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CH 500 ExL Turning Points in Church History

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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 own 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: I am now somewhat of a veteran teaching CH500 online and I have taught similar courses numerous times in a face-to-face class setting; nevertheless, I still have much to learn about teaching (in general) 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 still often “up on the slow-take” 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 no doubt 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 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 day-to-day. Let us work together in this class, therefore, 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, significant leaders, issues faced, 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 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:
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:
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: 250 x 2)
This portion of your work entails three areas: Preparation, Attitude, and Respect (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. Here, I am just as concerned with quality as I am with quantity (some times more words actually mean less thought)—with the depth of analysis and interpretation you are developing. Test: would others in the class say that you have shown up consistently for class with the appropriate tools, ready to offer meaningful insights. Are you absent from real discussion?

Attitude (toward the learning process): means you are engaged—you are awake, invested, putting forth effort in each module. 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 ;]

General Reading and Discussion (500 points; 250 pts x 2)
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: reading, digesting, and interpreting (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 materially critically, offered constructive solutions, and/or applied the reading to current life situations?

WARNING: Some discussion postings about your own (not-related-to-the-texts) experience are legitimate, good, and helpful. Some of that kind of discussion can count in the above category of Academic Manners. However, in this category, only discussion directly related to the readings counts.
**Group Project 1 (100 points)**

During Module 1b, groups will collaborate to produce a 1 page position paper defining the term “heresy”—both from an early church perspective (from our readings) and interpreting what the concept ought to mean to us today.

**Group Project 2 (400 points)**

Groups 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. Two groups 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 a group forum; the actual debate will take place in a class forum.

**Group Self Evaluation (300 points)**

At the end of the semester you will submit, using To Professor (which allows a private conversation) 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. 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—the level of energy, initiative, and commitment exhibited

2. Attitude—the person’s ability to get along with others in the group

3. Process—the degree to which the group 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 determine which one dominates in his mind and ministry—and why—and to investigate how they fit together (what are the logical relationships between the three). 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 each be expected to present a two-page (double-spaced) paper (about 800 words), responding to a question I will post about the readings. I will then select two student papers from each of the sets of two groups for the rest of the students to respond to and discuss.

Response to Module Presentations (200 points)
Those students who are not presenting during each of these weeks will read the selected two-page papers (as well as the reading scheduled for that module) and will respond (in one page—at least 400 words) 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Manners</td>
<td>500 (250x2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading &amp; Discussion</td>
<td>500 (250x2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project 1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project 2</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Self Evaluation</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1 (Chrysostom)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2 (biography)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module paper</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module response paper</td>
<td>200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total points</td>
<td>3000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 2006-07 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.

Plagiarism
You are expected to know the ATS policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism consists not only of using an entire paper or portion of a paper that is not your own work and handing it in as though you have written it yourself; it also includes using parts/elements of what other people have written within your own work without giving proper credit to the author(s)—without proper citation. **Those caught plagiarizing may not only flunk the assignment, but may flunk the course, depending on the severity of the offense.**

Reciprocal Learning Covenant (not exactly a Hittite-Suzerain treaty, but…)
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 at least by Sunday 9 pm (EST) at the starting date for each of our seven learning modules (when possible, earlier).
2. I will respond to all of your messages on a first come first serve basis as posted in To Professor (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. 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 (which always include 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 **Course Questions**. 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.

5. The best way for us to communicate and respond online is to paste our assignments (perhaps with the exception of the longer final biography paper) into a text box, **not using attachments**. The difference is this: it is easier for everyone to open immediately, and we can all highlight and respond more easily to particular statements that are made.

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.
**Groups:** You will be assigned to a group which will work together for two projects during the semester. However, online discussion in a course of twenty-two has proven overwhelming to students in the past. In order to make discussion manageable, for most modules you will only need to discuss with your and one other group (e.g., Groups A & D and Groups B & C). This means you will only be responsible for reading half the posts.

