

ACTS

SEMINARIES

Associated Canadian Theological Schools

HIS 540: History of Christianity I: From Christ to the Dawn of the Reformation

Professor: Daniel L Worden, Ph.D.
Fall Term 2019, 3 credit hours
Monday, 11:30-2:10 pm, Fosmark Building
Prerequisites: RES 500 (May be taken concurrently)

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I. Course Description

This course surveys the history of Christianity from the time of Christ until the eve of the Protestant Reformation in the fifteenth century AD. It is concerned not only with ecclesiastical organization and practice, but also with the history of theology, mission and spirituality, and the dynamic relationship between Christianity and culture. The course highlights various cultural, political and theological influences that have shaped the church's institutional development and explores major aspects of the relationship between the Christian faith and western culture.

The course will be taught by using lectures, group discussions, student presentations, augmented by readings from textbooks, primary source documents and exploration of internet sites. While the textbooks will provide a chronological survey of persons, events and movements important during this period, the lectures and discussion of source documents will permit a more detailed examination of select topics.

II. Learning Outcomes

By successfully completing the course, each student should:

A. Have a general knowledge of the key individuals and events within the first 1400-1500 years of the history of Christianity, and be familiar with enough names, dates and events to construct a chronological sequence of major events in the history of Christianity;

B Demonstrate skills in reading and interpreting historical materials including the identification and evaluation of different historiographical approaches, and the ability to identify and analyse complexities within Christianity through careful, sensitive reading of documents and events;

C Identify historical resources useful for personal devotional, intellectual and theological development as well as congregational edification and renewal;

D Be equipped with knowledge and skills for exploring their own spiritual, theological and Christian roots;

E Utilize historical knowledge and research skills for critical thinking and responding to some of the contemporary issues challenging Christianity.

III. Textbooks

A. Required Readings

Bettenson, Henry and Chris Maunder, eds. *Documents of the Christian Church*. 4th edition, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity Vol. I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. 2nd edition, New York: Harper-One, 2010.

Heath, Gordon L. *Doing Church History: A User-Friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008.

Williams, D.H. *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

B. Recommended Resources (on-line or from TWU Library). Resources are provided for the student wishing to discover interesting topics for personal research and aspiring to articulate well the relevant arguments.

Eusebuis. (C.F. Cruse, transl.). *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*. Peabody, MA Hendrickson Publishers, 1998. (There are other translations; any one is acceptable.).

Ferguson, Everett. *Church History Volume One: From Christ to the Dawn of the Reformation: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*. 2nd Edition, Zondervan, 2013.

_____. *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. 3rd edition, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2003.

Frend, W.H.C. *The Rise of Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.

Hill, Jonathan. *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity*. Lion Publishing: Oxford England, 2006.

Madigan, Kevin. *Medieval Christianity: A New History*. Yale University Press, 2015.

Noll, Mark A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. 3rd edition, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1997, 200, 2012.

Northey, Margot, Bradford A. Anderson, Joel N. Lohr. *Making Sense in Religious Studies: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*. 2nd edition, Oxford: OUP, 2015.

Socrates and Sozomenus. *Ecclesiastical History*. In the *NPNF*, Second Series, Vol. II. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, repr., 1983.

Theodoret. *Ecclesiastical History*. In the *NPNF Second Series*, Vol III. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, repr., 1983.

Wilken, R.L., *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003.

IV. Course Trajectory and Outline

Since this course traces the history of the Christian Church from the Apostolic Age of the first century AD to the dawn of the Protestant Reformation—around the middle of the 15th century, a careful outline is observed. This direction covers nearly 1500 years of the growth, adaptation, theological advance and international developments of the Christian Church and its impact throughout Western Europe—though some attention is given necessarily to the East. Primarily, the focus is directed to some of the major turning points that shaped Christianity through its stages as the Early Church, the Imperial Church, and finally the Medieval Church—Christendom. These turning points include noteworthy figures (both political and ecclesiastical) and crucial events (e.g. decisive conversions, theological controversies, military conquests, political-religious alliances, and the development of religious orders and universities). The course, therefore, will observe the social, cultural, and theological crossroads—as well as the immense contributions, but unfortunate corruption—that directed the path of western Christianity to the emergence of Protestant Reform.

