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CH 500 ExL Turning Points in Church History

Asbury Theological Seminary

Fall Term 2004

3 credit hour units

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Welcome to CH 500, Turning Points in Church History! I am looking forward to spending this semester in conversation together with you and with some of the great thinkers and actors of Christian history, discovering how their experience of God's love, truth and power sheds light on our lives and ministries today. Santayana suggested that "those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." Assuming that is true, our study of the lives and faith of countless Christians who have gone before us can serve as a compass and roadmap for us as we strive to lead God's people into the future. I invite you from the outset to ask how what we are reading and discussing relates to particular situations in the church communities in which we live.

COURSE ATMOSPHERE AND TONE: This is my first time teaching CH500 online. Although I have taught similar courses numerous times in a face to face class setting, I still have much to learn about teaching and working in an online environment. I frequently tell people that I am a person who is "directionally impaired"--you know, one who gets lost in closets, parking lots, etc. Although I'm not quite that inept with computers, I am on the uphill climb when it comes to knowing my way around the virtual world. So, please be patient with me, and forgive me ahead of time for the mistakes I will make, and please feel free to offer suggestions as to how I can make this a better learning environment for you and for future students. Let me know what works and what doesn't work so well.

Parker Palmer, the Quaker educator, writes that effective teaching begins by creating a **safe place to ask questions**. That is my one of my initial goals--to create a space where we can safely bring our whole selves to the discussion without fear that somehow others will reject or undercut us. As a distinctively Christian educational enterprise, we of the Asbury community ought to create such an atmosphere of love, acceptance, sincere hard work, and striving for excellence, that if an electronic passerby wandered into our group (don't worry, they can't), they would be astounded and ask themselves: "What is going on there? Why are those people so different from the people I know?" Kierkegaard noted

how strange people act when they fall in love--walking into walls, pouring coffee on themselves, etc--and wondered why most of us as Christians show no marked difference from others around us. Let us work together in this class to develop a spirit of "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to **selected themes as turning points** in the history of the Christian Church from its origins to the present time. Within the broad sweep of the four main periods of the Church (Early, Medieval, Reformation, and Modern), students will consider key persons, events, developments, movements, and theological concepts. Special attention is devoted to intellectual history (the history of ideas) and to religious biography (the role key individuals have played in the story of Christianity). Open to MA students (other than MATS) only.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will value the theological resources of the Church, including the creeds, great writings, issues faced, significant leaders, and decisions made by previous generations throughout church history. In order to fulfill that goal, this course introduces students to the theological and historical heritage of the Church. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- identify critical issues of historiography (the study or doing of history), interpreting them from a Christian perspective.
- determine key events and concepts and analyze that information in light of the students' own faith commitment.
- explore the work of key individuals and movements and to understand their work in light of the students' own ministry.
- explore major developments in the history of the Church and relate them to current discussions in the Church.
- develop and formulate historical and theological constructs which reflect the students' awareness of biblical, historical, and theological concerns.
- critique various theological and institutional formulations and determine their degree of conformity to biblical, theological, and historical norms.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Kelly, J. N. D. *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.

Noll, Mark A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Books, 2000.

Placher, William C. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, Vol. 1

Placher, William C. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, Vol. 2

Recommended Reading:

Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity*, Vols. 1 & 2. New York: HarperCollins, 1985.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION (all of these assignments will be spelled out in much more detail in the modules themselves; this is the general overview)

Academic Manners (500 points)

This portion of your work entails three areas: **P**reparation, **A**ttitude, and **R**espect (I want you to be **par** for the course—yuk, yuk). Let me spell out what I mean by each of these.

Preparation (and promptness): means you have read the material and responded on time and you have read and written with care and thoughtfulness. Test: would others in the class say that you have shown up consistently for class with the appropriate tools.

Attitude (toward the learning process): means you are engaged—you are awake, invested, putting forth effort in each module. Here, I am less concerned with quantity (some times more words means less thought), and more concerned with the quality of analysis and interpretation you are developing. Test: As a friend used to ask, “Would your colleagues rather see you coming or going?” Is the classroom a better place because you are there? If you were gone for a day or two, your classmates ought to begin complaining to their spouses or close friends: “Class was a bummer today. Janna (or Joe) was not there.”

Respect: means, positively, you appropriately respect others in the class, communicating with courtesy, politeness, and concern. Negatively, it means you are not acting like a cyber jerk ;0].

