General Church History I  
CH 511  
Fall 2010: Tuesday, 8:00 am-12:00 pm, Cherokee Room  
Professor: David Erickson derickson@bmats.edu (903) 795-3677

Course Description

This course is a general survey of Christian history, beginning with the book of Acts and continuing through the medieval period. Special attention will be given to the beliefs and practices of early Christians, the relationship of the Roman Empire to Christians, theological development through ecumenical councils and creeds, monasticism, missions, the rise of the papacy, the development of medieval theology, dissenting groups, and reform movements.

Course Purpose

One value of studying Christian history is to gain perspective from the past that enables us to live better as believers in the present and the future. Our predecessors have heroically served Christ, struggled desperately with their faith, and made many mistakes. Their experiences can encourage us and make us wiser. Another value of studying Christian history is to understand ourselves better. Each one of us has been deeply influenced by the social, intellectual, and theological environment that surrounds us. This influence is so pervasive, we are often unaware of how it effects us. When we study history we meet with people from different cultures and experiences. Learning how they faithfully, though imperfectly, served Christ and interpreted God’s Word, helps us to see our own blind spots as we serve Christ and interpret God’s Word.

Course Texts


Course Requirements

1. **Exams**
   There will be two (2) major exams, a mid-term and a final, each worth 15% of the overall grade for the course. Exams will test the student’s comprehension of the assigned reading, class discussion, and lectures. Taking good notes will be critical to success on the exams. The final exam is not comprehensive and will only cover the second half of the course.

2. **Biographies**
   There are two five (5) page double spaced biographical papers due during the semester. Each paper will cover a person from the list found on the schedule. Students must do one paper before the mid-term exam and one paper after the mid-term exam. A paper should examine the life of a significant Christian, with attention given to his or her theological contributions and historical significance. The biography must reference at least three sources and should include original sources, if possible. The biographies must use footnotes that conform to the standards in Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. The paper will be presented to the class on an assigned date. You are expected to be able to answer questions from the class and the professor after your presentation. Each biographical paper is worth 12.5% of the final grade.

3. **Book Reviews**
   Submit book reviews on the specified dates for the books written by Brown and Lambert. A book review is five (5) pages, double-spaced, and includes: a brief introduction, possibly with biographical information on the author (1 page or less), a summary of the book’s contents (3 pages), critical reflection on the book (1 pages), and a brief conclusion (1 paragraph). A book review should include full bibliographic information for the book under review at the top of the first page. Quotations from or references to the book being reviewed should be noted with parenthetical page citations. See the sample book review in the Syllabi section of the website for additional guidance. Each book review is worth 12.5% of the final grade.

4. **Reflection Papers**
   Every week (excepting exam days) bring to class a one (1) page single-spaced reflection paper from the week’s reading. A reflection paper should include the following: a summation of the main points in the weekly reading (simply reproducing the headings from the chapter is not acceptable), a reaction to or reflection on the reading, and two or three questions about the reading. The reading reflections may be in the form of paragraphs, an outline, or bullet points. Reflection papers must be written in proper English. These papers are worth 10% of the final grade. The lowest scoring paper will be dropped in the calculation of your grade.
5. **Recitation**

Every student should come to class prepared to intelligently discuss the assigned reading. Class discussion forms a critical part of the learning experience and good discussion can only occur when both the students and professor prepare for it. You are expected to be able to summarize and discuss the main ideas from the reading. On any day a student may be called on to lead the class discussion. Students may “pass” on class discussion one time without penalty. Unexcused absences automatically count as a “pass.”

**Course Grades**

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Exams</td>
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<td>Biographies</td>
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<td>Book Reviews</td>
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<td>Reflection Papers</td>
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The seminary’s standardized grading scale will be followed in assigning final grades:

- A 91-100%
- B 81-90%
- C 71-80%
- D 61-70%
- F 0-61%

**Course Policies**

1. **Attendance and Participation**

   Students are expected to attend every class session. More than one unexcused absence will result in a grade reduction. Under certain circumstances, such as the severe illness, injury, or death of an immediate family member or your own illness or injury, every effort will be made to accommodate you, provided you contact the professor to explain your situation. Additionally, it is recognized that many of you are engaged in professional Christian ministry, which will sometimes intrude on your academic life. The professor will try to accommodate the needs of your people as you attempt to balance the needs of ministry and study.

