



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

CH 501: Early and Medieval Church History
Fall 2011, Tuesday 1-4 PM
Bowie Divinity Hall, Due West, South Carolina
Professor Dale Walden Johnson

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Friday 9-11 by appointment
Wednesday and Thursday 1-4

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course traces the development of the Christian Church from the end of the Apostolic period to the division between East and West and the Western Church up to the 15th century Renaissance. Students examine the changing relation between Church and Empire, the development of Christian doctrine, the rise of the papacy, and the variety of patterns of Christian spirituality. Required. *Three hours.*

COURSE PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to enable students both to appreciate the rich heritage of Early and Medieval Christianity and to understand the factors that paved the way for the Protestant Reformation. The course also aims to give students the tools necessary for utilizing Church history in their contemporary expressions of Christian teaching and life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. As a part of our mission, one goal is that graduates be prepared to **utilize the Church's historical and theological heritage as an important resource** in their personal spiritual development and ministry. In order to begin fulfilling that goal, this course and its successor (CH 502: Reformation and Modern Church History) introduce students to the historical and theological heritage of the Christian Church.

It is the teacher's intention that by the end of the term, students will be able to:

1. **Trace** the major theological, intellectual, institutional, and spiritual developments of Early and Medieval Church history.
2. **Identify** the historical, cultural, and political factors that influenced the development of Christian thought and practice during the Patristic and Medieval periods.
3. **Articulate** the depth of spirituality and **be challenged** by the concern for godly life characteristic of the best of Early and Medieval Christianity.
4. **Explain** the role of the historian's perspective in the re-telling and interpretation of historical events.

COURSE METHOD:

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components. The first is the **Content Component**, the student's own mastery of historical, cultural, and philosophical material essential to an understanding of Early and Medieval Christianity. This will be accomplished through class lectures, class discussion, assigned reading, essay exams and two book critiques.

The second component is the **Reflective Component**, the students' reflection on the significance of early and Medieval Christian history for our Christian lives today. This will be accomplished through the students' own interaction with the material of the course in preparation for the examinations. Preparation for exams forces students to synthesize the material, make connections, and see patterns with seemingly unrelated bits of information.

The third is the **Research Component**. Each student will complete two, one page book critiques with specific detailed requirements. Students will select books approved by the professor and write a short analysis of the book conforming to specific instructions. I will give students a model or template of a book critique to assist them in this project.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

James McGoldrick, *Christianity and its Competitors: New Faces of Old Heresy*.

Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006. ISBN (13) 978-1-84550-140-2

Everett Ferguson, *Church History: From Christ to Pre-Reformation*. Grand Rapids:

Zondervan, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0310205807

Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*,

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., ISBN 13: 978-0801062117

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK (for students interested in graduate study)

Bradley, James E., and Richard A. Muller. *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.
ISBN- 13: 978-0802800008264

Haykin, Michael, *Recovering the Church Fathers*. Crossway Books, 2011.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement One: Each student will read the textbooks by McGoldrick, and Ferguson in their entirety, and the first half of Noll. Students are expected to complete this reading by the end of the semester, but before the final examination in December. As you read, pay careful attention to the differences in the three authors' perspectives on Church history. Students will be asked on the exams whether they have kept current with the reading assignment as outlined in the syllabus. Failure to

complete the reading will result in a reduction of the final grade. More importantly, the reading will supplement the lectures and reinforce material taught in class.

Requirement Two: Each student will complete three examinations that will cover material from class lectures and the assigned reading. The mid-term is November 8, and the Final exam is December 6th. Each exam will be worth 25% of your final grade.

Requirement Three: Each student will complete two, one-page book critiques on books relating to the content of the course. The professor reserves the right to approve all book selections. The specific details of the book critique are TBA (see above).

Criteria for Grading written work:

- grasp of basic information or argument
- completion of assignment according to the instructions
- proper use of English
- use of primary sources when required
- depth and creativity of argument
- conformity to Turabian, 7th ed. when writing a formal research paper

Attendance Policies and Etiquette:

It is imperative that each student attend each class. Arrive on time and don't leave early. We will take a 10 minute break each hour of the class. Perfect or nearly perfect attendance is the expectation of this class.

Please turn off all cell phones and beepers for the duration of the class.

Please pick up after yourself and leave the classroom in good order.

Key Policies:

Papers/Style and Bibliographic Formatting Requirements:

All written work must conform to the latest edition of the Turabian manual of style.

All papers must be typed/processed (twelve point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented following the standards in the "Style and Form Standards for All Masters Level Programs" (Erskine Seminary). In most courses, footnotes (or endnotes) and a bibliography are required in each paper. There are no footnotes in the one page book critique. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted toward the page number requirements.

Grading Scale:

I use the grading scale printed in the online seminary current catalog. Please check it to interpret numerical grade letter grade and GPA.

Notice regarding Office Hours:

My office hours are posted on my door each semester. However, due to meetings, and other unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, I **strongly** urge that you call or e-mail me to schedule an appointment at (864)- 379-6662. If you are off campus, please call my office, home or contact me through e-mail. All of these contact numbers are posted on the first page of the syllabus.

Notice regarding “extra credit.”

I do not allow a student to complete so-called extra credit to rescue them from a failing grade. The best way to earn a passing grade in this class is to attend class, take good notes, complete the assigned reading and review regularly. It is an excellent idea to work in groups, compare notes and quiz each other in preparation for a test.

In the event of an absence during an exam:

If a student has an excused absence during a regularly scheduled exam, they must immediately contact the professor. If a “make-up” test is given, it will most likely be a different one, or different format from the one the student missed.

Official Seminary Policies are found at the following link:

http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSStudents.pdf

Course Outline/Lecture/Tests and Reading Schedule**September**

Distribution of syllabus, course overview, explanations, etc.

Introduction to the study of history

“In the Fullness of Time...”

Persecution of the Church

Assaults on the Faith: Gnosticism, Montanism, etc.

Apostolic Fathers, Apologists and Polemicists

Constantine

Reading for the month:

By the end of the month, you should have read:

McGoldrick, pp.7-82, and Ferguson, skim pp. 27-45; read pp. 46-226.

Also, read Mark Noll, pp. 9-82.

Please also keep up with your two book critiques

Note: The Professor reserves the right to make some short, occasional reading assignments by way of handouts in class, or as library reserves.

October Topics for the month:

Athanasius, the Council of Nicea and the Aftermath

Long Live St. Augustine

The Theology of St. Augustine

Ecumenical Councils

Byzantine Christianity

Reading for the month:

By the end of the month you should have completed McGoldrick, pp. 227-352 in Ferguson and Noll, pp. 83-106..

Your first of two book critiques is **due October 11 (The day after my b-day)**

November Topics for the month:

Rise and Development of Monasticism
Rise of Medieval Papacy
Medieval Missions
Cluny Reforms, Crusades
Universities and Scholasticism

Mid term Exam – NOVEMBER 8

Book Critique # 2 due: Nov. 15

Note: Thanksgiving Holiday – November 21-27

Reading for the month:

By Final Examinations in December students should complete their second book critique, and have read pp. 353-500 in Ferguson and pp. 107-150 in Noll.

December Topics for the month:

The decline of Spiritual Authority
Wyclif and Hus- Forerunners of the Reformation
(Time permitting) Late Medieval Papal Critics,
Reformers, Secularists and Mystics

Final Exam – December 6 (after lunch)

Student end of course evaluations, etc.