



Survey of Church History

Syllabus

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Course Description

Church history is the heart of His story, God's kingdom work on earth. This course explores the development of the Christian church from Pentecost to the present day. It covers key people and events that God used throughout history to bolster His Church and also those negative influences that infected her. The goal of the course is to use lessons from church history to advance the kingdom of God in life and ministry.

Course Objectives

1. Identify significant points of church history and describe their impact on the church today.
2. List the salient elements of early Christian worship.
3. Identify the major contribution that Augustine and the Reformers made to the church's theological understanding of salvation, redemption, and grace.
4. Ponder the implications of "martyr faith" for his/her own life and ministry.

Course Texts

Required Textbooks:

Noll, Mark. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. Second edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000.

Shelley, Bruce. *Church History in Plain Language*. Second edition. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995.

NOTE: At the time of the Final Examination, each student will be asked to indicate what percentage of the required textbooks he / she has read.

Optional Textbook:

Dowley, Tim. *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, rev. ed. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995.



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Optional Videotapes:

The Trial and Testimony of the Early Church, Where Luther Walked, and God's Outlaw are available for purchase by calling (800) 523-0226. Videos may also be rented on a weekly basis from the Ockenga Institute at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.



Course Requirements

1. **Lectures, study questions and exercises:** Follow the Learning Guide by listening to the lectures, doing the readings and responding for your own use to its questions and exercises.
2. **Required reading:** All required reading is noted in each lesson. At the time of the Final Examination you will be required to indicate what percentage of the reading you completed.
3. **Research Paper:** You will select a topic in the field of Church History (from Pentecost to the present), research it thoroughly and write a paper on it. The papers should be typed and in correct form, footnoted where appropriate, and approximately **7-10 double-spaced pages** in length. In no case should they exceed 12 pages. The paper will be due at the completion of the course.



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4. **ITS Online Interactivity Forum:** Participate with other students worldwide in an ongoing asynchronous threaded discussion of two major course topics. Go to www.ITScourses.org/interactivity/ to register for and enter the ITS On-Line Forum. In order to get the fullest benefit from the Forum, complete the assignment **after** you have listened to all the lectures. Be sure to return to the forum after finishing the course to see how others respond. Follow these steps to complete the assignment:
- ◆ Post an original answer to each question for your course (75 word min.).
 - ◆ Post your response to any previous answer given to each question (75 word min.).
 - ◆ Submit a document to your proctor that contains the original questions, your postings, and the postings to which you responded.

NOTE: Please read the “Assignment Instructions” in the Forum for details.

Objective: to develop critical thinking skills through personal interaction with the content of the course and the responses of others within a diverse community of learners.

5. **Spiritual Formation Project:**

RATIONALE: Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. **With this in mind**, ITS includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor**, discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. *Identify your mentor early in the course*, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. Complete the following:

1. **Personal Reflection and Evaluation: *Reflect on the course*** – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.
 - a. Follow these steps in your reflection:



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Step 1: What **one** theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?

Step 2: What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?

Step 3: Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?

Step 4: How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what *specific steps* should you take to *concretely* apply what you have learned?

- b. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: **approximately three pages**)
 - c. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).
- 2. Community Reflection and Interaction: *Interview a mentor*** – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:
- a. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)
 1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
 2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
 3. Someone who is **not** your grader or a family member.
 4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
 5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
 6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.
- NOTE: ***Identify your mentor early in the course***, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”
- b. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
 - ♦ What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
 - ♦ In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
 - ♦ What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?



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NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do **not** use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

- 3. Synthesis and Application: *Draw your final conclusions*** – Having reflected on the course and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:
- a. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.
 - b. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
 - ◆ What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
 - ◆ What advice did he/she give?
 - ◆ How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?
 - ◆ Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.
 - c. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:
 - ◆ If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - ◆ Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?
 - ◆ In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, *specific* changes need to occur in your life and what *concrete* steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. **The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life.** If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.



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Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

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6. **Examinations:** Two examinations will be given during the course which will involve responding in short essay form to four out of six of the study guide “Focus” questions and in long essay form to two out of three study guide “Develop” exercises in the covered lessons:

Midterm: Covering lectures and readings from Lesson 1 through Lesson 12.

Final: Covering lectures and readings from Lesson 13 through Lesson 24.

Course Grading

Grading: Your final grade for the course will be computed on the following basis:

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|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Reading report:..... | 10% |
| Research paper:..... | 25% |
| ITS Online Interactivity Forum | 5% |
| Spiritual Formation Project | 10% |
| Midterm examination: | 25% |
| Final examination: | 25% |



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Notes Regarding This Downloaded Syllabus

This downloadable syllabus is not exhaustive. It is designed to provide learners with a picture of the course, not a full outline of the course. Grader Guidelines, Appendixes, Bibliographies, Lecture Outlines, and Review Questions have been removed. The complete course syllabus is included with purchase of the course in either a digital or hard-copy format.

Likewise, individuals taking the class for credit are responsible for the syllabus requirements of the specific institution through which the course is offered. Each individual institution has reserved the right to alter or change the syllabus as deemed necessary.