-9), “Modernism and Religion” (97-100)

April 2  “

7  Videos (selected footage): Bill Moyers, Bob Jones, 1st Baptist Dallas
9  William Jennings Bryan, Scopes Trial, Evolution Controversy; Video: "Creation Science on Trial" (Little Rock, Arkansas, 1980)

14  A liberal tradition: “Social Activism” (139-42), Dabbs, James McBride” (181), “King, Martin Luther” (189-91), “Campbell, Will” (174-6)

16  The Fire Next Time

21  The Fire Next Time  QUIZ


PAPER due

April 30  FINAL EXAM  (12:30 p.m.)