

Religion 300 Christian Foundations
Spring 2012
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Christianity is a complex religion and many of us have only a cursory knowledge of its traditions and history. This course considers some of the basics of Christian theology and its development, some of the history of Christianity, its denominational refocusing after the Reformation and some streams of its spiritual traditions. We shall approach the course theologically (and to some degree, philosophically) within a historical context, with emphasis on both ideas and spiritual practice. Along with the historical context, the following theological issues will be considered: God as Trinity, Christology, Ecclesiology, Authority, Soteriology, Anthropology, Sacramentology (Baptism and Communion), and Eschatology. The projects are designed to begin the student in reflection about her own tradition, experience and theology and why these three are important both for theoretical work and for spiritual development and growth.

TEXTS: Bass, Diana Butler, *A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2009.
Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Apostle's Creed for Today*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.
Hamilton, Adam. *Christianity's Family Tree: What Other Christians Believe and Why*. Nashville, Abingdon, 2007.
McLeod-Harrison, Mark and Smith, Phil, *Being at Home in the World*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2011.
Noll, Mark, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* 2nd edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

POLICIES: Plagiarism and cheating of other forms will be strongly treated resulting in, minimally, an F for the assignment, and a possible F for the course. Plagiarism is the use of other people's words or ideas without proper acknowledgement. If you have questions about whether something constitutes plagiarism, please ask.

I do not permit students to use computers in class except for taking notes. I do not permit emailing, web-surfing, text messaging, or other forms of electronic communication during class. If I discover anyone engaged in computer use other than note-taking, that person will be asked to leave the class room. In short, I take such communication to be rude and unprofessional behavior. Please don't engage in it.

Please note: all assignments must be completed to pass this course. Also, please do not email assignments, as I won't print them out. If your printer stops working at the last minute or some other emergency arises, then email the assignment by the due date with an explanation and get me a hard copy ASAP.

General academic help is available through ARC (Academic Resource Center). Please avail yourself of the help. (See note at the end of the syllabus.)

ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE:

READING AND QUIZES: Reading is assigned every day. You are expected to complete the reading before class and be in attendance in class. Quizzes on the reading will be given daily. The questions will be true/false and multiple choice. The quizzes will be of different lengths, but typically no more than 5 questions per day.

Students need to do the reading as assigned and take detailed study notes with concepts, definitions, central names, and so forth. The quiz will be at the beginning of the class, so be on time. If you miss a quiz because of tardiness, you simply miss the quiz. If you miss a day because of illness or University-related reasons, or a death in the family, or (possibly) a wedding of your very best friend in all the world!!! and

you are in the wedding party, please arrange a make-up. Please don't ask if you can miss a quiz for any reason other than those listed. The answer is "no."

DENOMINATION GROUP ASSIGNMENT: The class will be broken into smaller groups for this assignment.

Each group will be given a Christian denomination to research. You are required to use all resources available to you, including personal interviews with pastors and parishioners from the denomination, visits to at least three churches for worship, books, articles, and the web. However, when using the web, please use legitimate, scholarly resources (not local church web sites—except in limited cases which you'll need approved by the instructor—or Wikipedia-type sources) except as general background. You may use the official web site of a denomination. If you need help sorting out what is a good site, make an appointment with a librarian to help you. However, the bulk of your research needs to come from books and professional journal essays. I expect each person in the group to use at least 5 good sources beyond the web and/or interviews. That's a total of approximately 20-25 book and journal article resources for the group.

Each group will produce a 60 minute presentation that covers in some detail the general history of the denomination (its roots, what denomination it broke off from (if it did), why it got started, etc.), its culture (what is a worship service like, for example), its doctrine (including the names of its main creedal statements, when they were written and by whom and who has the authority to interpret those documents) and how the denomination differs from others as well as how it is similar. The main point of this last requirement is to contrast what might be called the "sub-cultural" experience of the denomination and any distinctive doctrines or emphasis on a doctrine. (That is, what does it "feel" like to attend church in this denomination; what doctrinal emphases are expressed in the church experience?) Please do not assign this component to a member or your group who is not fairly deeply familiar with American church experience. That person's experience will be, perhaps, too limited with the church to do a good job. The group will be assigned a class date and be given the time to do a presentation to the class on their research.

It is your responsibility to divide up the work, hold people accountable to deadlines, and make sure they are doing their work. Should your group find that you have a "free-loader" problem (a member of the group who is not doing the work required of her or him) you are required to meet as a group with the person to discuss the problem. Should her or his work habits change, then that is all to the good. Should this first step not work, then your group (as a group) is free to discuss the problem with the instructor so we can brainstorm a solution. Should that not work, then you may ask me to meet with the group as a whole, including the freeloader. Should I find that, in fact, the person is not pulling her or his weight, I will assign that person a grade of D or F for the assignment whereas the rest of you will receive the general group grade I assign. Learning to work together is very important. Remember that not everyone has the same gifts academically. You will need to adjudicate whether the person is working or not vs. whether the person is working but just not someone who does A work. You all need to figure this out before you speak with the instructor, if you can. If in doubt, talk to the instructor. If the person is working hard but not able to produce good results, then you all need to work out how to help the person in question and thereby help your group. Group projects are hard and are only as good as the weakest contributions. Yet after you graduate, you will be working, often, in groups and will need to figure out how to get things moving and working well.

