Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:50-4:10
Room Location: CAAS Vanguard Lounge
Instructor: Elizabeth McAlister
Email address: emcalister@wesleyan.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00 to 5:00 and by appointment
Office Location: CAAS room 228

Overview
In this course we examine intersections between "race" and "religion" in a number of historical and social contexts in the Americas. We place at the center of our discussions the question of how race and religion are co-constructed categories that function as a prism through which people come to understand and experience their own identities and those of others. We will privilege interpretations that emphasize: a) the intersections of "race" and "religion" as a process in which power plays a pivotal role; and b) a means through which groups form collective identities.

We will read a range of historical analysis and primary source materials from the U.S. and the Caribbean. After a set of theory readings, we will examine missionary works, Christian proslavery tracts, Creoles in New Orleans, "Hindoos" in US law, analyses of anti-Semitism, Rastafari, Haitian Vodou, the pagan white supremacy movement, as well as Islamophobia, the racialization of Muslims, and the contemporary U.S. relationship to the Middle East.

Requirements: Attendance at all classes, completion of the reading assignments, class discussion and weekly 1-page response papers constitute essential components of the course and count for 25% of the grade. Response papers must be posted on Moodle by 11:00 sharp on the day of class so that I can read them before our discussion. Late response papers will not be accepted and cannot be made up (but you do get one pass). Response papers will be evaluated on a check system, with average work equaling a ✔, excellent work ✔+, below average ✔−.

During the course of the semester you will give an oral presentation to start class discussion. You get to write three 5-7 page papers for another 75% of the grade. (I will take of a third of a letter grade for each day a paper is late, unless you have asked for an extension at least one day before the due date.) Remember that we are operating under the Honor Code at Wesleyan. Please do not use laptops or tablets in class (but see me if you need one for a specific reason). I don’t mind eating and drinking or lateness (within reason). I DO mind seeing you on your phone, so put it away and on silent. Please email me if you will be or have been absent, and briefly state a reason.

Grading
Participation, response papers, class presentation: 25%
First Essay: 25%
Second Essay: 25%
Third Essay: 25%

Students with Disabilities: It is the policy of Wesleyan University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students are responsible for registering with Disabilities Services, in addition to making requests known to me. The procedures for registering with Disabilities Services can be found at http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/disabilities/Student/index.html

Readings
You are required to bring each reading to class on paper, in print form. Class readings are in article or chapter form and will be available to download from Moodle.

Sept 4 Introduction to the Course

Sept 6 Religious Systems of Meaning


Sept 11 Race as Social Construction


Sept 13 Christian Systems of Meaning

----Wiles, “What Christians Believe”

Sept 18 Early Christianity and the potential for race


Sept 20 Colonial Encounters: European and Native American

--James Axtell, The Invasion Within: The Cultural Origins of North America, Chapter 7 (pp. 131-178)

Sept 25 Africans in the Americas
--Winthrop Jordan, The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States, Chap. 2 (pp 26-54) and 5 pp 87-98.

Sept 27 Atlantic Slavery: Historical Primary Sources

Oct 2 Whiteness and Religion: 19th Century Formations

Oct 4 Racial Formations in Change

4:30: Talk by Inderpal Grewal, author of Saving the Security State

Oct 9 Asians, African Americans, and Missionaries

Oct 11 Race, “Hindus” and the Law

4:30 Talk by Lila Abu-Lughod

Paper #1 Due by Friday Oct 13 at 5:00 to Moodle
Oct 16  Ethiopianism and Rastafari


Oct 18  Prof away giving talk

--No reading--work on paper

Oct 23  Fall break 19th to 24th no class

Oct 25  A History of Racism

--George Fredrickson, Racism: A Short History, Ch. 1 (pp 1-47).

Oct 30  Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism

--Sander Gilman, The Jew's Body, Ch 7 (169-193); Ch 10 (pp. 234-243).

Nov 1  A history of US Anti-semitism


Nov 6  Anti-Judaism without Jews


Nov 8  Race, The Middle East and US Cultural Politics

--Melani McAlister, Epic Encounters, Preface, Intro, Ch. 2
Nov 13  
*Multiculturalism and the Terrorist Threat*

--Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, Ch 5, 6, Conc.

Nov 15  
*Race paranoia in US politics, then and now*

--David Brion Davis, “Responses to International Involvement and Ethnic Pluralism (1918-1948) in *The Fear of Conspiracy*, pp 205-210
--Charles Jansen, “Emulating the Tribe” (2015) from Radix

Nov 20  
No class; Thanksgiving Week off

-- Nov 26 Paper # 2 Due by 5:00 to Moodle

Nov 27  
*Racing Religion, Muslims, and the Law since September 11“


Nov 29 Reading TBA

Dec 5  
*Ideology-based Racialization and Islamophobia*


Dec 6  
*Paranoia and Evil*


Reading Period begins December 8 and ends December 11
Final Paper Due December 16 at 5:00, to Moodle

Nov 21  Pagan White Supremecists