A. Section One: The Early Church

Date	Class and Subject Matter	Chapter Readings in González	Page Readings in Bettenson
September 9	Class 1: Intro, Historiography, the Humanities, Syllabus, Textbooks, and Course Trajectory	Ch. 1	No reading
	Class 2: Greco-Roman and Jewish Contexts	Chs. 2-4	pp. 1-5
September 16	Class 3: The Christ-event, the Apostolic Mission to Jews—Jewish persecution against Christians, Apostolic Mission to Gentiles	Ch. 5	No reading
	Class 4: The Fall of Jerusalem and the Sub-Apostolic Period: The Loss of the Apostles, the Emergence of Apostolic Fathers, Early Developments of Ecclesial Leadership	Ch. 6	pp. 66-78

**Summary of
Doing Church
History is DUE
today**

September 23	Class 5: Early Persecution of Christianity and the Rise of Second Century Apologists	Ch. 7	pp. 5-14
	Class 6: The Diversity of Christianity, the Invention of Heresy, and the Emergence of Christian Orthodoxy	Ch. 8	pp. 28-33; 37-41; 66-83; pp. 72-75
September 30 Summary of <i>The Epistle to Diognetus</i> is due today	Class 7 Early Alexandrian Christianity, Emerging Christian Teachers, the Gnostic Challenge—Clement of Alexandria	Ch. 9	Review pp. 37-41
	Class 8: Origen of Alexandria/Caesarea, Third Century Controversies, Empire-wide Imperial and Cultural Crises, and Campaigns of Christian Persecution	Chs. 10-11	pp. 14-16

B. Section Two: The Imperial Church

October 7 One-page Summary of Williams's Chapter 4—"The Fall"—pp.101-131	Class 9: Conversion of Constantine, Christian Toleration, Founding of Constantinople, and an Ecumenical Council at Nicaea (Arianism)	Chs. 12-14, 16-19	pp. 16-20; 25-28; 42-47
	Class 10: Theodosius I and Christianity as Official Religion of the Empire—Reaction: Early Monasticism, Anthony and Pachomius	Ch. 15	pp. 21-24
October 14	THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS		
October 21	READING BREAK—NO CLASS		
October 28 Preparation for Major Essay is due today	Class 11: Road to Chalcedon, the Orthodox Definition of Faith (a decisive Creed), and Constantinople as <i>Nueva Roma</i>	Chs. 20, 28	pp. 47-55
	Class 12: Christian Piety East of the Empire	Chs. 25-26	No reading
November 4	Class 13: The Rise of the Papacy in the West (Rome)	Ch. 27	pp. 84-88; 102-122
	Class 14: The Aftermath of Chalcedon, the Faith and Exploits of Justinian (the Great) in the East (Constantinople)	Review Ch. 28	No reading
November 11	Class 15: Political, Spiritual, Biblical, and Intellectual Influences that Shaped Western Medieval Christianity.	Chs. 21-24	pp. 55-66
	Class 16: Conversion of Clovis I, the Merovingian Dynasty, and Papal Alliance with Frankish Kings, Gregory the Great	Review Ch. 27	No reading

C. Section Three: The Medieval Church (Christendom)

November 18	Class 17: Charlemagne and the Carolingian Renaissance in the West—Cultural Development through Feudalism	Ch. 29	pp. 106-107
	Class 18: Islam and Iconoclasm in the East— The East West Schism	Ch. 31 pp. 311-313	pp. 101-106
November 25	Class 19: Benedictine Monasticism, Monastic Movements, and the Evangelization of Western Europe	Review Ch. 27 and read Ch. 30	pp. 127-141
	Class 20: Monastic Reform and the Role of the Mendicant Orders (Franciscans and Dominicans).	Ch. 32	pp. 135-140
December 2 Major Essay is due today	Class 21: The Emergence of Cathedrals and Chapters, Universities and Scholastic Theology	Review Ch. 32; Esp. pp. 369-380	pp. 144-159
	Class 22: Papal Corruption, Early Flames of Protest and Reform, and The Impact of Renaissance Humanism—its Vision for Reform	Chs. 33-35	pp. 191-98
December 3	LAST DAY OF CLASSES		
December 9	MINI-CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS Please make efforts to finish strong!		

