

HIST-502: History of Christian Thought and Practice II (online)

Fall 2025

** Draft syllabus - subject to change **

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Course Modality: Online asynchronous

Course Description

Welcome to History II. This course will introduce you to the relatively recent history of Christianity, from the late Middle Ages (beginning around 1500) to the present time. In the last 500 years, Christianity has developed a wide range of expressions, most of which still exist today. This course will help you better understand how these varied traditions took shape and how they, in turn, have shaped modern church and society. Special attention will be given to the particular contexts in which Christian thought and practice have developed.

Learning Outcomes

- To appreciate the long history of the Church and its many stories.
- To interpret the dynamics of different times and places.
- To analyze why things happened as they did (and now are as they are);
- To recognize historical trends (and to identify them when they are repeated).
- To interpret the present in light of the past, noting both similarities and differences.
- To articulate aspects of Christian history as they are relevant to particular contemporary contexts, and to interpret those aspects for lay audiences.
- To see “the Church” in all its diversity (of time, place, culture, sub-culture, rank, ordination status, ethnicity, race, gender, class, and so on).
- To employ the best resources from the past to lead the church of the future.
- To be enriched by the stories of those who have gone before.
- To develop broader empathy for people (historical or contemporary) in circumstances that are unfamiliar to us.
- To exercise our abilities to think critically and communicate clearly.

Weekly Schedule

All work for this course will be done asynchronously. That is, there is no one time during the week when students must log on. Instead, all assignments are due by 5pm Chicago time on Thursdays, but those assignments can be done at any time throughout the week.

The following tasks should be completed no later than 5 p.m. Central Time on the date listed on the syllabus for each topic: Doing the assigned reading, listening to the lecture, and posting to the discussion forum. Students must post a minimum of once a week on the discussion forum.

Required Texts

- Justo González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume II: The Reformation to the Present Day* (2010). ISBN: 978-0061855894, \$27.99 at Amazon.com. Available as an e-book at Styberg Library.
- Dale Irwin & Scott Sunquist, *History of the World Christian Movement, Volume II: Modern Christianity from 1454 – 1800* (2012). ISBN: 978-1570759895, \$50.00 at Amazon.com. Available as an e-book at Styberg Library.
- Albert Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African-Americans* (2001). ISBN: 978-0195145854, \$16.99 at Amazon.com.
- Other required readings, podcasts, and links will be posted on Moodle.

Assignments & Grading

Quizzes (20%)

For each topic, students will take a quiz on Moodle over the main points of the reading(s) and any other assigned materials. Each quiz contains five multiple choice or true/false questions and must be completed within ten minutes. At the end of the ten minutes, the quiz will be submitted with the answers that have been entered. It is open-book and open-note, but you will not be able to complete it successfully if you have not done the reading before beginning the quiz. Two attempts are allowed. Quizzes are due by 5 p.m. CST on the date listed on the syllabus for that topic. Moodle will be programmed to disallow access to the quiz at that time, so please plan accordingly. The two lowest quiz scores will be dropped.

Participation (20%)

In order to fully engage this course, it is important that you actively participate so that your classmates can learn from you and you from them. The discussion forum on Moodle will be the main avenue for this engagement. The minimum expectation for participation in the online discussion forum is one substantial post per week (approximately 300 words, or about 3 minutes if you are posting a video or an audio file). All posts should engage the previous posts of other students (unless, of course, you post first) and should not be constructed as stand-alone reports. Posts are due at 5 p.m. CST on the date listed for the topics. Quantity and quality will both be considered when assigning a participation grade.

Essays (30% x 2 = 60%)

Two 5-7 page essays will be required, one as a mid-term and the other as a final. They are due 5 p.m. CST on the dates listed below. Details, guidelines and rubrics for all essays will be posted on Moodle. Please see also the Style Sheet posted on Moodle for an overview of citations and other stylistic issues.

