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CH 501 Church History

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**CH 501
CHURCH HISTORY**

July 2005

**J. Steven O'Malley
Instructor**

Credit: Three Semester Hours

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Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday from 3:45-4:30 p.m. (E.S.T.)

This syllabus may be amended prior to the beginning of class.

Welcome to our class! Let me take a moment to introduce myself to you and to begin laying some plans for our work together. Instructing students in church history is for me to join with you in exploring and sharing in the odyssey of a remarkable company of women and men. It is investigating the response of the Christian community to the revealed truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in its confessions and structures, its life, and its work. It is to acknowledge our dependence upon that mighty cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1) who have given testimony by word, deed, and life to His claim upon this universe. It is to recognize that we are not alone in ministry. It is to discover that there are vital resources from the past that might empower and guide each of us who seeks to become a partaker in that vital company of the committed – a vehicle *through which* God has incredibly transformed this planet over the past two millennia. It is a company filled with its share of failures as well as achievements in faith, and our awareness of both can hopefully enhance our capacity to live out our ministry with discernment and greater faithfulness to the Lord of the Church.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the development of Christianity from the Apostolic Period to the Reformation. Emphasis is placed upon the central historical figures, movements and theological issues, with attention given to their importance for Christian ministry today. Major primary texts and interpretive studies will be read.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand and appreciate the Christian tradition so the student recognizes that our generation lives on the growing edge of a vast Christian heritage.
2. To grasp the normative historical expressions of the church that defined its community and mission. The historical traditions developed within the history of Christianity will be related to the challenge to, and opportunities for, Christian ministry today.
3. To acquire basic factual knowledge of the persons, places, dates, events, and movements that shaped the history of the Christian Church.
4. To comprehend the issues that motivated the Church to develop its beliefs, practices, and structures and to grasp why, from time to time, the Church modifies them.
5. To understand the evolution of Christian doctrine with respect to Scripture and tradition and to learn to discern between form and content.

6. To appreciate the importance of primary sources and the nature and effects of historical interpretation.
7. To view the present in the light of the prior beliefs and actions of the Christian community.
8. To evaluate one's Christian vocation in the light of the Christian tradition.
9. To gain insight into the nature and practice of Christian ministry.
10. To acquire insight into the multi-ethnic and cross-cultural nature of ministry.
11. To participate in the task of developing capable and effective Christian leadership for the contemporary church, which will maintain its faithfulness to its vital heritage.
12. To locate the historical discipline within the broad spectrum of theological studies and develop sensitivities to the interrelationship of the biblical, historical, theological, and pastoral disciplines.

SPECIFIC GOALS

1. To identify the key historical periods of the pre-Reformation church.
2. To demonstrate an understanding of the major heresies that confronted the early Christian community, especially in terms of their departure from Scripture.
3. To grasp the importance of the early ecumenical councils.
4. To clarify the meaning of heresy, error and schism with applications to Christian ministry today.
5. To survey the essential components of early Christian worship and music in the light of their relevance to the contemporary church.
6. To explain the developments in church polity which gave rise to the monarchical episcopacy and ultimately the medieval ecclesiastical hierarchy.
7. To distinguish the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, and major Church Fathers in terms of their key representatives and theological tasks.
8. To reflect critically upon the problems and possibilities of church and state relations during the early centuries.
9. To articulate the monastic vision and its impact upon Christianity.
10. To explore the interplay between church and culture as leading theologians developed their theologies, with a view to current applications in Christian ministry, and also including an examination of the rise of non-Western traditions of Christianity, in their historical development.
11. To gain a basic understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy.
12. To explain the nature of Islam and its challenge to Christianity.
13. To acquire an understanding of the types of scholasticism.
14. To trace the evolution of the papacy.
15. To describe the late medieval movements of protest and understand the rise of the Renaissance that ran parallel to the waning of the Middle Ages.
16. To situate the Wesleyan tradition in the broader streams of Church history.

COURSE PROCEDURES

We will have two comprehensive essay exams based on lectures and readings, one at mid-term and one at the end of the semester. These will consist of short answer questions (ca. 50 word response each, with correct grammar), and a longer essay on the final. Each exam will deal with the content of Gonzalez (volume one) and one essay question from the Irvin/Sunquist volume in relation to the lectures and the readings from the primary texts (Bettenson and Kerr). Questions

will be crafted in such a way so as to implement the course goals. Attention to these goals in studying will aid the student in preparation. The examination will focus on both theory and the practice of ministry.

Since it is imperative that students attend class on a regular basis, absenteeism (missing more than two classes), will result in grade reduction. Completion of assigned readings will be followed by students submitting a reading report on the date of the final exam that indicates all readings have been completed.

