

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

**History 229/Religious Studies 400**

**CHRISTIANITY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1500-1800**

Fall 2020

TTh, 9:30-10:45 a.m., 1295 Grainger Hall

Dr. Eric Carlsson

eric.carlsson@wisc.edu

5217 Mosse Humanities

Online office hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00 pm; Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 pm; and by appointment

**Course Description**

Between the late Middle Ages and the era of democratic revolutions Western Christianity experienced a series of sweeping changes that altered its global profile and helped form the modern world. This course examines some of these shifts and their impact. Some questions we will explore include:

- Why did the Reformations of the sixteenth century—Protestant and Catholic—occur and what immediate and long-term effects did they have on people’s lives and on early modern societies more generally?
- What was the relationship between European colonization, the Atlantic slave trade, new theories of race, and the spread of Christianity to the “New World”?
- How was the Christian religion resisted, received, and reshaped by Native Americans and people of African descent?
- What sparked movements of reform and renewal—including new Catholic religious orders and the Protestant Evangelical Awakening—and what consequences did these have for the character of modern Christianity?
- How did the nature of Christian belief and identity change under the impact of confessional pluralism, religious conflict, new ideas about liberty and rights, and political revolution?

The course will not aim to cover every aspect of early modern Christianity; that would be impossible, in any case. Instead we will focus on select historical problems that shed light on how religious identities, beliefs, and practices found expression and how these, in turn, shaped peoples and societies in the early modern Atlantic world.

**Learning Outcomes**

The main objective of this course is to spark and nourish your fascination with religious history in general and the history of early modern Christianity in particular. If you invest time, thought, and hard work in the course, you can also expect to:

- learn how to think historically about the phenomenon of religion and how religious systems, identities, beliefs, and practices change over time and space
- gain skill in reading primary sources from the past contextually, empathetically, and critically, and in reading and evaluating modern scholarly writings with understanding and insight
- learn how to construct strong historical arguments based on evidence and clear reasoning
- become a stronger writer of clear and persuasive prose
- grow in the virtues of curiosity, open-mindedness, and intellectual humility

## **Instructional Format**

This course is scheduled to meet in person until Thanksgiving week, when we will move online for the rest of the semester. If at any point in the semester the University provides new guidelines, we may move online earlier than that. Likewise, instruction will move online if I become ill. You are expected to attend all in-person classes if you are healthy.

## **UW-Madison Policy on Face Coverings**

Individuals are expected to wear a face covering while inside any university building. Face coverings must be [worn correctly](#) (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) in the building if you are attending class in person. If any student is unable to wear a face-covering, an accommodation may be provided due to disability, medical condition, or other legitimate reason.

Students with disabilities or medical conditions who are unable to wear a face covering should contact the [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#) or their Access Consultant if they are already affiliated. Students requesting an accommodation unrelated to disability or medical condition, should contact the Dean of Students Office.

Students who choose not to wear a face covering may not attend in-person classes, unless they are approved for an accommodation or exemption. All other students not wearing a face covering will be asked to put one on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear face coverings appropriately or adhere to other stated requirements will be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) and will not be allowed to return to the classroom until they agree to comply with the face covering policy. An instructor may cancel or suspend a course in-person meeting if a person is in the classroom without an approved face covering in position over their nose and mouth and refuses to immediately comply.

## **UW-Madison Policy on Quarantine or Isolation Due to COVID-19**

Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 [symptoms](#) and [get tested for the virus](#) if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.

## **Course Workload**

This three-credit course meets for two 75-minute periods each week over the semester and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of three hours outside of class for each class meeting. In other words, plan to allot about six hours per week for reading, writing papers, and preparing for class meetings. Some weeks the work load will be heavier; other weeks it will be lighter.

## **Course Requirements**

I. Read all assigned texts and participate actively class meetings. We will discuss assigned readings almost every class meeting, whether in-person or online, and on some days we'll spend the whole period in class discussion. On occasion you will do brief in-class writing exercises to spur thought and discussion. You are expected to read all required texts closely beforehand and to come ready to voice your questions and insights and to engage with those of your classmates. *You must bring a copy of texts, either in electronic form or in hard copy, to class on the day they will be discussed.*

You will receive a participation grade (on a 10-point scale) three times during the semester: on October 1, November 5, and December 10. Attendance and class participation count for 20% of your course grade.

2. Write four 250-300-word responses to assigned readings. Questions for each reading will be posted on Canvas. You will have the option to write on most texts and may choose which readings you respond to. If you wish, you may write up to six response papers; the four highest grades will count. The first response must be turned in by September 22, the second by October 20, the third by November 10, the fourth by December 8. Response papers will be graded using the following criteria:

1. Did you answer the question clearly and directly?
2. Does your response reflect a close, thoughtful reading of the whole of the relevant text(s)?
3. Is your paper based on the text itself rather than generalizations or things you may have read about the text elsewhere (such as the Internet)?
4. Is it written in clear and concise prose, polished for grammar and style?

