

**Professor Andrew Chesnut**  
[rchesnut@mail.uh.edu](mailto:rchesnut@mail.uh.edu)  
AH 537 743-3119

History 4375

**RELIGIONS OF MODERN LATIN AMERICA**

Fall 2006

This course proposes an exploration of one of the most neglected aspects of Latin American history and culture -- religion. Religion permeates the fabric of Latin American public and private life. An understanding of the religious beliefs and practices of the peoples of Latin America is essential for those studying the history, culture and politics of the region. Drawing on a wide range of educational media, we seek to comprehend the role of religion in modern Ibero-America. We will specifically examine the three main religious traditions of the region: Catholicism, Protestantism and African diasporan groups such as Umbanda and Santeria. Focusing primarily but not exclusively on popular faith (the religion of "the people"), we will examine the role of religion in modern Latin American societies.

**Course Outline**

August 22 - **Overview of religion in Latin America.** Read Chesnut (2) 1-16, Burdick 1-32

August 29 - **Catholicism - Popular and Official.** Read Chesnut (2) 17-38, Burdick 33-67

September 5 - **Catholicism - Popular and Official.** Read Burdick 68-108

September 12 - **Liberation Theology and Base Christian Communities.** Read Burdick 108-130

September 19 - **Liberation Theology and Base Christian Communities.** Read Burdick 130-155

September 26- **Catholic Charismatics.** Read Chesnut (2) 64-101, Burdick 155-173

October 3 - **Protestantism – Mainline.** Read Burdick 173-190, Chesnut (1) 3-29

October 10 – **Protestantism – Pentecostalism.** *Midterm 10/10* Read Burdick 190-206, Chesnut (1) 29-67

October 17 – **Pentecostalism** - Read Burdick 206-230, Chesnut (1) 67-91

October 24 - **Pentecostalism - Beliefs and Practices**. Read Chesnut (1) 92-144

October 31 – **Pentecostalism - Beliefs and Practices**. Read Chesnut (1) 145-174, Chesnut (2) 39-63

November 7 - **Pentecostalism- Theories of Growth**. Read Murphy 1-36, Chesnut (2) 103-127

November 14- **African Diasporan Religions**. Read Murphy 39-76, Chesnut (2) 128-146

November 21 – **Thanksgiving**.

November 28 - **African Diasporan Religions - Vodou and Santeria**. Read Murphy 77-143, Chesnut (2) 147-160

December 14 - **Final Exam** (11:00-1:00)

### **Course Requirements**

1. Regular class attendance
2. A midterm (10/10), final exam (12/14) and 8-10 page paper (11/30)
3. Weekly readings

### **Grade**

The midterm, final exam and paper are each worth 30% of your grade while class attendance accounts for the remaining 10%. **In addition, *consistent and thoughtful* participation in class discussions can raise your final grade by half a letter (e.g. A- to A).**

### **Required Texts**

1. John Burdick, Looking for God in Brazil
2. R. Andrew Chesnut (1), Born Again in Brazil
3. R. Andrew Chesnut (2), Competitive Spirits
4. Joseph Murphy, Santeria

### **Office Hours**

Please feel free to call or visit me on T and Th, 2:30-3:30.