General Reading and Discussion (500 points)

This portion of your grade will be based on the **quality** of your discussion posts and will be given twice during the semester (250 points each). Again, there are three components to this portion of your grade you should be attentive to: **r**eading, **d**igesting, and **i**nterpreting (I want you to be **r[ea]di** to discuss (sorry, I couldn’t resist). Ask yourself:

1. Have I **read**? (Versus trying to bull snort your way through the discussion—believe me, I’ve read these books, so I can tell the difference). Test: can you sum up the gist of the reading (in your own words) in a way that could help those who haven’t read it understand the material?
2. Have I **digested** the reading—that is, have you mulled it over, meditated upon it, and considered it deeply? Test: can you effectively discuss the ideas and implications from the readings with others in the class?
3. Have I begun to **interpret** the material? I want to force you to move past merely repeating what you’ve read. Continually, refer back to the texts and continually ask “why.” Test: Have you raised provocative/insightful questions, analyzed the material critically, offered constructive solutions, and/or applied the reading to current life situations?

Group Project 1 (100 points)

During Module 1, groups/teams will collaborate to produce a 1 page position paper defining the study of (church) history for others in the class to review and discuss.

Group Project 2 (400 points)

Teams will be divided along the lines of an either/or issue. Martin Luther, accused of heresy and of destroying the church of Christ, is on trial. One group will act as his team of defense lawyers and two groups will work to convict him of the alleged crime. This assignment will require: 1) research—through the course texts, 2) opening arguments—synthesized by the team, 3) rebuttal arguments from the different teams, and 4) concluding statements and discussion. Your initial work can be done in you team folders (through CH 500-XL-RM→Teams icon); the actual debate will take place in the discussion center.

Group Self Evaluation (300 points)

At the end of the semester you will submit to HS 500-XL-RM Office (which only I can read) an evaluation of each of your team members on a scale of 1-10, 10 being highest. This is to help avoid the inevitable complaint from students that there were individuals within the group who contributed little to the work. Since most of you are almost overly kind in grading your peers, when someone receives below say an eight, I know that you have been slacking. Evaluate your peers on the following criteria:

1. Work—especially the quality of the work contributed, but quantity, too
2. Initiative—the level of energy and commitment exhibited
3. Process—the degree to which the team member promotes team spirit and collaboration and cooperation within the group

Chrysostom Paper (300 points)

Students will write a five page paper analyzing J. D. N. Kelly's book, *Golden Mouth*. Notice the subtitle of the book: *John Chrysostom: Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop*. The goal will be for you to examine these three aspects of Chrysostom's life, to investigate how they fit together: which one dominates in his mind and ministry and why? What does this tell us about his ministry and historical context? What does it have to offer for those ministering in churches today? This paper will then become the basis for a class wide discussion on the book. You will be required to read papers from at least two other students and post responses to what they wrote. Open discussion will follow.

Module Presentation (200 points)

During one module in the semester, you will be assigned to present a two page paper responding to the readings for that module (four people will be presenting papers during the module, and this format will occur during three modules = twelve students each presenting once). Specific directions/questions may be given in the module (Noll also has questions at the back of his book that are always helpful)—and all class members should do the reading with these questions in mind—but those writing the papers will generally want to pay attention to the following:

1. What is the *most important* content/information in the reading and how can it be summarized accurately (paraphrased in your own words) and effectively communicated to others? Notice, that here you are already acting as a historian—“selecting” what is most important in the material. This is the level of

Description.

- a. **S**—substantiate: refer to the text; use evidence. Incidentally at this point, think of the relationship between Noll’s “narrative” history and Placher’s “primary sources.” How might the primary sources either confirm/substantiate Noll’s approach or challenge it?
 - b. **P**—paraphrase: simplify and sum up the material in your own words
 - c. **I**—illustrate: come up with an analogy or illustration to “flesh out” the main point(s). To what can we accurately compare the two natures of Christ? G. K. Chesterton insists it is not like the admixture of two colors, as in the blending of red and white to make pink, not a little divinity and a little humanity stirred and shaken; instead, Christ’s two natures are like the bold red and white on the shield of St. George—both colors at their fullest display. I can’t stress enough how helpful it is for both you and the people you are communicating with for you to create ACCURATE analogies or illustrations to “flesh out” what you have just read.
 - d. **T**—thesis: you must commit yourself to move beyond mere description, toward arguing a point. Interpret. Ask why. A good thesis is usually complex, interesting, and compelling. We as readers are drawn in to your logic. “Ah, this makes sense,” we muse to ourselves musingly.
2. What is the deeper significance or meaning of the reading? **Interpretation.**
 - a. You began this process above, especially under “d”
 3. How do we apply what we have learned to the contemporary church?