Final grades for the course are determined by the following scale:

A: 100-93%	C: 73-77%
A-: 90-92%	C-: 70-72%
B+: 88-89%	D+: 68-69%
B: 83-87%	D: 63-67%
B-: 80-82%	D-: 60-62%
C+: 78-79%	F: 59% and below

Policies and Procedures

1. *Careful language* is especially important in an online course. Because online interactions play out differently than face-to-face interactions, some extra guidelines for discussion will be helpful:
 - In an online discussion, you have fewer words with which to make your point. This makes your reflection prior to posting and your choice of words all the more important. Everyone benefits from thoughtful discussion posts, so please take the time to express yourself clearly, and please make sure that your post contributes to the flow of discussion. Also, because your spelling and grammar convey the seriousness that you bring to the task, please proof-read your posts before submitting them.
 - The online discussion is the main collaborative activity of the course, so your classmates are depending on you, and you on them. Please

participate regularly, on schedule, and in response to the question and to previous postings.

- Without the non-verbal clues we have when we talk with someone face-to-face, comments can be misinterpreted. Please make sure your posts are clear, especially when you are making a contentious statement. We will tackle difficult topics, and we will disagree, but we must do this in a respectful and constructive manner.
2. *Late papers and other assignments* will be accepted without penalty only in severe and documented situations. Please plan your work so that an acute emergency (e.g. brief illness, computer problems, pastoral emergency) does not interfere with submitting your work on time. Unexcused late assignments will be docked a full letter grade (i.e., 10 percentage points) for every day they are late. Any portion of a day late counts as a full day, so if a paper is due at 5 p.m. and you submit it at 5.30 p.m., your grade will be docked by one full letter grade (e.g., 90% becomes 80%). *Quizzes* must be completed according to schedule as Moodle is programmed to make them unavailable after the due date. Any quizzes not taken on time will receive a score of zero.
 3. *Regarding plagiarism*, please familiarize yourself with Garrett-Evangelical policies as found in the Academic Handbook. It is especially important to make sure you understand what constitutes plagiarism so that you do not inadvertently violate the policy. All written work will undergo an online plagiarism check.

Garrett-wide Academic Policies

This course follows all school academic policies and procedures, which can be accessed in their entirety on the Registrar section of MyGETS at this

link: https://mygets.garrett.edu/ICS/Registrar_and_Advising/Common_Syllabus_Policies.jnz

A couple of these policies that I want to highlight:

- **Inclusivity & Diversity:** The basic commitments of the seminary to mutual love and searching for the truth in Christ lead to a principle that in the classroom and in course assignments, persons are always to be respected and ideas are to be freely discussed.... All participants in the teaching-learning process have an obligation to honor and respect varying perspectives on relevant issues.
(See 19-20 Handbook, 9)
- **Attendance and lateness policies:** Attendance is required. Students who miss more than 20% of the class sessions (e.g., more than 2 classes in the weekly schedule, a

proportionate amount for other class formats) should not expect to pass the class. (19-20 Handbook, 19)

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 4:

Course Introduction

- Listen to course introduction lecture and review the syllabus
- Browse website to make sure you can find course materials
- Take practice quiz
- Introduce yourself to your classmates by posting an introduction to the discussion forum under “Course Introduction”

Reform in the Late Middle Ages

- Holder, “The Late Medieval Context”
- John Wyclif, “On Indulgences,” and Jan Hus, “The Treatise on the Church”

16th & 17th Centuries

September 11:

Reformation Overview: People, Places, and Confessions

- Tait, “Martin Luther’s *Ninety-Five Theses* (1517)” (& other Reformation movements)
- View Smart history video series (parts 2, 3, and 4):
<https://smarthistory.org/protestant-reformation-part-2-of-4/>
<https://smarthistory.org/protestant-reformation-part-3-of-4/>
<https://smarthistory.org/protestant-reformation-part-4-of-4/>