V. Course Activities/Requirements and Grading

NB: Evaluation of student performance in this course intentionally does not include knowledge-based exams. Instead, projects have been designed that will help students build a solid base of historical knowledge as well as develop analytical, applicational and integrative skills.

To this end, students will be encouraged to work effectively with primary and secondary sources in order to advance their research, writing, and especially, their dialectical skills by asking and answering relevant historical questions pertinent to sound teaching and relevant ministry. Students will improve their ability to write succinct “prose” essays by composing a clearly defined thesis, well-organized arguments, and by supplying sufficient supportive evidence.

Course activities and requirements for successful completion of this course include the following:

A. Secondary chapter readings in González, the readings of two books: D.H. Williams and G. Heath, and the primary page readings in Bettenson must be well-observed. All readings specified must be completed before class begins. Concerning González and Bettenson, students will sign an attendance/log sheet indicating they have or have not read the assigned material.

B. One-page summary of Gordon Heath, *Doing Church History*.

C. One-page summary of an Ancient Document: *The Epistle to Diognetus*—this document is interesting and useful, as the author seeks to explain the mystery and presence of the Christian life in this world to an outsider. It is a concise and excellent example of how one Christian teacher shows how theology informs ministry.

D. Summary of DH Williams Chapter 4— “The Corruption of the Church and Its Tradition—this is the “Fall Paradigm”—pp.101-131 in *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants*.

E. Preparation for Major Research Essay: Student will compose a short report, which must include a proposed thesis statement, a conceptual outline—with applicable arguments, and an annotated bibliography that reflects relevant research and the direction of the Major Essay. Please begin to work on this alongside the earlier classes and assignments, as this is the fruit of your major interest and work for the class—so enjoy this process from beginning to end of the course.

F. Major Research Essay: Students will research and write an academic essay of approximately 2,500-3,000 words on a subject pertinent to the first 1500 years of the history of Christianity. Each essay must have a title page, followed by a page containing an outline along with a 1-2 sentence thesis statement—**essays without such a page will not be accepted for grading. Please refer to your textbook—*Doing Church History*, pp. 80-85.**

Options:

(1) Student may pick one of the three epochs of interest and write an academic essay demonstrating decisive research. Spinning off the three-part outline by González, consider these three topics: 1. The Early Church—Theology and Ministry after the Apostles (AD 70-AD 325); The Imperial Church—Theology and Ministry after Constantine (AD 325-800); The Medieval Church—Theology and Ministry after Charlemagne (AD 800-AD 1500).

(2) As an alternate, the essay may feature an individual, institution, movement, document, religious practice or theological issue, but the subject should be concise enough to be investigated in some detail. In addition to key secondary sources try also to use primary sources in your analysis. Your aim in the essay must be to **analyze and explain** the historical development and significance of your subject. Every section of the essay needs to relate to the central argument.

This assignment represents a significant proportion of the final grade indicating the level of research and general quality expected. Begin work on this project as soon as possible by selecting a topic and assembling resources. It is a good idea to discuss your essay topic in advance with either the professor or a teaching assistant.

NB: The grade for this assignment will be based on the following criteria:

1. Clarity and Force of Argument (plausible thesis, sound logic, evidence supports thesis, etc.)
2. Quality of Research (depth and breadth, evidence of discerning analysis, etc.)
3. Organization (effectively organized, sections support main thesis, smooth transitions, etc)
4. Writing style (eloquent, cogent, proper format, grammar, etc.)

G. Mini-Conference Response Presentation (takes the place of a final exam): Students will read and assess DH Williams’s book, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for a Suspicious Protestants*. and write a five-to-seven-page response-review and prepare for a final discussion on the future of Evangelicalism in respect to the Apostolic Tradition. Significant to the presentation is an integration of the historical moves of the history of Christianity integrated with Williams’s concerns about moving forward and the student’s personal critique and thoughtful perspectives. The format of the mini conference is to be determined based upon the needs of the students.

Important to the presentation of your response is to wrestle with these four questions:

1. Should the Evangelical Church Culture re-connect itself to the Apostolic Tradition?
2. Did the Political-Religious moves of Constantine in the early 4th Century set up the “Fall” of the Church? What are the implications either way?
3. What are the limits of the Reformed tenet of *Sola Scriptura* in contemporary religious culture?
4. Should Christian leaders (such as Pastors and Teachers) be aware of and even teach the historical movements of Christianity and how its Movers responded to their contextual issues (e.g., How did Clement of Alexandria handle the heretical issues of Gnosticism?)—could and should these historical correctives be taught in contemporary culture?

NB: Students who are unfamiliar with writing research essays in history should consult Heath, *Doing Church History* (2008), or introductory guides such as Anthony Brundage, *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*, 3rd ed. (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 2002); Mary Lynn Rampollo, *A Pocket Guide to Writing History*, 5th ed. (Boston: Bedford Books, 2006); or William Kelleher, and Helen Towser Jones, *Writing History: A Guide for Canadian Students*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2007).

Some of the following websites might also prove useful:

Boston University Guide: http://www.bu.edu/history/files/2011/01/writing_guide.pdf
 Suggestions on Essay Writing: <http://www.westmont.edu/~work/material/writing.html>
 History Commandments: <http://personal2.stthomas.edu/gwschlabach/courses/10commnd.htm>

VI. Course Evaluation, Due Dates, and meaning of Grade Scale:

Evaluation Method	%	Due Date	Assessment of Course Learning Outcomes
Attendance, assigned reading and personal engagement during class experience	10	Please Follow Course Schedule on point	

Summary of Heath, <i>Doing Church History</i>	5	September 16	
Summary of Diognetus	5	September 30	
Summary of Williams Chapter 4	10	October 7	
Preparation for Major Essay	10	October 28	
Major Essay	30	December 2	
Review of Williams and participation in Mini-Conference	30	December 9	

GRADE SCALE: THE MEANING OF LETTER GRADES

Letter Grade	Definition	Grade Point
A+	Outstanding Excellent	4.30
A		4.00
A-		3.70
B+	Proficient Good Average	3.30
B		3.00
B-		2.70
C+	Adequate Acceptable Marginal	2.30
C		2.00
C-		1.70
F	Inadequate	0.00

VII. MISCELLANEOUS NOTES and COURSE POLICIES

A. Assignment Format. Unless otherwise specified, all written work must be **double-spaced** and in a 12 point Times New Roman. Please use page-bottom footnotes (not end-notes). Bibliographies with complete citations must be attached at the end of each paper. The style guide of choice at ACTS Seminaries is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 9th ed. **Grades will be reduced if the Turabian style format is not used** (take special care with bibliographies and footnotes). Students may find the following website helpful:

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

B. E-file Assignment Submission. All written work must be electronically submitted as MS Word or easily convertible to Word format. Assignments may either be sent by email directly to the professor or uploaded to the TWU Moodle course site. **When submitting assignments in electronic form, please be sure to include your last name, course number and the assignment in the file name (e.g., Prof Worden - HIS540 Research Essay.docx).**

C. Inclusive Language. Develop the habit of using inclusive language. Failure to do so in writing or

in public speaking is often considered offensive in North America, and it is impossible to publish material without using inclusive language. It is therefore a useful habit to develop during graduate studies.

D. Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty. Students are expected to be familiar with the ACTS policy concerning plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism will be treated as a serious offense and will result in the failure of the specific assignment and possibly also in a failing grade in the course. Every instance of plagiarism without exception (even minimal plagiarism) will be reported both to the registrar and the Academic Success Committee of ACTS Seminaries, and will result in a letter included in your permanent student record. Further details about this subject can be found in the ACTS Seminaries Student Handbook.

E. TWU Writing Centre is available to assist all students with their academic writing assignments in any subject at any stage of the writing process from brainstorming to editing. This is a free service. In-person one-on-one coaching sessions are available. Online Graduate Sessions are also available with video conferencing and document sharing. For more information, visit create@twu.ca/learningcommons or contact writingcentre@twu.ca.

F. Students who use the assistance of tutors must indicate that they have done so, must describe the nature of the assistance, and must include full contact information of the tutor. Failure to disclose the assistance of a tutor will result in the rejection of assignment, and may also result in having the assignment categorized as plagiarism. Students will be exempt from this disclosure requirement if they use the TWU Writing Centre.

G. One due date extension may be requested without penalty on eligible assignments, IF requests are submitted (a) in advance of the due date, and (b) with an alternative due date. The marks for assignments that are submitted late will be reduced by one letter grade, and will not be accepted if more than seven days late except in the case of extenuating circumstances.