

HIST/RELI 401 Christianity in History

Fall 2009

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday, 2:00-3:00 p.m.; or by appointment.

TEXTS:

Justo L. González. The Story of Christianity. Vol. 1. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984.

Selected Primary Readings. See the reading schedule below and the attached list of web addresses.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Assigned Readings and Quizzes. Readings for each week are listed in the class schedule. On Tuesday of each week there will be a brief quiz related to the González reading for that week. (The first quiz will be on Thursday, September 3.) Quizzes are worth five points each to a maximum of 60 points.

2. Discussion/Research Essay. Each student will develop an essay based on one of the seven discussion essay questions in the class schedule. Essays should be four to five pages and include a bibliography. Students will discuss the essays in the form of a panel in class. They are due on the day the question is listed in the class schedule. Selection of essays will be September 8.

3. A. Discussion Questions. For each week in which primary readings are assigned, each student will come to class prepared with a discussion question for the consideration of the class. Questions should raise issues of interpretation and analysis rather than matters of fact. Questions should be typed and printed and will be turned in at the end of the period. (If a student is encountering printer difficulties, I will accept these questions through e-mail if they were mailed before class.) These discussion questions are worth 2 points for each assignment, for a total of 22 points.

B. Primary Reading Essays. In addition, each student will study three of the primary documents assigned and prepare a brief essay in response. Essays should be no more than one page. The strongest essays will be focused around a clear central point and will use material from the reading to support the point. Essays should be typed and printed. They are due in class on the day for which the reading is assigned. Late essays may not be accepted. Essays are worth 10 points each.

Students should be prepared to select preferences on September 8.

4. Exams. Three exams will be given during the semester. Guidelines will be distributed prior to each exam. They are scheduled for October 1, November 5, and December 18.

EVALUATION:

Discussion/Research Essay	200
Primary Document Questions	22
Primary Document Essays	30 (10 each)
Quizzes	60
Exams	300 (100 each)
TOTAL	612 points

Final grades will be awarded according to traditional percentages: 90% A, 80% B, 70% C, 60% D, and below 60% F. Pluses and minuses in each category will be given at the top and low ends. In keeping with the Registrar's policy of calculating GPAs, there is no A+.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

September 1-3 **Christianity and History;
Christianity and Judaism**

Reading: González, 7-30.

September 8-10 **Christianity and Rome**

Reading: González, 31-48.

September 8 Discussion Essay and Primary Source Selections Due.

September 10 Reading: Correspondence between Pliny the Younger and Emperor Trajan; Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas.

September 15-17 **The Problem of Authority**

Reading: González, 49-81.

September 17 Reading: Justin Martyr, The First Apology; The Second Apology; Tertullian, On the Proscription of Heretics; Irenaeus, Against Heresies.

September 17 Discussion Essay: Did the church need the structures of authority which began to develop in the second century?

September 22-24 **Christianity in Society**

Reading: González, 82-108.

September 24 Reading: Ignatius, Epistle to the Smyrneans; The Didache; Justin Martyr, The First Apology.

September 29-October 1 **Constantine; The Origins of Monasticism**

Reading: González, 113-150.

October 1 Reading: Athanasius, The Life of St. Anthony; Constantine, "The Edict of Milan."

October 1 **Midterm Examination, Due October 6**

October 6-8 **Arianism and Other Controversies**

Reading: González, 151-172.

October 8 Readings: Theodoret, Against Heresies.

October 8 Discussion Essay: Did the Council of Nicaea resolve the Trinitarian controversy in the correct manner? Did it indicate anything about the best way to settle doctrinal disputes?

October 13-15 **Arianism and Other Controversies, part 2**

Reading: González, 151-172.

October 20-22 **The Church of the Late Empire**

Reading: González, 173-219.

October 22 Readings: Augustine, Confessions; Anti-Pelagian Writings.

October 22 Discussion Essay: Constantine's embrace of Christianity is generally considered to be a turning point in the history of the church. Develop an essay in which you examine this crucial event, producing a thesis in which you assess its impact on Christianity.

October 27-29 **The Collapse of Rome; The Rise of Europe**

Reading: González, 231-276.

October 29 Reading: The Council of Chalcedon.

October 29 Discussion Essay: Examine the question of the role of women in early church through a reading of Karen J. Torjesen, When Women Were Priests. You may address the issue by using Torjesen as one of many sources or you may prepare a more formal book review of Torjesen's book.

November 3-5 **The Foundations of Medieval Christianity**

Reading: González, 277-291.

November 5 Reading: Benedict, The Rule of St. Benedict.

November 5 **Midterm Examination, Due November 10**

November 10-12 **East and West**

Reading: González, 292-300.

November 12 Discussion Essay: Develop an essay on the relationship

between Islam and Christianity. You may develop your own topic based on your reading, but three possible topics are: reasons for the success of Islam in replacing Christianity in the Middle East in the seventh century; the influence of Islamic civilization on Christian Europe in the Middle Ages; and the impact of the Crusades on the relationship between Christianity and Islam.

November 17-19 **The Height of the Medieval Synthesis**

Reading: González, 301-323.

November 19 Reading: Anselm, Proslogion; Boniface VIII, “Unam Sanctam”; Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica.

November 24 **The Dissolution of the Medieval Synthesis**

Reading: González, 324-341.

November 24 Reading: Julian of Norwich, Book of Showings; Revelations of Divine Love.

November 26 **Thanksgiving Holiday, no class**

December 1-3 **The Eve of the Reformation**

Reading: González, 342-374.

December 3 Readings: The Council of Constance; Thomas a Kempis, The Imitation of Christ.

December 3 Discussion Essay: What was the importance of mysticism in late-medieval Christianity? In your answer, be sure you have considered the place of such mystics as Bonaventure, Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Johann Tauler, and Catherine of Siena.

December 8-10 **Christianity Comes to the New World**

Reading: González, 379-411.

December 10 Discussion Essay: Develop an essay on the introduction of Christianity into the new world. Issues you might address include the propriety of its introduction, the soundness of the methods used, and the lasting effects of its entrance.

December 18 8:00 a.m. **Final Examination Period, Final Exam Due**