Application.

4. From this point, we as a class can then move effectively into Discussion, confident that our discussion will be grounded firmly in the content of our study.

When you are responsible for writing the paper during your week, you may of course enter into the discussion that follows, but since you are setting up the terms of discussion for us, you are not required to add any posts. I should think you will become interested, however, in what your colleagues are saying about what you said, so please feel free to jump into the fray.

Response to Module Presentations (200 points)

Those students who are not presenting during these (3) weeks will read the two page papers presented by four classmates (as well as the reading scheduled for that module) and will respond (a one page response—generally—to the four papers) and then discuss the issues raised (two more substantive posts minimum).

Final Biography Paper (500 points)

This eight to twelve page paper will focus on the life contribution of one of history's leading Christians.

Selection: I would like you to find a figure who dramatically influenced the direction of the church, and who falls outside mainstream western culture. In other words, choose someone who was female, or non-Caucasian, or from the two-thirds world. I cannot stress enough how important it is to choose a figure here who is worth spending this amount of energy on. First, they should be someone you are personally interested in. Second, they should be significant enough in history that you will have no trouble finding research information on them. Third, you want to select someone who lived an interesting life: someone who is complex and multifaceted will be easier to study and write about than someone who, say, was only a scholar. Find someone who is inherently exciting.

Evaluation of the paper will be graded according to the following rubric: 100 points for **writing** (correct grammar, accurate word choice, clear style and transitions); 200 points for **substance** (thoroughly researched and thoughtfully interpreted—instead of merely describing); 200 points for **thesis and logic** (creative thesis—a thesis always argues a point—supported by evidence, and argued convincingly and compellingly).

EVALUATION

Assignment	points
Academic Manners	500
Reading & Discussion	500
Group Project 1	100
Group Project 2	400
Group Self Evaluation	300
Paper 1 (Chrysostom)	300
Paper 2 (biography)	500
Module presentation	200
Module response	<u>200</u>
Total points	3000

GRADING

A letter grade will be given based on percentage of total points. With 3000 total points available, at the end of the semester I will be dividing your points by 30. Please keep a record of your total points during the semester. That way, at any time during the semester you will be able to divide by the number of total points available up to that point and know where you stand grade wise.

A (95-100), **A-** (90-94),
B+ (87-89), **B** (83-86), **B-** (80-82),
C+ (77-79), **C** (73-76), **C-** (70-72),
D (60-69), **F** (less than 60).

From the *2001-03 Catalog*, 28:

- A Exceptional work: surpassing or outstanding achievement of course objectives
- B Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
- C Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
- D Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
- F Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives.

Reciprocal Learning Covenant (not exactly the law of the Medes and the Persians, but close to it, check out Esther 1:19).

I promise to give this whole experience my best shot. If one of us messes up others will forgive him or her as long as that person is making an honest attempt to put it right--**right**? So we can know what to expect, let us spell out a few things for the record.

What you can expect from me:

1. I will have all of your materials and assignments on-line by 9 am (ET) at the starting date for each of our seven learning modules (when possible, I would like for you to have the new module a week in advance).
2. I will respond to all of your messages on a first come first serve basis as posted in the CH 500 XL Office (which only I can read) or in my e-mail, which I check most weekdays. In case an "urgent" message needs a quick response simply write URGENT in caps in the subject line (just please don't cry wolf).
3. Please feel free to call me at my office or at home if it is an easier way for you to clarify questions.
4. If I need to be out of town I will let you know in advance. In case of emergency, I will email you my cell phone number ahead of time
5. While I might not participate in all your discussions, I will monitor your group conversations and participate at times.
6. Once or twice during the semester, I will check in with you to see how you feel about this ExL experience and ask for your suggestions.
7. I pledge to pray for you as a class. I pledge to pray individually, per your request. If we are going to get through this thing with all our faculties still (relatively) in tact, we will need to watch each other's backs. We really are a team. Let us affirm from the outset that the Spirit of God which knows no boundaries of time or distance can bind us together into a unique and meaningful community of Christian discipleship.