The Reformation & Christian Practice

- Mentzer, “The Piety of Townspeople and City Folk”
- Listen to hymns in the Powerpoint: “The Reformation in Architecture and Music”
- The Trial & Martyrdom of Michael Sattler:
<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2044/the-trial--martyrdom-of-michael-sattler/>

September 18:

Reformation Theology

- McGrath, “The Reformation and Post-Reformation Periods”

- Elizabeth I, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*

Reformation Social Ethics

- Butler Bass, "Ethics: Walking the Talk"
- Lindberg, "Luther and the Common Chest"

September 25:

Christianity in Asia

- Irwin & Sundquist, chapter 3: "Christianity Re-encounters Asia"
- India: "St. Thomas Christians and the Portuguese before 1599"

Christianity in Africa

- Irwin & Sundquist, chapter 2: "African Christianity in the 16th Century"
- "African Catholicism in the Congo"

October 2:

Christianity in the Americas

- Irwin & Sundquist, chapter 1: "Christian Beginnings in the Americas"
- Cooper, "A Cloak in Mexico Illumines the History of Christianity in Latin America"

Christianity in the North American Colonies

- Gonzalez, chapter 25
- Winthrop, selections from *A Model of Christian Charity*

18th & 19th Centuries

October 9:

Revolutions in South America and the Caribbean

- Irwin & Sundquist, chapter 18: "South America and the Caribbean in the Age of Revolution"
- "On the Path to Independence"

The Enlightenment and Deism

- González, ch. 22 (pp. 237 - 248)
- Locke, Selections from "A Letter Concerning Toleration"

October 16: Mid-term

October 23: Reading Days - no assignments

October 30:

The Great Awakenings and the American Revolution

- González, pp. 288 - 290; 319 - 332
- "Documents on Religious Liberty"

Slave Christianity and Protest

- Raboteau, chapter 3
- Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, "Spirituals and the Quest for Freedom"
- Recording of spirituals: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJR0Fx9apo0> (begin watching at 0:57:00, i.e., 57 minutes into the concert)

November 6:

The Debate over Slavery

- González, pp. 332 - 344
- "Varieties of Abolitionism" & "White Apologists"

The Protestant Missionary Movement

- González, pp. 417 - 438
- William Carey, "An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens," (1792) Sect. IV & V, pp. 67 - 87:
<http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf>

November 13:

Home Missions & Women's Roles

- Brown, "Protestant Women and Social Reform"
- Audio Clip of James Morone, "Dried Up," on Backstory:
<http://backstoryradio.org/shows/cheers-and-jeers-alcohol-in-america/>
(Scroll half-way down the webpage, click on "Segments," then on "Dried Up")
- Lucy Rider Meyer, "Deaconesses," pp. 49 - 68, v - viii

20th Century

The Fundamentalist – Modernist Controversy

- González, pp. 473 – 477
- PBS Documentary on the Scopes Trial: *Monkey Trial*

November 20:

Ecumenism and Vatican II

- González, pp. 438 – 455
- Vatican II document, “Decree on Ecumenism”:
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html

Post-colonial Movements

- Roberts, “Christianity and Nationalism” & “Missionary, Go Home!”
- “Korea: Christians and the Independence Movement”
- “All-Africa Conference of Churches”

November 24 – 28: Thanksgiving Break

December 4:

Religion in the Civil Rights Movement

- Raboteau, chapter 6
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail:
http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html

Liberalism and Pluralism in Modern America

- González, pp. 482 – 490
- Betz, “Beyond the Judeo-Christian Tradition: Restoring Native American Religion to Twentieth-Century U.S. History”
- Brown, “Women and Ordination”

December 11:

Contemporary Evangelicalism

- Podcast from Speaking of Faith, “The Evolution of American Evangelicalism”:
<http://being.publicradio.org/programs/evangelicalevolution/index.shtml>
- Hybels, “Rediscovering Church”

Eastern Orthodoxy and other Eastern Churches

- Gonzalez, ch. 30 (pp. 373 – 383)

- Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*

December 16: Final Paper Due