

## The History of Western Christianity to 1750

4 Credits  
TR 8-9:15  
Grainger 2170

In its first eight hundred years, Christianity grew from a small persecuted sect in the Roman Empire to the dominant religion in western Europe. The next millennium witnessed its deep penetration into the lives of Europeans, its fissuring into multiple Churches, and their spread across the globe. This course will explore Christianity as it was defined and redefined over its first 18 centuries. It will explore the ways that Christians, over time, understood the life of Christ and his teachings—the ways in which his life was to serve as a model, the relationship between his preaching and formal doctrine. It will explore the rituals Christians articulated over time, the architecture they designed as sites of worship, images, music, and performances.

This course meets as a group for 150 minutes per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 9 hours outside lectures and discussion each week on course activities. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 9 hours per week for reading and preparing for discussion, viewing films, writing, and preparing for exams. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 12 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group meetings of 150 minutes per week), reading, writing, movies, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus..

### Requirements:

#### Listening:

- ♦ for your sake and for the sake of those around you: no cellular devices, no surfing the web, no email, no other activities than listening to others, and no earphones. Anyone texting, emailing, surfing, or using their laptops for anything other than notes will not be permitted to use the laptop for the rest of the semester.
- ♦ lecture attendance mandatory: since there is no textbook, lectures are the narrative.
- ♦ discussion: in listening to others and respecting their points of view, you will glimpse something of Christianity's power to engage widely different minds, imaginations, and experiences.

#### Reading:

- ♦ Original sources: testimonies from the past, ways of thinking about core questions of this course. Attend to each text's point of view, its concerns, and its silences.
- ♦ All readings (📖) must be completed by the week they are assigned.

#### Viewing:

- ♦ Films marked on the syllabus throughout the semester. First class meeting we'll talk about the different possibilities for viewing.

## Writing:

- ♦ Four essays analyzing sources according to themes presented in lectures
  - Essay 1: due in lecture, Thursday, February 1 (10%)  
500 words: Choose one passage from one of the two Gospels and one from I Corinthians. How do they differ in their presentations of Christ?
  - Essay 2, due in lecture, Thursday, February 22 (10%)  
1000 words: Choose one passage from Augustine's *Confessions*. What does it tell you about his understanding of the Christian life?
  - Essay 3, due in lecture, Thursday, March 15 (15%)  
1500 words: Compare the Christian life of the Rule of Saint Benedict with that depicted in *Perceval*.
  - Essay 4, due in lecture, Thursday, April 26 (15%)  
1500 words: Formulate a question of analysis of your own, drawing on at least two of the readings from the second half of the course. Your question must be approved in advance.
- ♦ final exam: May 8 10:05 a.m. -12:05 p.m.

## Academic Integrity:

The University has clear policies on academic integrity. Please be sure you understand these rules, as this course is governed by them: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>

## Grading:

Participation in weekly discussions:	25%
Essays:	50%
Final exam	25%

## Readings

Those students wishing to purchase a copy of a Bible are urged to get *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, Third Edition, Michael D. Coogan, editor (Oxford, 2001). While we directly read the Bible only two weeks, lectures and readings will continue to refer to it throughout the semester.

Most readings, including Augustine's *Confessions* and Dante's *Inferno*, are available online at the following websites:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/>

<http://www.ccel.org/>

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html>

Other online sources for specific week's readings are given in the syllabus.

The following print editions are **recommended**, however:

Augustine, *Confessions*, translated Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press, 2009) [on reserve]

Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, translated Mark Musa (Penguin Classics, 2002) [on reserve]

These translations are easier to read and the translators provide helpful notes.

Finally, you may wish to consult one of the following histories of Christianity:

*The Cambridge History of Christianity* (multi-volume)

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (Viking Penguin, 2010) [on Reserve]

## Lectures and Discussion Assignments

### Early Christians

1/23 The Study of Christianity

1/25 The Person of Christ

 <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/> or *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Coogan:  
Gospels of Mark and John

### Founding a Church

1/30 Apostles, Disciples, Witnesses, Gnostics

2/1 Martyrs

 <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/r/rsv/> or *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. Coogan:  
First Letter to the Corinthians

Essay 1 due

👁 “The Last Temptation of Christ”

### Defining Doctrine

2/6 Patriarchs and Church Fathers

2/8 Nicaea

 Tertullian, The Incarnation of the Logos:  
<http://www.ccel.org/print/schaff/anf03/iv.iii.xxi>  
The Nicene Creed: <http://www.ccel.org/print/schaff/creeds1/iv.iii>

### Bishops and Barbarians

2/13 The World of Late Antique Christianity

2/15 Augustine

 Augustine, *Confessions*, entire

### The Desert and the Cloister

2/20 Hermits

👁 The Secret of Kells

2/22 Fathers and Brothers

 The Rule of Saint Benedict: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/benedict/rule.toc.html>  
Essay 2 due

## Hierarchies Sacerdotal and Temporal

2/27 Popes

3/1 The Holy Roman Emperor

 Sermon of Pope Leo I: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/360382.htm>  
Einhard Life of Charlemagne: <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/einhard1.asp>

## Representation

3/6 Images and Icons

3/8 East and West: The Iconoclastic Controversy and Incarnation

 John of Damascus: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/johndamascus-images.html>

## Seeking Holiness

3/13 Into the Wilderness: Clairvaux, Fontenay, Senanque

3/15 The Grail

 Perceval, pdf at Learn@UW  
Pope Urban II: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>  
Essay 3 due

## Ex Cathedra

3/20 Altars and Apses: Cathedrals

3/22 Bernard and Abelard

 Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermons on the Song of Songs, pdf at Canvas.  
Heloise Letter to Abelard: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/heloise1.html#first>  
Abelard, Prologue to *Sic et Non*:  
<http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/Abelard-SicetNon-Prologue.asp>

## *Spring Break*

## The Study of Revelation

4/3 Universities and Scholasticism

4/5 Arab Science and Christian Knowledge

 Aquinas on Nature

## Sacraments

4/10 The Fourth Lateran Council

4/12 Penance and Purgatory  
 Dante, *The Inferno*

## Living Christianity

4/17 Holy Blood, Relics, and Sacrifice

4/19 New Worlds  
 Ferdinand and Isabel,  
Privileges: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th\\_century/colum.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/colum.asp)  
Margery Kempe: <http://www.luminarium.org/medlit/kempe4.htm>  
Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, Book Four:  
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.FOUR.html>

## Fragmentation

4/24 “The Word of God”

4/26 Exiles and Churches  
 The Heidelberg Catechism, entire:  
<https://students.wts.edu/resources/creeds/heidelberg.html#121>

Essay 4 due

## Global Christianity

5/1 The Baroque

5/3 Pilgrims  
 Jonathan Edwards, Sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”:  
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/sermons.sinners.html>  
👁 The Mission

5/8 10:05-12:05 **Final Exam**