What I can count on from you:

1. You will **actively participate** as a member of a learning community. CH 500 XL is not an independent study. Our classroom may be electronic but it is nonetheless real. We will be interacting with and learning from one another. Expectations (including participation) will be spelled out with each learning module.
2. Please keep track of **your own grade** for the semester. Add up your points and divide them by the total number of points so far. Realize that, since there are 3000 total points in the class, at the end of the semester I will be dividing your total number of points by 30, which will then put your grade on a 100 point scale.
3. You will invest the same **amount of time** in this class as if you were on campus. Plan on 10-12 hours of reading, reflecting, discussing, and writing each week.
4. I would appreciate all electronic messages pertinent to the class subject matter being posted to the **Discussion Center**. Although some assignments might be an exception to this (and I am not prohibiting personal e-mail communication), in an on-campus setting classroom questions and responses would be heard by all. Let's make an honest attempt to make our electronic classroom experience similar. "How to" questions should be directed instead to The **Q and A** conference center.
5. Send **documents of several pages** as "attached files," but shorter responses in e-mail messages. Most of these will be posted to the Discussion Center.
6. If you have responsibilities that take you away from our community for a few days, please let us know in advance.
7. Sometimes things happen. If in **crisis**, e-mail me as soon as possible so we can adapt the schedule and pray for you specifically.
8. **Late work** will be graded down a half a letter grade every three days.
9. Please remember that **an incomplete in the course** can only be granted (according to the Dean and the catalogue) for reasons of "unavoidable emergency." Such permission can only be granted by the Academic Dean.
10. I would appreciate it greatly if you would recruit one or two **friends to pray** for us during this semester.

Contact Information:

While I can help you with course content, you will want to contact the good folks in our Information Systems office for help with technical questions. To make the most of your learning experience and to ensure it is a beneficial one, please contact the following people if you have questions about any of the ExL issues.

ExL Contact Information:

For general questions regarding the **ExL program**, email **ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu**

For **technical support**, email **ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu**

For **library research support**, contact Information Commons at **Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu**

For **library loans**, contact Dot James at **Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu**

Library/Information Commons Resources

Link: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/library>

Email: Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu

Toll-Free: 1-866-454-2733

ExL students are encouraged to make use of local libraries, if possible. However, library services are always available to students through the Asbury Seminary Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be made online by going to the following link: <http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html>.

Advanced Research assistance is available by contacting Hannah Kirsch (Hannah_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu), which includes using various online databases, or doing research on a specific topic.

To request material from the Asbury Seminary Library, please follow the instructions on the library loan page (<http://asbury.hosts.atlas-sys.com/illiad/logon.html>). Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Wilmore campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) if the materials are not available in electronic format; however, shipping via media rate is free. (Media rate normally takes 5 business days for shipping, but it can take two weeks to addresses in the West). Express mail services (prices vary according to weight) and scanning (5 cents per page in pdf format) are also available. Requests generally require 1-2 business days to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early enough to allow for shipping and processing!

Course Navigation (Windows and Icons):

Course Center: This will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules (No interaction takes place here. This is where I post course materials and documents only).

Discussion Center: This is where most assignments will be posted and where all of our discussion and communication will occur.

Prayers of the People: I invite you to let the class know how to support you in prayer during the semester. Anything that is submitted here is considered confidential—all information shared does not go outside the group. One challenge for us is to learn how to listen well to each other, pray seriously, and offer encouragement while recognizing there is a fine line (easy for us to cross) from encouragement to “preaching” at someone else. Try to discern when someone needs compassion instead of advice. Again, this is a fine line and has as much to do with our tone and motive as anything else.

CH500-XL-RM-Q & A: **This is an experiment.** Not every ExL teacher includes this feature in the course. Let me know if it works. This will be used for all public, class “how to” questions, not related to the subject matter. At the very least, this will be a way to organize our topics, separating out content discussion from more trivial questions. My hope is that when questions are asked, especially technical questions—say navigational questions (how to find something in First Class, or on the Internet, or how to interpret course directions)—that some of you may be able to answer each other’s questions. This will only work if you check in now and then to read each other’s questions. Especially on technical issues, I hope you feel free to help each other out. I will check in at a minimum of twice a week and offer all the assistance I can. So, if you have a question that requires my immediate attention, send it through the Discussion Center. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and the professor, you should post to the Q & A “conference.”

CH500-XL-Office: This is for private correspondence between you and the professor. Most communication should be directed to the Q & A Conference so that fellow learners can benefit from your questions or comments. However, if there is a sensitive matter you would like to direct my way, including crises in your life, confusion or concern over my evaluative remarks, or a concern about a fellow learner, feel free to send me a note via the Office icon. This should not be used to ask general course-related questions.

Archives Center: This will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable. Once “archived,” comments cannot be amended (unless I drag and drop them back into the Discussion Center).

