

STARR KING SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY

Summer Session, 2010

Thomas Starr King as Bridge Builder

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This short, but intense course will seek to locate Thomas Starr King both in his historical and in his denominational contexts. One of the heroes of early San Francisco history—celebrated after his tragic death at the age of 39 as the man who “saved California for the Union”—Starr King is now known primarily to Unitarian Universalists. In entitling the course “TSK as Bridge Builder,” the aim was to call attention to the multiple ways in which he spanned divides: Unitarians and Universalists, east coast and west coast, working-class roots and power elite congregants in San Francisco, friendships with men who had very different approaches to the direction of the denomination, such as Theodore Parker and Henry Bellows. The main text is a superb synthesis of American religious history through the Civil War. It will be VERY important to read this long book in advance and then to come to class each day prepared to discuss the chapters assigned to each day. I should also explain that I recently received a grant from the UU Funding Program to microfilm some 400 TSK speeches and sermons that have been in the Boston Public Library. There is a listing of the titles, the sermons are very legible, and they constitute a wonderful resource for this class. I’ll hand out the list of titles on the first day of class.

Required text:

Mark Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*.

<http://tinyurl.com/y76odcw> | ISBN-13: 978-0195151114 | paperbck ISBN-13: 978-0195182996

Readings on reserve:

William Ellery Channing, “Remarks on National Literature,” in *The Complete Works of William Ellery Channing*.

<http://tinyurl.com/yvr8qck> | ISBN-13: 978-1428631571

Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900*, Chapter 2.

<http://tinyurl.com/y4lxhv> | ISBN-13: 978-0664223540

Richard Fox, *Jesus in America: Personal Savior, Cultural Hero, National Obsession*, Chapter 5.

<http://tinyurl.com/y2iogbm> | ISBN-13: 978-0060628741

Thomas Starr King, *Christianity and Humanity*, ed. By Edwin Whipple, selected sermons.

<http://tinyurl.com/y2zr5se> | ISBN-13: 978-0554618654

Schedule of the Week:

Monday, August 9: Introduction to Starr King and Exploration of Antecedents

Reading: Parts I and II of Noll

Tuesday, August 10: Two Paths to the Americanization of Protestant Christianity

Reading: Parts III and IV of Noll; Channing's "Remarks on National Literature"

Wednesday, August 11: Starr King in Boston

Reading: Chapter 5 of Dorrien; Chapter 5 of Fox; Matthews ms., "A Fit Saint for California," to be handed out in class

Thursday, August 12: Starr King in California

Reading: Part V of Noll; Matthews ms., "The Cultural Front," to be handed out in class

Friday, August 13: Summing Up

Reading: Three TSK sermons—"The Supremacy of Jesus," "The Supreme Court Decision and Our Duties," "Lessons from the Sierra Nevada"

Written assignment:

This will consist of a paper of about 10 pages in length. Noll makes the argument that most Northern Protestant clergymen fell short of Lincoln in depth of theological sophistication. What I'd like you to do is to select one of the TSK ms. sermons dated before the Civil War and contrast it with a speech or sermon written after the outbreak of war. How does the rhetoric change? How does the content change? This is not written in concrete, so if you have another idea, please see me about it!

Supplemental reading:

I have chosen readings not only about UU's, but also about some of TSK's significant contemporaries or great figures or themes in American religious history. In all cases these are books I have read myself and learned from.

Robert Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*, 1994.

Debby Applegate, *The Most Famous Man in America: The Biography of Henry Ward Beecher*, 2006.

Dee Andrews, *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800: The Shaping of an Evangelical Culture*, 2000.

Amy Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770-1880*, 2001.

Charles Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life/ The Private Years*, 1992.

Capper, *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life/ The Public Years*, 2007.

Patrick Carey, *Orestes Brownson: American Religious Weathervane*, 2004.

Andrew Delbanco, *William Ellery Channing: An Essay on the Liberal Spirit in America*, 1981.

George Fredrickson, "The Coming of the Lord: The Northern Protestant Clergy and the Civil War Crisis," in Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War*, 1998.

Dean Grodzins, *American Heretic: Theodore Parker and Transcendentalism*, 2002.

Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President*, 1999.

Philip Gura, *American Transcendentalism*, 2007.

E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*, 2003.

Daniel Walker Howe, *The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861*, 1970.

Walter Donald Kring, *Henry Whitney Bellows*, 1979.

George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life*, 2003.

Megan Marshall, *The Peabody Sisters: Three Women Who Ignited American Romanticism*, 2005.

Robert Bruce Mullin, *The Puritan as Yankee: A Life of Horace Bushnell*, 2002.

Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, 2006.

Robert Richardson, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*, 1995.

Richardson, *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*, 1986.

David Robinson, *The Unitarians and the Universalists*, 1985.

Conrad Wright, *The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America*, 1955.

Donald Yacovone, *Samuel Joseph May and the Dilemmas of the Liberal Persuasion, 1797-1871*, 1991