

HIST/RELI 401 Christianity in History

Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, 10:00-11:00 a.m.,
or by appointment.

TEXTS:

Justo L. González. The Story of Christianity. Vol. 1. The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation. Revised and Updated. HarperOne, 2010.

Greg Peters. The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality. Baker Academic, 2015.

Selected Primary Readings. See the reading schedule below and the supplementary 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 five to seven pages and include a bibliography. Students may also work on a different topic with the professor's approval. Students will discuss the essays in class. They are due on the day the question is listed in the class schedule. Selection of essays will be September 8. This is the major student product for the course. In order to give good focus to this project, the following elements will be evaluated separately:

A. Meeting with the professor to discuss the project at least three weeks before the essay is due in class.

B. Bibliography. A preliminary bibliography is due at least two weeks before the final essay is due in class. The completion of a preliminary bibliography and the modified bibliography will be evaluated separately.

C. A thesis statement and working outline will be due at least one week before the final essay is due in class.

D. Finished Essay.

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 are 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. Reflection on Monasticism. Each student will prepare a reflection on the nature of monasticism and its place in Christian practice. The reflection may be more personal in nature, though a more traditional analytic piece will be fine if students prefer that approach. The reading of Peters, a possible visit to the Trappist Abbey, and class discussions will be key materials to draw on, though many other course readings from Gonzalez, Benedict, and the mystics will be useful as well. Reflections should be 750-1000 words. They are due at the time of the final examination period.

EVALUATION:

Discussion/Research Essay:	
Meeting with Professor	20
Bibliography	30
Thesis and Working Outline	20
Finished Essay	100
Primary Document Questions	22
Primary Document Essays	30 (10 each)
Quizzes	60 (5 each)
Reflection on Monasticism	50
TOTAL	332 points

Final grades will be awarded according to traditional percentages: 92% and higher, A; 90-91% A-; 88-89%, B+; 82-87%, B; 80-81%, B-; 78-79%, C+; 72-77%, C; 70-71%, C-; 60-69%, D; below 60%, F. In keeping with the Registrar's policy of calculating GPAs, there is no A+.

NOTE ON CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY USE

Students are asked not to bring laptop computers or hand-held devices such as smart phones, I-Pads, or Blackberries to class. Students who desire to use such devices for notetaking must speak with the professor. Students who use such devices for activities not related to the class may be asked to leave.

DISABILITY SERVICES:

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, Associate Director of Learning Support

Services (ext. 2314 or rmuthiah@georgefox.edu).

ACADEMIC RESOURCE CENTER:

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) on the Newberg campus provides all students with free writing consultation, academic coaching, and learning strategies (e.g., techniques to improve reading, note-taking, study, time management). The ARC, located on the first floor of the Murdock Learning Resources Center (library), is open from 1:00-10:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 12:00-4:00 p.m. on Friday. To schedule an appointment, go to the online schedule at arcschedule.georgefox.edu, call [503-554-2327](tel:503-554-2327), or email the_arc@georgefox.edu. Visit arc.georgefox.edu for information about ARC Consultants' areas of study, instructions for scheduling an appointment, learning tips, and a list of other tutoring options on campus.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

September 1-3 **Christianity and History; Christianity and Judaism**
Reading: González, xiii-39.

September 8-10 **Christianity and Rome**
Reading: González, 41-58.

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, 59-96.

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

September 22-24 **Christianity in Society**
Reading: González, 97-127.

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

September 29-October 1 **Constantine**
Reading: González, 131-172.

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

October 6-8 **The Origins of Monasticism**
Reading: Peters, 1-52, no quiz.

October 13-15. **Arianism and Other Controversies**

Reading: González, 173-197.

October 15 Reading: Arius, letter to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia.

October 15 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 20-22 **The Church of the Late Empire**

Reading: González, 199-262.

October 22 Reading: 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, 269-325.

October 29 Reading: The Council of Chalcedon.

October 29 Discussion Essay: One of the great historical projects over the past four decades has been the steady advance and revision of our understanding of the role of women in early Christianity. Focus your efforts on one of the many aspects of this important question and develop an essay examining your selected topic.

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

Reading: González, 327-344; Peters, 53-134.

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

November 10-12 **East and West**

Reading: González, 345-356.

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, 357-385.

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

November 19 Discussion Essay: Christians in the West often forgot the fact that an ancient expression of Christian faith continued in the East the period we call Early Christianity. Develop an essay in which you explore the distinctive qualities of Eastern Christianity through a study of developments in the East after the fifth century.

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

Reading: González, 387-406.

November 24 Reading: Johannes Tauler, Inner Way; Julian of Norwich, Revelations of Divine Love.

November 26 **Thanksgiving Holiday**

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

Reading: González, 407-446; Peters, 137-258.

December 3 Reading: 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, 449-491.

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 10:15 a.m. **Final Examination Period**
Reflection on Monasticism due.