GRADING

Points will be assigned for the completion of the above course requirements as follows:

Class attendance and participation	20
Mid-Term Exam	80
Final Exam	100
TOTAL	200

Upon completion of all requirements, grades will be determined in the following manner:

180 – 200	(90% – 100%)	A
160 – 179	(80% – 89%)	B
140 – 159	(70% – 79%)	C
120 – 139	(60% – 69%)	D
Below 119	(below 59%)	F

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The following texts are appropriate materials, in conjunction with class lectures, through which the student can actualize the course goals:

Bettenson, Henry. Documents of the Christian Church. (Oxford paperback, second ed.). This is a record of crucial letters and texts of official church proclamations that shaped the direction of church leadership in the history of the church.

Gonzalez, Justo. The Story of Christianity. Vol I. (Abingdon paper ad.) A concise but insightful analysis of the history of early Christianity, through the Middle Ages, that weaves a narrative that is often compelling for the reader.

Irvin, Dale, and Sunquist, Scott, eds. History of the World Christian Movement (Earliest Christianity to 1453), (New York:Orbis Books, 2001). An engagement of Western with non-Western Christian traditions, written from the diverse perspectives of leading contemporary representative of global Christianity.

Kerr, Hugh T. ed. Readings in Christian Thought. (Abingdon paper ad.). A concise collection of selected texts illustrating style and message of major writers in the history of Christian thought (through the modern era).

Rand McNally Historical Atlas of the World (paper edition). An important resource for acquiring geographical understanding of global Christianity, in its development.

(NOTE: the first and fourth and fifth texts will be used through the second course).

Recognizing that this course is primarily an introduction to the history of Christianity, we are also provided with an attached bibliography of primary and secondary works that will enable us to begin an ongoing reading program in the literature of the history of church (ATS library call numbers are included). I would also encourage you to begin building a good library with tools that will be useful to you on a long-term basis. Be sure to allocate enough time and resources to acquire the tools you need. In addition, we are provided with a bibliography of primary and secondary works, that will enable us to undertake an ongoing reading program in the history of Christianity, that will hopefully extend beyond this course.

READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

You are strongly encouraged to start early and keep up with our reading schedule (and even get ahead!). Another reading tip that will be important in our learning is to read an assignment early in the week in which it is to be discussed, and before viewing the videotape for that week. Then, after the videotape and our discussion, reread the same material (an in-depth reading!) before proceeding to the next assignment.

Module One: 7/12

The Fullness of Time: The First Hundred Years
HWCM, 1-46

Module Two: 7/13

Early Christian Expansion Amid Opposition
Kerr, 17-23
Bettenson, 1-12
HWCM, 47-97, 118 top – 121

Module Three: 7/14

Heresy and the Formation of Orthodoxy
Gonzalez, 58-81
Kerr, 28-51
Bettenson, 7-14, 23-24 (a and b), 29-33, 35-38
HWCM, 102-136, Irenaeus on 72, 74f, and Alexandrian thought 89f.
Irenaeus on 72, 74f, and Alexandrian thought on 89f

Module Four: 7/15

Pastoral Care, Worship, and Church Life in the Apostolic Church
 Bettenson, 62-77 (through Cyprian)
 HWCM, 137-152

Module Five: 7/19

Constantine and the Response of the Christian Community
 Bettenson, 15 (1) – 19 (o), 77-79
 HWCM, 160-172, 209-214

Module Six: 7/20

Arius and the Age of Nicea
 Gonzalez, 158-167
 Kerr, 74-77 (not creed 3)
 Bettenson, 38-44, 83-85 (Vincentian Canon)
 HWCM, 173-183, 184-187

Module Seven: 7/21

(mid-term exam: first 90 minutes)
 Augustine and the End of an Era
 Gonzalez, 207-219
 Kerr, 51-68
 Bettenson, 52-62
 HWCM, 224-225, 231-234

Module Eight: 7/22

Theology East and West: Christological Controversy in the East and the Dawn of a New Day in the West
 Gonzalez, 251-261
 Kerr, 76 (third creed)
 HWCM, 187-208, 214-224, 227-230, 234-239, 240-254

Module Nine: 7/26

New Challenges in the East and the Making of Western Christendom
 Gonzalez, 266-272
 Kerr, 91-117
 HWCM, 257-283, 323-353

Module Ten: 7/27

Christianity in the Aftermath of Islam
 Gonzalez, 288-295
 HWCM, 295-304, 360-380, 383-405, 406-422
 Bettenson, 104 (c), 111 (a), 128-152 (i)

Module 11: 7/28

Scholastic Theology and the Decline of the West
Gonzalez, 311-323, 342-365
Kerr, 82-95, 98-100, 102-119, 122-124
Bettenson, 137-151, 135-136, 173-179
HWCm, 423-449, 476-504
Review

FINAL EXAM 7/29