**ONLINE SECTION DESCRIPTIONS AND COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES**

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into [http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu](http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The **Course Information Center**, in the center of your screen, contains many features to be used throughout the semester:
   a) **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class;
   b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
   c) **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
   d) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
   e) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
   f) **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

2. **Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.
3. **Resources**, a section located on the left side, provides links to items you may want to use often in the semester.

**Discussion Etiquette:** Let me offer a few suggestions about your posts.

1) **Please use 14-16 point font** for discussion posts, since it is easier for everyone to read. Use the editing tools available in the forum to select the font you would like to use. Thanks.

2) If you are new to Online, it is helpful when responding to your peers, to **highlight** the particular sentence(s) you want to respond to and copy them, then hit “reply.” Paste the copied text into the new post so that the person’s statement and your comment will both appear for others, giving us the particular context you are addressing.

3) Papers should be **14 point font**, double spaced, with normal margins.

4) The suggested **number of pages** for papers and posts is the minimum requirement—you may always write more.

5) **Let me reiterate**: during discussion, “chatty” comments are welcome (especially comparing your own past or present church experience with our current topic), since these both set a congenial atmosphere and help us apply the church history we are studying. **However, while these type of comments count for Academic Manners, they will not count for the Reading & Discussion portion of your grade. The Reading & Discussion points come from comments directly related to the reading in some way (which might mean ongoing conversation about the reading with colleagues).**
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 4, Locke, Tindal, Hume).

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 (especially Kelly). 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE # &amp; start DATE</th>
<th>TOPICS TO COVER</th>
<th>READING PAGE NUMBERS</th>
<th>PROJECTS &amp; WORK TO DO</th>
<th>OTHER ASSIGNMENT S &amp; DUE DATES</th>
<th>OTHER MATTERS</th>
<th>TEAMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mod intro 2/11</td>
<td>What is Church History; who cares?</td>
<td>M Read N: 11-22; Post your bio; + read others</td>
<td>Tu Study the syllabus; MQs: 1-7</td>
<td>Th Identify Noll’s bias (&amp; yours)—post that</td>
<td>F post response to others in class &amp; discuss</td>
<td>AB DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/18</td>
<td>Judaism Heresy Orthodoxy Apologists</td>
<td>M N: ch 1 P-I ch 1; NQ: 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10; N App Q: 1, 4</td>
<td>Tu Start Group Project 1: define what heresy meant &amp; means</td>
<td>Th Post definition paper; and respond to other groups</td>
<td>Fri Discuss</td>
<td>AB DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod 2a</td>
<td>Mod 2b</td>
<td>Mod 3a</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>Arius</td>
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<td>Chrysostom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chalcedon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading week</td>
<td></td>
<td>Read two other student's papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fr</td>
<td>Tu</td>
<td>Reading week</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tu 1st response</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod Papers due</td>
<td>Response papers; Th 2nd response</td>
<td>K:1-290</td>
<td>Papers due for all class members</td>
<td>1st response Th 2nd response</td>
<td>N: chs 2-3 P-I: chs 2-3</td>
<td>Read, study, exchange ideas in groups, plan your arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mod 5b</td>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism</td>
<td>M N: chs 6, 10 P-I ch 4 P-II 4 (Spener, Wesley—both readings)</td>
<td>W Begin open discussion comparing and contrasting Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism (are they compatible?)</td>
<td>AB CD</td>
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<td>Mod 6a</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Enlightenment and modernism</td>
<td>M N: chs 11 and 13; P-II ch 4 (Locke, Tindal, Hume, and Kant); ch 6</td>
<td>Module paper due Fr</td>
<td>AB CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod 6b-7</td>
<td>5/12</td>
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<td>Module Response paper due Tu</td>
<td>AB CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mod 7a</td>
<td>5/19</td>
<td>Continued discussion of Enlightenment</td>
<td></td>
<td>T final biography paper due</td>
<td>AB CD</td>
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