Chat Center: This is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. Remember: None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.

Resource Center: This provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, chapel services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer, and a Real Audio Player.

Teams: You will be assigned to a team which will work together for two projects during the semester. In addition, you will often need to respond specifically to comments made by other members of your team throughout the semester. The individual modules will give you the information about when you need to work in your team folder.

READING LEGEND

N= Noll; P-I= Placher, volume 1; P-II= Placher, volume 2; K= JND Kelly; N-Q= the Study questions in the back of Noll, starting on p. 320; N App Q = Noll's "Application For today's Church" questions; MQ= module questions that I will ask in the Module folders. I will either refer you to page numbers (N: 11-22), chapters (P-I: chs 2-3); or occasionally, selected figures from Placher (for example, P-II: chapter 7, Schleiermacher, Barth, and Niebuhr).

Before the text indicator (N, P, or K), or assignment, I may post the day that the reading/assignment is to be completed (M,T,W,Th,F,S,Su; normally with the date; for example, "M 9/13 N ch 1" means chapter one of Noll should be completed on Monday 9/13; in each case, the reading should be finished by the end of the day (**midnight on that day ET**—eastern time zone). Hopefully, this will be a way to keep us all on the same page, so when we are ready to discuss, everyone has done the reading and we won't get frustrated. If I mark a day for an assignment, it is due by noon (in order to give others a chance to still respond that day).

WARNING

Please read the schedule carefully and ask if you have questions. We will try to get into a rhythm of having reading finished by Monday night, first response on Tuesday, and second on Thursday; on other weeks you will be writing papers for Friday that will be responded to on the following Tuesday and Thursday.

Also, please plan ahead for the big projects. Study the schedule to see when papers are due, and when larger reading assignments fall. You will need to work ahead, especially for the final biography paper.

COURSE SCHEDULE

MODULE # AND START DATE	TOPICS TO COVER	READING PAGE NUMBERS	PROJECTS & WORK TO DO	OTHER ASSIGNMENTS & DUE DATES	OTHER MATTERS
Mod intro 9/7	Introduction of ourselves			W 9/8: Post your bio; Study the syllabus; MQs: 1-7	F 9/10: post response to others
Mod 1a 9/13	What is Church History; who cares?	M 9/13 N:11-22	Tu 9/14 Identify Noll's bias (& yours); start Group Project 1; discussion	Th 9/16: Group Project 1 due	Respond to another group

Mod 1b 9/20	Judaism Heresy Orthodoxy Apologists	M 9/20 N: ch 1 P-I ch 1	Tu 9/21 NQ: 3,4,5, 7,9,10; N App Q: 1, 4	1 st Discussion post by Th 9/23	
Mod 2a 9/27	Nicea Arius Chalcedon	M 9/27 N: chs 2-3 P-I: chs 2-3		Fr 10/1 Papers due, group 3	
Mod 2b 10/4				Tu 10/5 Response papers; Th 10/7 2 nd response	
Mod 3a 10/11	John Chrysostom	K:1-290		F 10/15 Papers due for all class members	
Mod 3b 10/18		M 10/18 read two other student's papers		Tu 10/19 1 st response Th 10/21 2 nd response	
Mod 4a 10/25	Monasticism Charlemagne Papacy Crusades	M 10/25 N: chs 4-5 P-I ch 6		F 10/29 Papers due group 2	
Mod 4b 11/1				Tu 11/2 Response papers; Th 11/4 2 nd response	
Mod 5a 11/8	Reformations: Lutheran, English, and Catholic	M 11/8 N chs 7-9 P-II chs 1-3	Read, study, exchange ideas in groups, plan your arguments		

Mod 5b 11/15	Reformation Debate			M 11/15: opening arguments; Tu 11/16 rebuttals; Th 11/18 closing arguments	
Mod 6a 11/22	Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism	M 11/22 N: chs 6, 10 P-I ch 4 P-II 4 (Spener, Wesley— both readings)		F 11/26 Papers due group 1	
Mod 6b 11/29				Tu 11/30 Response papers; Th 12/2 2 nd response	
Mod 7a 12/6	Enlightenment and modernism	M 12/6 N: chs 11 and 13; P-II ch 4 (Locke, Tindal, Hume, and Kant); ch 6	Open discussion of the problems of modernism and how the video may relate (see Module)	1 st post due by Tu 12/7; other responses are optional	Watch the video “Babette’s Feast”
Mod 7b 12/13				M 12/13 final biography paper due; all class work due by Tu 12/14 midnight ET	