

History of Christianity I 6HT502

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Course Description

This course treats Christian history from the post-apostolic period to the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation. Topics will include the development of theology, ecclesiology, worship, intellectual culture, monasticism, church-state relations, and European Christianity on the eve of the Reformation. This history presents a complicated story affected by power, politics, culture, and even economics and geography. Whether or not we are always aware of it, contemporary practices, doctrinal positions, and even hermeneutical methods have histories which extend back to the earliest periods of Christian history. This general introduction to the history of the Christian Church will provide essential tools for thinking historically about Christian faith, worship, and ministry. The aim of this course is to encourage critical, historical thinking regarding the actors and events which have continued to shape the church to this day. To this end, it emphasizes primary source reading and substantial class participation in order to orient students to Christian history as they engage with their faith, the church, and members of diverse theological traditions.

Texts

Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1, The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (Harper & Row, 1984)

Electronic reading packet containing selections from sources available in the public domain.

These readings can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~dlschwar/RTS%206HT502%20Readings/>. Please check this site periodically as I may need to update or modify the readings.

Assignments

Regular attendance and active participation will be essential for learning in this class. To fully engage in these aspects of the class you will have to come with the assigned readings completed in advance.

Regular attendance, reading, and participation: 15%

Class presentation: 20%

Take home exam: 30%

Final paper: 35%

Course Outline

The class will take place on four weekends with two weeks between each session. This schedule should allow you sufficient time to prepare the reading assignments and come to class ready for discussion. Since no one wants a full day of lecture on Saturday (or even a full evening of lecture on Friday night), this class will function as a cross between a traditional lecture and a

seminar. We will alternate between my lectures and class discussion. I will be present and engaged throughout, but I expect class discussions to be led by students. Each discussion will begin with a student presentation on the primary source readings assigned for that session and then proceed to a discussion led by the presenter. See below for a my expectations regarding presentations.

Week One: September 22-23

Gonzalez pp. xv-135

1st Discussion:

Correspondence of Pliny and Trajan; Justin Martyr, 1st Apology and Dialogue with Trypho; Martyrdom of Polycarp

2nd Discussion:

Gospel of Thomas; Tertullian, Prescription against Heretics

3rd Discussion:

The Didache; Tertullian, On Baptism

Week Two: October 6-7

Gonzalez pp. 136-220

1st Discussion:

Life of Antony; Life of Macrina; Chrysostom's Letter to Theodore

2nd Discussion

Augustine's Enchiridion; Gregory Nazianzen;

3rd Discussion:

Augustine's On the Catechizing of the Uninstructed and City of God; Epistle of Theonas; Jerome's Letter on Classical Literature

4th Discussion:

Athanasius on the Psalms; Ephrem Hymns; John Chrysostom Commentary on Matthew; Gregory the Great Sermon

Week Three: October 20-21

Gonzalez pp. 221-375

1st Discussion:

Annals of Xanten; Peace of God; Truce of God

2nd Discussion

Rule of St. Benedict; Charter of Cluny; Early Career of St. Bernard

3rd Discussion

Boethius, Consolation of Philosophy; Anselm, Proslogium

4th Discussion

Urban II, Speech at the Council of Clermont; The Slaughter of the Rhineland Jews; The Crusaders at Antioch

Week Four: November 3-4

Gonzalez pp. 377-412

1st Discussion

Ibn Rushd, Religion and Philosophy; Aquinas, Summa Theologiae; Scotus, Ordinatio

2nd Discussion

The University of Paris on The Great Schism; Manifesto of the Cardinals; Decree of the Council of Pisa; Pius II's bull Excecrabilis

3rd Discussion

Tales of the Virgin; Tales of Relics; Prologue of Canterbury Tales; Tales of the Host

4th Discussion

Luther, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church

Student Presentations

Presentations should include an introduction to the sources for the discussion including background on author, date, location of composition, and where possible audience. The presenter should explain their relevance to one's understanding of the immediate historical circumstance as well as their relevance to the history of the Church more broadly. Finally, in order to facilitate discussion, the presenter should suggest topics for class discussion. Presentations should be designed to function as springboards for class discussion. Presenters should plan on speaking for approximately 15 minutes and then begin the discussion period. If you have further questions regarding presentations please contact me (dlschwar@princeton.edu). **Also, given the limited number of weekend meetings available to us, we will need three students who are willing to make presentations on Saturday September 23.** I would greatly appreciate it if anyone is willing to volunteer for a presentation for this first week. Please contact me by email if you are able to make a presentation on the first weekend.