



EUH5934
Monday, period 8-10
Keene-Flint 013
Nina Caputo
Dept of History

Office Hours

Apostasy and Self

Through much of history, people changed religion because a ruler or head of a kinship group did so, whether as a result of military defeat or as a form of alliance. Late antiquity saw the emergence religious conversion as a means of expressing religious, political, intellectual, or social identities. When we talk about conversion today, we usually mean the self-determined conversion of an individual from one form of orthodoxy to another. As a rule, this kind of spiritual or intellectual transformation is radical and complete, a casting off the old and replacing it with a new self, often sealed with a change of name. And since late antiquity, conversion is also the stuff of stories, whether written or oral. This course will examine the conceptualization, representation, narration, and reception of converts and conversion in Europe from the middle ages through modernity, ending with Trotsky and Malcolm X.

Written assignments : Academic writing demands that you make your arguments in a clear and precise manner and that you back them up with evidence. Thus, written assignments will be graded on the basis of **style as well as content**. Completion of the written assignments is *absolutely required* . Late assignments **will not** be accepted without penalty. Please make every effort to apprise the instructor of adverse circumstances that affect your ability to attend class or complete assignments on time. Official documentation is required to excuse an absence and to schedule make-up assignments. Unless otherwise noted, assignments will be collected at the end of the precept session for which they are assigned. Do not submit your work to via email – written work must be presented in hard-copy.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend class regularly and arrive for lecture promptly. A penalty will be imposed on students who arrive late for class. Attendance is mandatory. Unexcused absences will be penalized in the following manner: you will be permitted three absences over the course of the term; every absence thereafter will lower your grade by one third. Absences will be excused if students provide proper documentation.

Conduct PLAGIARISM and will not accepted in this class because it violates the University of Florida's honesty policy. Please review the policy at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/>.

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation

must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Please turn off your cell phones. If your cell phone rings or if you spend your time texting, you will be asked to leave the class and this will count as an unexcused absence.

Online Course Evaluation Process: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Suggested books:

There are no required books for this course. As much as possible, secondary readings, course materials, and other information will be made available through **Canvas**. The following books are recommended.

Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative*

Karl F. Morrison, *Understanding Conversion*

Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*

Course Requirements:

Attendance is mandatory

Participation — 10%

Two 5-7 page papers — due 4 February and 24 March

A final research paper – 15-20 pages – due 29 April

Grade scale:

87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	below 60 = E
93-100 = A	83-86 = B	73-76 = C	63-66 = D
90-92 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-	60-62 = D

I 7 January

William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, lectures 8-10

Mark Baer, "History and Religious Conversion" in *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion* ed. Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian (Oxford, 2014), 25-47.

Max Weber, *Sociology of Religion*, selections

II 14 January

Exodus 1-14, 19-20, 24, 31

Maccabees I 1-5

Acts of the Apostles 9:1-19, 22-23:11, 26:12-30

1 Thessalonians

Arthur Darby Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo*, Chapter 1, 10, and 14

Alan Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee*, Chapters 1, 3, and 5

III 21 January – MLK Day, no class

IV 28 January

Augustine, *Confessions*, selections

Morrison on Augustine

Karl Morrison, "Posing the Question: Perspectives from a Historian's Desk" in *Understanding Conversion* (University Press of Virginia, 1992), 1-27

Paula Fredriksen, "Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self," *Journal of Theological Studies* 37, no. 1 (1986): 4-34

V 4 February

Ryan Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative* (University of Pennsylvania, 2012)

Adnan A. Husain, "Conversion to History: Negating Exile and Messianism in Al-Samaw'al Al-Maghribi's Polemic against Judaism," *Medieval Encounters* 8, no. 1 (March 2002): 34.

VI 11 February

Hermannus quondam iudaeos, *Opusculum de conversione sua*,

Jean Claude Schmitt, *The Conversion of Herman the Jew: Autobiography, History, and Fiction in the Twelfth Century*, trans. Alex J. Novikoff, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), excerpts

Avrom Saltman, "Hermann's Opusculum de Conversione Sua: Truth and Fiction," *Revue Des Études Juives* 147, no. 1-2 (1988): 31-56

Aviad M. Kleinberg, "Hermannus Judaesus's 'Opusculum': In Defense of Its Authenticity," *Revue Des Études Juives* 151, no. 3-4 (1992): 337-53.

Arnaldo Momigliano "A Medieval Jewish Autobiography" in *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism* trans. Maura Masella-Gayley (University of Chicago Press, 1994), 109-119

VII 18 February

Luther, "The Ninety-five Theses";

Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, excerpts;

Brad Gregory, "'To the point of shedding your blood': The Bible, Communities of Faith, and Martyrs' Resistance to Conversion in the Reformation Era" in *Conversion: Old and New Worlds* ed. Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton (University of Rochester Press, 2003), 66-86.

John Woolman, *Journal*, <http://www.strecorsoc.org/jwoolman/w09.html>

Sander L. Gilman, *Jewish Self-Hatred: Anti-Semitism and the Hidden Language of the Jews* (Baltimore and London: Johns H, 1986), chapter 2.

Descartes, *Meditations*

VIII 25 February

Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*

Trotsky, *My Life*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1930/mylife/1930-lif.pdf>

IX 4 March – Spring Break

X 11 March

Malcolm X, http://www.malcolm-x.org/docs/let_mecca.htm

G.G. Harphram, "Conversion and the Language of Autobiography," in *Studies in Autobiography*, ed. J. Olney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 42–50.

XI 18 March

TBA

XII 25 March

TBA

XIII 1 April

TBA

XIV 8 April

TBA

XV 15 April

TBA

XVI 22 April

TBA