To get credit for a response paper, leave it on Canvas before the class when the reading is due; the submission folder closes at 9:30 a.m. sharp. No late papers accepted. Together, the four responses make up 20% of your course grade.

3. OPTION A: Write two analytical papers of 1700-1800 words (about 5 pages) each, due on Canvas before class on October 8 and November 17, respectively. Each paper will address a question based on texts and themes that we will have discussed in class. The first paper is worth 15% and the second is worth 20% of your course grade.

Late Papers: If you face a situation that will prevent you from turning in a paper on time, please contact me as early as possible, and at least three days before the assignment is due, and we can work out another due date. Late papers that haven't received an extension will be lowered one grade for each day they are late (e.g., a B paper becomes a BC if turned in a day late, a C the next day, etc.).

Rewrites: You may rewrite one or both of the analytical papers. To do so, you must talk with me by the next class day after I return the original version. We will agree on the revisions to be made and set a new due date, typically one week later. Rewriting a paper does not guarantee a higher grade. To raise your grade, you must revise your essay substantially, taking my comments into account and also initiating your own improvements.

OPTION B: Write a 10-12-page research paper on a topic arising out of course themes. To pursue this option, you must speak with me by October 1 to start identifying a topic. A paragraph stating your research question and its significance will be due on October 8, and by October 15 you will submit a bibliography of your sources. A complete draft of your paper will be due on November 3; the following week we will meet to discuss it. The revised version of your paper will be due on November 19. The research paper counts for 35% of your course grade.

4. Write a final paper of 1900-2100 words (about 6 pages), due on Canvas by 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 18. The essay prompts will be posted during the last week of class. The final paper makes up 25% of your course grade.

## Grading Scale

All assignments and your final course grade will be calculated using the following scale:

93-100%=A	83-87%=B	70-77%=C	0-59%=F
88-92%=AB	78-82%=BC	60-70%=D	

## Honors Credit

Students taking the course for honors credit will pursue an independent project arising out of course topics and their own interests. This may take the form of a longer paper on a topic arising out of course materials; for those with interests in art, film, or other media, there are other possibilities. Please contact me by the week of September 21 to discuss options.

## Communication and Office Hours

I welcome meeting with students outside of class time. This semester those meetings will take place online on BBCollaborate Ultra, which you can access via our course Canvas site. You are encouraged to drop into online office hours at any time during the semester, whether to discuss a question or problem you've encountered in the course, to get help on a paper, to explore an idea, or simply to chat. I'll hold regular office hours on Tuesdays, 2:00-3:00 and Thursdays, 12:30-1:30. If you have a schedule conflict during those times, let me know and we can arrange another time to meet.

Outside class time and office hours, the best way to reach me is by email ([eric.carlsson@wisc.edu](mailto:eric.carlsson@wisc.edu)). I check email regularly and will try to respond within 24 hours. Often I can reply sooner than that, but on weekends response time may be up to 48 hours.

## Electronic Devices

Under normal circumstances, there are strong reasons for students to avoid the use of computers in class. A substantial body of research suggests that students grasp concepts better, process information more thoughtfully, and focus their attention more sharply when they take notes with pen and paper rather than on a computer. You are therefore strongly encouraged take notes by hand. Since we are not now living in normal circumstances, however, and course readings are being made available in electronic form only, laptops are allowed in class to access the readings. Please do not use electronic devices for other purposes—checking social media, playing games, online shopping, etc.—during class. Cell phones should be silenced and put away.

## The Digital History Lab

The Digital History Lab is an excellent resource for undergraduates writing history papers. Trained Ph.D. students in history will help you regardless of your stage in the writing process—formulating a thesis, developing your argument, citing sources, revising your drafts, and more. To learn more and sign up for an online appointment, visit <https://history.wisc.edu/undergraduate-program/the-history-lab/>.

## Learning Accessibility

If you have an instructional need that requires accommodations, please inform me of this at the start of the semester or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will then either work directly with you or coordinate with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

## Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, you agree to uphold the high academic standards of UW-Madison. No form of cheating, unauthorized collaboration, or plagiarism—representing somebody else’s work as your own—or helping others commit these acts will be tolerated. In your papers you must cite sources carefully, whether you repeat someone else’s exact words or paraphrase or draw on their ideas. If you have specific questions about plagiarism and how to avoid it, please speak with me or consult <https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/quoting/sources/>. Penalties for academic misconduct range from failing an assignment or a course to being suspended from the university. For university policies on academic misconduct, see <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/>.

## UW-Madison Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. UW-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

All required and recommended readings are available on our Canvas website. The single exception—Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Harvard University Press, 2005)—can be accessed as an e-book via UW Libraries or purchased in hard copy from local and online bookstores. Full bibliographical information for all readings is posted in the “Course Documents” module on Canvas.

### I. Introduction

Th Sep 3 Course Introduction

Tu Sep 8 From Christ to Christendom  
Andrew F. Walls, “Culture and Coherence in Christian History”  
Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*, 7-30

### II. European Reformations

Th Sep 10 Late Medieval Christendom  
R. N. Swanson, “The Pre-Reformation Church”  
Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*  
Erasmus, *Paraclesis*

Tu Sep 15 An Accidental Revolution  
Alec Ryrie, “Luther and the Fanatics,” in *Protestants*, 15-39  
Martin Luther, Preface to his Latin Writings and “The Freedom of a Christian”

Th Sep 17 Religious Radicals  
Sigrun Haude, “Anabaptism”  
Letter from Elizabeth, a Dutch Anabaptist martyr, to her daughter  
Sebastian Castellio, *About Heretics: Should They Be Persecuted?*

Tu Sep 22	<u>Calvinism and Society</u> Mack P. Holt, "Calvin and Reformed Protestantism" John Calvin, <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>	Response 1 due
Th Sep 24	<u>Catholic Reformation</u> Robert Bireley, SJ, "Redefining Catholicism: Trent and Beyond" Decrees of the Council of Trent	
Tu Sep 29	<u>New Religious Orders and Catholic Spirituality</u> R. Po-Chia Hsia, <i>The World of Catholic Renewal 1540-1770</i> , 26-42 St. Ignatius Loyola, <i>Spiritual Exercises</i> <i>The Life of Saint Teresa of Ávila</i>	
Th Oct 1	<u>Confession and Conflict</u> Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Rites of Violence"	Option B topic check-in
<b>III. Catholicism, Colonization, and Missions to the "New World"</b>		
Tu Oct 6	<u>Conquest and Mission</u> Carlos Eire, "Missions to the New World," in <i>Reformations</i> , 466-97 Documents: Legitimation and Criticism of the Conquest	
Th Oct 8	<u>Debating Human Rights</u> Bartolomé de las Casas, <i>A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies</i>	Option A Paper 1 due Option B paragraph due
Tu Oct 13	<u>Jesuit Reductions</u> View: <i>The Mission</i> (dir. Roland Joffé) Documents: The Jesuit Reductions	
Th Oct 15	<u>Confrontation and Dialogue</u> Sabine MacCormack, "'The Heart Has Its Reasons': Predicaments of Missionary Christianity in Colonial Peru" Documents: Religious Dialogue and Native Voices	Option B bibliography due
<b>IV. Religion of the Heart and a Heart for the World</b>		
Tu Oct 20	<u>Heart Religion and Mission in a Catholic Mode</u> Natalie Zemon Davis, "Marie de l'Incarnation: New Worlds"	Response 2 due
Th Oct 22	<u>German Pietism</u> Ulrike Gleixner, "Pietism" Philipp Jakob Spener, <i>Pia Desideria</i> August Hermann Francke, <i>Autobiography</i>	
Tu Oct 27	<u>The Rise of Anglo-American Evangelicalism</u> David Hempton, <i>The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century</i> , 141-67 George Whitefield, "The Nature and Necessity of Our New Birth in Jesus Christ" Jonathan Edwards, "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God"	

Timothy Cutler, Critique of the Northampton Awakening

### **V. Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora**

- Th Oct 29     Christianity in Atlantic Africa—Guest Lecturer: Paul Grant  
Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*  
Okun Asare of Mfamosing, “Sheep and the Shining Stone”
- Tu Nov 3     Theology and the Construction of Race     Option B Paper draft due  
Start reading Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*
- Th Nov 5     Afro-Caribbean Protestantism  
Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, 1-132
- Tu Nov 10    Transatlantic Religious Networks     Response 3 due  
Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*, 133-247
- Th Nov 12    “The Invisible Institution”  
Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion*, 118-48
- ### **VI. Religion, Rights, and Revolution in the Anglo-American World**
- Tu Nov 17    Toleration and Religious Liberty     Option A Paper 2 due  
Robert Louis Wilken, *Liberty in the Things of God*, 155-79  
John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*
- Th Nov 19    Sacred Cause of Liberty?     Option B revised draft due  
Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty*, 11-35
- Tu Nov 24    Religion and Revolution  
(online)     Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty*, 37-55, 75-95  
Thomas Paine, “Common Sense”
- Tu Dec 1     The American Religious Settlement  
(online)     Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America*, 236-64  
Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 89-107
- Th Dec 3     The Bible and Slavery  
(online)     Mark A. Noll, *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln*, 386-421
- Tu Dec 8     The Road to Abolition     Response 4 due  
(online)     Christopher Leslie Brown, “Christianity and the Campaign against Slavery and the Slave Trade”  
Thomas Clarkson, “An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species”  
Hannah More, “Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great”  
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*
- Th Dec 10    Conclusion  
(online)

Final paper due on Canvas on Friday, December 18 at 1:00 p.m.