BAPTIST HERITAGE: EARLY AMERICAN BAPTISTS

(CH 631)

COURSE SYLLABUS

Purpose of Course

Professional Christian leaders need to have a sure and settled understanding about the historical background and distinctive teachings of their individual denominations. Lessons learned from analysis of the successes and failures of earlier Baptist leaders can be very instructive and helpful to current ministers as they strive for proficiency and growth in the ministry. Knowledge of one’s past contributes to understanding the present and the future. Clear understanding, formulation, and articulation of such historical events and doctrines, therefore, is foundational to an effective ministry.

This course is designed to enable the graduate student to achieve the following goals:

1. By means of research to discover and delineate the distinctive historical background of Baptists in America, England, and Europe.
2. To gain first-hand familiarity with some of the problems and influence that Baptists have had on society and culture.
3. To become familiar with technological tools and the latest resources for use in research, including the Internet and various data bases and indexes.
4. To learn how to synthesize and present logically and clearly in written and oral form the results of research which has been made concerning certain historical and theological subjects.

To do this, we will study several primary and secondary sources related to Baptist history and practice. The professor will bring lectures also concerning various theories pertaining to the origin of Baptists, and the members of the seminar will contribute by presenting reports and providing thoughtful reflection, discussion, and conclusions based on the research of the various members. Hopefully, all of us at the conclusion of the study will be stronger Christians and more cognizant of our distinctive place in history.

1Office hours are on Monday, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, 10:30 – 12:00 noon and by appointment at other times. The professor’s home telephone number is: 903-586-5920. The office number is: 903-586-2501 ext. 223. Email address is: philipbryan@bmats.edu

2The class meets in the Mount Olive Room on Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.
Requirements

Each student will:

(1) Read all of the textbooks and at least 300 pages of collateral reading (20% of grade);
(2) Participate in class discussion, reflecting knowledge gleaned from reading preparation (20%); and
(3) Present three reports to the members of the seminar, summarizing portions of the textbooks and other Baptist histories and documents and reporting other research concerning some other aspects of Baptist history and/or historiography (60%).

Students should provide all members of the seminar with detailed outlines of their presentations, i.e., reports (4-7 pp., single-spaced). Each report should be well-documented and include any pertinent bibliographical and/or biographical information. Neatness is important; part of the evaluation of the reports will be based on proper form, spelling, etc.

Textbooks

Philip R. Bryan, "An Analysis of the Ecclesiology of Associational Baptists, 1900-1950"
Z.N. Morrell, Flowers and Fruits from the Wilderness

Suggested Sources for Historical Research and Reports


Official class attendance policies are outlined in the Seminary Catalog, pp. 44-45. Moreover, discussion is encouraged but students should be careful not to dominate such discussion, and ALL CELL PHONES SHOULD BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS TIMES!!

Please limit the reports to NO MORE THAN 7 pages, single-spaced.

Several of these books are available through the BMA Seminary virtual bookstore: http://bmats.edu left hand column.

Besides a copy in the library, this book (and several other pertinent materials) can be reached on the professor’s web page: http://www.geocities.com/prbryan.geo

Besides a copy in the library, this book can be reached on the professor’s web page: http://www.geocities.com/prbryan.geo

Students should contact the professor for a copy of this book.
David Benedict, A General History of the Baptist Denomination
William Cathcart, The Baptist Encyclopaedia
H. Leon McBeth, The Baptist Heritage
________. A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage
________. Texas Baptists: A Sesquicentennial History
W. H. Whitsitt, A Question in Baptist History

Format

The format this semester will be structured along the lines of a seminar. Various reports by students and lectures by the professor will provide the bases for class discussion.

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>Introduction of Course, Assignment of Summary Topics and Bibliographical Research</td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Library Work</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Library Work</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
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<td>LECTURE: “A Critique of the English Separatist Descent Theory in Baptist Historiography” (Part II)</td>
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<td>(5)</td>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>II. Baptist Origins in Texas and Other States</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>REPORT:</td>
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<td>(7)</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>III. Local Associations</td>
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<td>(8)</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>REPORT:</td>
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9This CD was produced by The Baptist Standard Bearer in Paris, AR. It is available online at their Website. We also have a copy in Kellar Library.
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<td><strong>IV. Baptist Historians</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spring Break: Class Dismissed</strong></td>
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<td>(14)</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>REPORT:</td>
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<td>(15)</td>
<td>5/13</td>
<td><strong>READING REPORT AFFIRMATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>FINAL WRAP-UP</strong></td>
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WELCOME ABOARD! IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU ON THE TEAM!!
Research Notes:

I. Theories of Baptist Origins
II. Baptist Origins of churches and association/conventions in Texas and some other states
III. Local Association origins
IV. Baptist Historians
   a. SBC  b. ABA  c. BMA  d. Other Baptists

b. Bogard, Clover, Ashcraft, John Ferguson

Check these historians about (a) biographical information and (b) their individual theories of Baptist Origins, including possible restoration of immersion in 1640, John Clarke, Roger Williams, and relationships between associational Baptists and SBC, and church perpetuity.