The group aspect of the project is allotted 200 points which is awarded entirely on the content, thoroughness, and accuracy of your presentation. Everyone in the group receives the same grade (barring any "free loaders" who come to the instructor's attention).

In addition to the general presentation, each member of the group will turn in an annotated bibliography (remember those 5 good sources mentioned above?). An annotated bibliography in this case shows that you have read and digested the material (or interview, etc.) and a judgment as to whether the source is useful or not, along with why or why not. In short, it will be a detailed set of notes that clearly indicate that you did contribute to the group's research and presentation. This part is graded individually and is allotted 200 points.

The group project is allotted (the presentation and the individual parts) a total of 400 points.

HISTORY TEST: There is an in-class history of Christianity test. It is based on the reading and on class discussion. It will be a multiple choice/ true false/ matching type of test. It is allotted 150 points. In this regard, students will soon realize that I do not typically lecture. I do explain concepts and ideas but I tend to go where the discussion goes. This does not alleviate the student from taking notes on the discussion. The questions on the history of Christianity test will not generally be the same as the quiz questions.

DAILY QUESTIONS: Each day the student will turn in three questions for the day at the beginning of class. These questions will be a “why” sort of question rather than a “what” sort of question. But each must be thoughtful and clear and not merely tossed off the top of the head as you enter the class room. Some of these questions will form the starting basis for the discussion of the day, or at least part of it. These questions are allotted 50 points.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON *LUTHER* AND *ROMERO*:

In lieu of a final exam, each student will watch two films on the well-known Christian theologian/activists, Martin Luther and Oscar Romero. (*Luther*, starring Joseph Fiennes 2003 and *Romero*, starring Raul Julia, 2000) Each student is expected to take some notes on the films and then write a 750 word (3-page, double spaced) *theological* response to the lives of Luther and Romero as presented in the films. In particular you are to answer the following questions. What was at stake in the lives and actions of these two men? How did they think *theologically*? How did that theological thinking affect the way they lived their lives? You are to appeal to the readings and class discussions from the semester to provide an interpretive framework for your thinking and writing on this assignment. That is, your essay should reflect what you’ve learned this term about what it means to follow Jesus. Of course, you cannot include everything from the term. I am interested in how what you’ve learned can help you reflect *theologically* on the importance and implications of being a true Christian. This is worth 200 points.

All papers and reports are to be in 12-point type, please. Also, please follow the Religious Studies Departmental guidelines for papers, footnotes and bibliography. You can find them on the department’s website.

EVALUATION AND DUE DATES:

Quizzes: 200 points, daily.

“Three Questions for the Day” 50 points, daily.

History of Christianity Test 150 points, Thur. Feb. 23 in class

Group Project: 400 points

 Annotated Bibliography 200 points.

 Group Denominational Presentation, 200 points (Due date as assigned by group below).

Luther/Romero Reflection, 200 points, Due Thurs, April 26 at 8:00 a.m.

COURSE CALENDER: READINGS AND DUE DATES:

- T.P. = Turning Points
 B.H.W. = Being at Home in the World
 C.F.T. = Christianity's Family Tree
 A.C.T. = Apostle's Creed for Today
 P.H.C. = A People's History of Christianity

January 10 Syllabus and Housekeeping	January 12 - Introduction to Theology: What do you think?
January 17 - TP 11-64	January 19 - TP 65-126
January 24 - TP 129-174	January 26 - TP 175-219
January 31 - TP 221-267	February 2 - TP 269-313
February 7 - PHC 1-57	February 9 - PHC 59-120
February 14 - PHC 121-180	February 16 - PHC 181-246
February 21 - PHC 247-310	February 23 - HISTORY EXAM
February 28 - ACT 1-18	March 1 - ACT 19-39
March 6 - ACT 40-60	March 8 - ACT 61-75 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY
March 13 - ACT 76-92	March 15 - CFT 11-30 Orthodox
March 20 - CFT 31-42 Roman Catholic	March 22 - CFT 43-58 Lutheranism
March 27 - <i>Spring Break</i>	March 29 - <i>Spring Break</i>
April 3 - CFT 59-80 Presbyterianism	April 5 - CFT 81-110 Charismatic Movement
April 10 - CFT 111-130 Methodism	April 12 - BHW 1-40
April 17 - BHW 41-77	April 19 - BHW 78-130
	April 26 - 8:00 final due

If you have specific physical, psychiatric, or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please contact the Disability Services office early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide current documentation of your disability to Disability Services. For more information, contact Rick Muthiah, coordinator of Disability Services (ext. 2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu), or go to www.georgefox.edu/offices/disab_services.

The **Academic Resource Center (ARC)** provides all students with free writing consultation, general tutoring, and learning enhancement strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). Students can make an appointment with the ARC Writing Center for guidance and feedback on written projects. ARC Consultants can also provide basic tutoring for many general education and other courses. The ARC hours of operation are from 3:00-10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:30-4:30 p.m. on Friday. Go to www.georgefox.edu/arc/ <<http://www.georgefox.edu/arc/>> for information about Consultants' areas of study, how to schedule an appointment, and helpful learning tools. Call Rick Muthiah, Director of the Academic Resource Center, at ext. 2314 if you have questions.