

SYLLABUS

Reli 300A

Christian Foundations

Spring, 2012

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Appointments may be made through Religion Department secretary.

Course Description: Christian Foundations utilizes the flow of Christian History to explore both the development of Christian doctrine and the context of the spiritual journeys of Christians from all ages and all parts of the world. By tracing the history and theological development of Christianity, it reveals the foundations (foundational assumptions and positions) of the Christian faith. In so doing, it gives students both a broader perspective of the whole Christian movement, over two thousand years, and helps them come to terms with their own personal faith tradition. Through this process students are better able to understand and thoughtfully refine their own theological positions. They also gain a more global perspective on the true nature of Christianity.

Texts: *Church History in Plain Language*, Bruce L. Shelley

The Cruelty of Heresy, C. FitzSimons Allison

recommended: *Pocket Dictionary of Church History*, Nathan P. Feldmeth

Course Objectives Students will be able to:

1. articulate the major theological positions of the Christian faith.
2. describe major doctrinal developments such as trinity, Christology, salvation, anthropology, ecclesiology.
3. explain the development of canon, church leadership and views of authority.
4. discuss the "story" of the church through the east/west and catholic/protestant splits.
5. relate the moral and theological reformations of the church.
6. describe Christianity in a global context.

Student Learning Activities

- active participation in class lectures and discussions
- thorough reading of assigned materials
- writing response papers (in response to reading assignments)
- writing of essays
- visiting an Orthodox and a Roman Catholic worship service
- participation in examinations

Specific Course Requirements

1. **Reading of assignments** as per course calendar. Please consult the course schedule for assigned readings and come to class prepared (by *thorough* reading) in order to learn beyond the readings and to participate in class discussion.

2. **Writing "Response papers"** related to reading assignments. A guide will be provided during the first class session. Students will prepare two copies, one to submit and one to retain for class discussion. Response papers are due at the very *beginning* of class. No credit will be given for late papers. Reading assignments which require a response paper are indicated by an **(R)**.

Writing of Essays:

3. **Writing "baseline essay,"** explaining foundational beliefs (basic theology). This essay should be 2 – 3 pages, typed, double-spaced. The purpose is to establish your theological "baseline," so try to write it in one hour (or maximum of 70 minutes). You may use additional time to polish the form or retype it. This essay will not be returned, so retain a copy for yourself.

Title: My Foundations:

Here are the themes:

- a. Who is God?
- b. Who is Jesus?
- c. What is the church?
- d. What does it mean to be human?
- e. How are we saved?
- f. What are the significance of Nicea and Chalcedon?
- g. To what does the Christian look for authority?
- h. The sacraments: what are they? what is the significance of the Lord's supper?
- i. What is the significance of Martin Luther?

4. Writing two reflective worship essays, one after visiting an Orthodox, and the other after visiting a Roman Catholic worship service. Dates are noted in course calendar.

These essays are to be 2 pages in length, typed. They are to include your specific observations and reflections about the service.

You should relate

- a) how this compares to your own previous worship experience,
- b) what you sensed and felt from the worship, and
- c) how you connect this worship experience to what we learned about the Orthodox church (split of 1054) [1st worship essay], or what we learned about the Catholic Church in our study up to and including the Reformation [2nd worship essay].

5. A fourth essay will be assigned and described later in the course.

6. There will be two examinations in the course, a midterm and a final. They will be objective in nature. The dates are listed in the course schedule. Material covered in exams will be from lecture and assigned readings. Please **bring your own scantron** for each exam. Exams taken at times other than scheduled in the course calendar must be approved and rescheduled in advance by the instructor.

Evaluation based on these points:

Baseline essays	16	points
Reading Response papers	30	
Worship essays (2)	16	
Participation	10	
Examinations	30	

grades: within the following scale, the bottom 3 are -, the middle 4 are straight grade, and the top 3 are +.

- A 90 – 100%
- B 80 – 89%
- C 70 – 79%
- D 60 - 69%

Borderline course grades will be influenced by the student's consistent preparedness and constructive participation.

If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Office as early as possible so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. For more information, go to ds.georgefox.edu, or contact Rick Muthiah, 503 554 2314, or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu.

Class Schedule with text readings & assignments

key: “S” = Shelley; “A” = Allison “(R)” means response paper due

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Text & assignments due</u>
Jan 9 1	Course Introduction, syllabus The Fullness of Time	in class
Jan 16, MLK holiday		
Jan 23 2	The Church Under Siege, Christ OR Caesar Welcome Heretics! Early Thinkers in the Faith Irenaeus to Origen	S 3 & 4 (R) together S 5 – 8
Jan 30 3	“By this sign, conquer!” XP Monasticism	S. 9 A 1 Short Beds (R) A 2 (R) S 12
Feb 6 4	325! Nicea & Theology Nicea to Chalcedon To Chalcedon, Christology	S 10 A 3 A 4 (R) S 11 A 5 & 6 (R) for 6 only
Feb 13 5	Augustine! Life & Theology	S 13, A 7 (R) Nestorius
Feb 20 6	1054! When the church came apart! In Search of the Holy Grail assign: visit Orthodox ch w/in 2 weeks	S 14, S 15 S 19 A 8 (R) Eutyches
Feb 27 7	“The papacy is ours!” When the Dumb Ox Spoke	S 19 S 20 (R)
Mar 5 8	Midterm Exam; Worship Essay (Orthodox service) due	
Mar 12 9	Marrying the Widow Movements of Protest I, Wycliffe	S 21 (R)
Mar 19 10	Movements of Protest II To Roast a Goose	S 23 (R)
Spring Break	March 26 – March 32 (just fooling ☺)	
Apr 2 11	Luther! & the Reformation assign: visit Roman Catholic ch w/in 2 weeks	no reading! ☺ (no foolin’, it’s April 2 nd !)

Apr 9 12	Luther ... Alive! assign: final essay	S 24 (R) (Luther)
Apr 16 13	Back at the White Horse Inn The Incredible 18c Worship Essay (Catholic service) due Vatican II	S 25, 26, 27, 28, 34 (R) for 28 only S 45 (R)
Apr 23 14	Final Exam (Exam will cover lectures and reading since midterm, i.e Shelley, from chapter 21, through Epilogue, but only those chapters assigned in the weekly schedule.) Final essay due	S 39, 40, 46, 48, Epilogue

Welcome to Christian Foundations! A couple of great notes to begin on:

“Fairy tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.”

“Angels can fly, because they take themselves lightly.”

G. K. Chesterton

Let us fly!