   Personal electronic devices (computers, cell phones) may be used in class for taking notes only. Using the internet, texting, or taking phone calls during class is strictly prohibited unless given explicit permission to do so. A violation of this rule may result in expulsion from class or the prohibition of electronic devices in the classroom.

2. **Deadlines**

   You are expected to adhere to all deadlines without fail. Late work is automatically worth zero points. You have been informed of the various due dates well in advance and are expected to meet them regardless of any personal impediments. Deadlines are a fact of life. You can choose to plan ahead so that
you meet them, or you can be content with the mediocrity of last-minute work. Either way, you still have to be on time.

3. **Grammar and Style**
Biographies and book reviews are expected to employ proper English grammar and must conform to the standards in Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th ed.* (on issues that Turabian does not address, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed.*). Papers that have more than three grammatical errors or more than two style errors will be immediately returned to the student for correction. The student must then resubmit a grammatically sound and stylistically proper paper. The grade of the paper will be reduced 10 percentage points every day past the due date until an adequate paper is produced. Students are encouraged to consult with the professor before the due date to ensure that their paper will not be returned.

4. **Academic Integrity**
The sanctity of truth is central to those who believe in a God who cannot lie and who forbids false witness. Academic honesty is the application in the academic world of the sanctity of truth. A student who submits work as part of the requirements for a course thereby asserts that the student personally has done that work and that it has not been submitted for credit in any other course without permission. Unless credit is explicitly given to sources, the student is asserting that the words and/or the thoughts are the student's own original work. Academic dishonesty is falling short of these standards. It includes, but is not limited to: cheating, submitting work which was prepared by another person, not giving credit on papers to sources, and submitting without approval work originally prepared by the student for another course.

5. **Special Needs**
Individuals with documented impairments who may need special circumstances for exams, classroom participation, or assignments should contact the professor at the beginning of the course in order for special arrangements to be considered.

6. **Syllabus Disclaimer**
During the course of the term the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may appear necessary. All such modifications will occur during a regularly scheduled class meeting.
Schedule
Fall 2010

August 31  Introduction

September 7  The Beginning of the End
Reading:  Gonzalez, 7-38; Selections from Clement and Ignatius

September 14  Enemies Within and Without
Reading:  Gonzalez, 39-66; The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas; The Martyrdom of Polycarp

September 21  Creating a Permanent Institution
Reading:  Gonzalez, 67-108; Selections from Against Praxeas
Bios:  Irenaeus
Tertullian
Novatian

September 28  Orthodoxy and Heresy
Reading:  Gonzalez, 113-135, 158-188; The Nicene Creed; Selections from De Incarnatione
Bios:  Eusebius of Caesarea
Arius
Athanasius
Basil of Caesarea

October 5  Reclaiming Apostolic Christianity
Reading:  Gonzalez, 136-157, 189-206; Leo to Flavian (Tome)
Bios:  Donatus
Anthony
Ambrose of Milan
John Chrysostom

October 12  The End of the World as We Know It
Reading:  Gonzalez, 207-265; Rule of St. Benedict; Confession of Patrick; Selections from Augustine
Bios:  Augustine of Hippo
Patrick
Benedict of Nursia
Nestorius
Pope Gregory I
John of Damascus

October 19  Mid-Term Exam

October 26  The Long Winter
Reading: Gonzalez, 266-291; Debate between Timothy I and Caliph Mahdi
Bios: John Scotus Erigena
       Ratramnus
       Boniface
       Ansgar
       Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII)

November 2  These Happy Golden Years
Reading: Gonzalez, 292-323; Siege and Capture of Antioch and Jerusalem;
        First Rule of the Friars Minor
Bios: Francis of Assisi
       Dominic de Guzman
       Anselm of Canterbury
       Peter Lombard
       Thomas Aquinas
       Pope Innocent III

November 9  The Babylonian Captivity of the Church
Reading: Gonzalez, 324-341
        Selections from Anselm and Aquinas
Bios: William of Ockham
       Philip IV of France
       Catherine of Siena
       Meister Eckhart

November 16 Reforming the Church from Within
Reading: Gonzalez, 342-374; Selections from John Wycliffe
Bios: John Wycliffe
       John Huss
       Jean Gerson
       Girolamo Savonarola

November 23 Expanding East and West
Reading: Gonzalez, 378-411
Bios: Francis Xavier
      Matteo Ricci
      Bartolomé de Las Casas
      Juan de Estrada Rávago

November 30 Flex Week

December 7  Final Exam