

New Geneva Theological Seminary
CH 505 - American Church History
August 11-15, 2025
Dr. Dominic A. Aquila

Course Description

This course will consider topics such as: the transition of European churches to America; the development of theological, liturgical, social and political issues; the nature and influence of Puritanism, separation of church and state; awakenings and revivals; the development of the church on the frontier; liberalism, fundamentalism, neo-orthodoxy, and contemporary evangelicalism.

Course Objectives

1. To acquaint students with the major personalities, schools of thought, political, social and cultural trends that characterizes the period of our study?
2. To widen students comprehension of the historian's role as a creative and discerning thinker.
3. To increase students understanding of past discussions about pivotal issues and doctrines of the church.
4. To expand students awareness of the lives of men and women of the past who knew God through Jesus Christ.

Course Text

Noll, Mark A., *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada, Second Edition* (Eerdmans).

Course Requirements

1. The careful reading of the text. Read up to and through Section 16.
2. There will be a number of small papers on people, events or movements. You will find information first in your text and then you may use other books or articles on the web. Each of your written assignments may be submitted over a period of time from August 18-September 30, 2025.
 - a. Read the *Mayflower Compact* and write 3-4 pages assessing this document in light of its time. Read the *Cambridge Platform of 1648* and write 3-5 pages assessing the importance of this document and its significance..
 - b. Read "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards; write 2-3 pages evaluating the sermon and its importance.
 - c. Read about George Whitefield and his ministry in the American colonies and his impact and influence on the Great Awakening. Write a 3-4 page report. Read about Gilbert Tennant and Theodore Frelinghuysen and write a 3-5 page report on their impact on the Great Awakening and development of the Log College.
 - d. Read on John Wesley and his influence in the development of the church in America, especially the development of the Methodist Church. Write a 2-3 page report.
 - e. Read about Charles Finney and write a 3-5 page report on his impact on 19th century evangelicalism and revivalism.

- f. Read about J. Gresham Machen and write a 3-5 page report on his involvement at Princeton Seminary, beginning Westminster Seminary and his influence in the Presbyterian Church, USA..
- g. Write a 4-6 page personal assessment and evaluation of where you see the present evangelical church. Explain your assessment with some anecdotal examples.

Course Outline (Subject to adjustment)

- 1. Old World Influences and Settlements
- 2. Colonial Expansion
- 3. The Colonial Period
- 4. Puritan Influences
- 5. The Beginnings of Other Churches
- 6. The Great Awakening
- 7. The Church and the Revolutionary War
- 8. The Church in a New Nation
- 9. The Americanization of Christianity
- 10. Education and Politics
- 11. The Second Great Awakening
- 12. Church Growth on the Frontier
- 13. The Church and Slavery
- 14. The Church and the Civil War
- 15. Post Civil War America
- 16. Mass Crusades and Revivals
- 17. Missions and an Era of Optimism
- 18. The Growth of Theological Diversity
- 19. Controversies: Fundamentalists and Modernists; Science and Religion
- 20. The "Christian" (20th) Century
- 21. The Challenge of Urbanization
- 22. The Rise and Decline of Mainline Churches
- 23. A Resurgence of Evangelicalism
- 24. Charismatic Renewal: Protestant and Catholic
- 25. Postscript: A Post-Christian America

Dr. Dominic Aquila (daquila@newgeneva.org)
719-237-2708 (Cell)