



**ERSKINE**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*For Christ and His Church*

**CH 501: Early and Medieval Church History  
Fall 2010**

**Bowie Divinity Hall, Due West, South Carolina  
Professor Dale Walden Johnson**

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Wednesday and Thursday 9:00-11:00

**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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 an analysis of the book. Specific details TBA.

### **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

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Requirement One:** Each student will read the textbooks by McGoldrick, Ferguson and Noll in their entirety. 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 11 and the Final exam is December 7<sup>th</sup>. Each exam will be worth 20% 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.

**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, 6<sup>th</sup> 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. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted toward the page requirements.

**Grade of "Incomplete"**

Students should review the Seminary policy on "Incompletes" in the Seminary catalog. A grade of incomplete (I) is rare and must conform to policy statements in the catalog and student handbook. Students do not have the option of "taking" an incomplete. Under certain circumstances, instructors will suggest or initiate a grade of incomplete. It can be given as a final grade only when the student (1) has completed most of his/her course work and (2) has been providentially hindered from doing the rest of the course work.

Note that there is a processing fee associated with “Incompletes” and that Incompletes must be completed by the stated deadline or they automatically become an “F.” Only the Academic Dean may approve extensions of deadlines for Incompletes.

**Grading Scale:**

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

**Drop/Add:**

Please note the following memo from the Registrar’s office to the student: “I understand that once I have completed, signed and submitted my registration to the Registrar’s office for this class it is a BINDING CONTRACT. My billing will be based on this registration. I further understand if I decide not to take this class, a “drop/add” form must be completed with the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from this class will result in receiving a grade of “F” for the course, and full tuition charges apply. **No exceptions will be made to this policy.**”

**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.

**Language about God and Humanity:**

Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church’s historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (I Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing “humanity” rather than “man” “people” rather than “men.”

Plagiarism is a serious issue. Any student guilty of plagiarism or cheating is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. All written work for this class must be original to this class. Do not submit anything recycled from some other class. You must attribute any sources you use, providing full citation to the author. It is also wise to avoid using content from the internet. It is very difficult to verify content you find on the net.

Conduct in Theological Discussions:

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the Catalog for more information.

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

**September** Distribution of syllabus, course overview, explanations, etc.

**Topics for the month:**

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..

EXAM # 1 – OCTOBER 5

Your first of two book critiques is **due October 12**

**November Topics for the month:**

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

EXAM # 2 –NOVEMBER 9

Book Critique # 2 due: Nov. 16

**Note: Thanksgiving Holiday – November 20-28**

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 EXAMINATION – December 7 (after lunch)**

Student end of course evaluations, etc.

Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning