

CAS RN 212

Christianity

Spring 2016; M, W, F 2-2:50 PM



Three Marys at the Tomb of Jesus, Fra Angelico, Fresco at the Convento di San Marco, Florence (1440-41)

Instructor:

Prof. Deeana
Klepper
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Office Hours:

Tuesdays 11-12:30
Fridays 12-1:30, and
by appointment.

Requirements

Policies

Texts

In this introduction to Christianity, we will examine the nature of Christianity and Christian self-understanding in its multifaceted world context. After an orientation to the development of Christianity across time, the course will proceed thematically, exploring a range of beliefs and practices in theological, social, cultural, and historical contexts. In examining any given theme, we will consider a variety of approaches to each subject from within Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, and other traditions. The course does not presume a familiarity with Christianity in any of its manifestations, and students can expect to develop an understanding of the religion from a variety of perspectives.

Course Objectives:

- 1) to acquire familiarity with the central narratives of Christian tradition and to understand their impact on Christian experience
- (2) to acquire familiarity with the historical development of Christianity

(3) to acquire familiarity with a broad range of Christian beliefs and practices

(4) to gain understanding of the diversity of Christianity across time and space and to become familiar with major variations and denominations

(5) to recognize the impact of Christianity on the landscape and culture of our contemporary world

(6) to gain facility in speaking and writing about religion broadly and Christianity specifically in ways that are both respectful and critical/analytical

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate in discussion. Readings are to be completed by the day for which they are assigned. Graded work for the class will consist of class participation; four short response papers; a midterm exam; a group project on a Boston church ("church" understood as both building and community), which will involve a collective class presentation as well as individual 6- to 7-page papers; and a final exam. The grading for the course will be as follows:

10% for class participation

20% for the responses

25% for the church project (10% collective work; 15% individual paper)

20% for the midterm

25% for the final exam

The class participation grade will be based on attendance, thoughtfulness of contributions to discussion (including evidence of having read the relevant texts), and the level of your preparedness and involvement in the course.

If you know you will be unable to attend class due to illness or an emergency, you should make every effort to alert me in advance (or to let me know of the circumstances of your absence as soon as possible) by e-mail or voice mail. **More than three unexcused absences during the semester will result in a lowered overall grade in addition to an unsatisfactory class participation grade.**

Grading Scale

Grade	Range	Grade	Range
A	93-100	C+	78-79
A-	90-92	C	73-77
B+	88-89	C-	70-72
B	83-87	D	60-69

Policies

Classroom Etiquette: Out of respect for your fellow students as well as the instructor, **please be on time!** Late arrivals are distracting. For the same reason, I ask that students only leave the room in the middle of class if it is absolutely necessary. If you know that you will need to leave class early for some reason, please sit near the door and try to exit as quietly as possible. Please check to make sure that your cell phone is off before class starts. If you cannot resist the temptation to "multitask" on your laptop, please do not bring it! It not only impairs your ability to keep up with the conversation, it is also distracting to your fellow students. We all will appreciate these considerations.

Honesty and Fairness: All students should familiarize themselves with the Boston University [Undergraduate Academic Conduct Code](#). Please see also my [plagiarism policy](#). I value the trust between teacher and student a great deal, and my plagiarism policy reflects the importance of that trust. Please also note that I am **required** to report all cases of academic misconduct to the CAS Dean's Office.

Make-up Exams: I will only give a make-up exam if a student misses a test because of a medical problem, emergency in the family, a religious holiday, or official university business. In all cases where you know in advance about a conflict, let me know as soon as possible.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact [Disability Services](#) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. If you suspect that you may have an undiagnosed disability that is interfering with your success in your coursework, please come see me and I will help direct you to the appropriate resources at BU.

Religious Holidays: Students are entitled to make up work missed because of a religious holiday as long as they make arrangements in **advance**.

Required Books

available at Barnes and Noble Bookstore:

David Chidester, *Christianity: Global History* ISBN
9780062517708

Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford University Press edition) ISBN 9780199537822

Shusaku Endo, *Silence* ISBN 9780800871864

Copies of required books will also be held on reserve in Mugar Library

Other Readings:

A number of readings are available in pdf format on the Blackboard site or on the Web linked directly to the course syllabus. **Please bring reading materials to class on the day(s) they are assigned**

Schedule:

Week I Introduction: Ancient Roots of a Contemporary Religion

Wednesday 1/20 Getting Started

Friday 1/22 Chidester 3-42; [Genesis 1-4; 17](#)

Week II Jesus and The Stories Told by His Followers

Monday 1/25 [Gospel According to Mark 1; 8:27-38; 13:1-37; 14:12-25; 15:33-39](#)

Wednesday 1/27 [Gospel According to Matthew](#)

Friday 1/29 [Gospel According to John](#)

Week III The Church

Monday 2/1 Chidester 60-74; [Acts of the Apostles Chapters 1-12](#)

Wednesday 2/3 [1 Corinthians 5-8](#)

Thursday 2/4 Response 1 due

Friday 2/5 [Letter to the Galatians 1-5; Letter to the Romans 9-11](#)

Week IV Martyrdom, Holiness, and Early Christianity Identity

Monday 2/8 Chidester 75-124

Wednesday 2/10 [The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicity](#)

Friday 2/12 St. Augustine, *Confessions*

Week V Christianities, Global and Local

Monday 2/15 President's Day: No Class

Tuesday 2/16 Monday Schedule: Chidester 43-59; [The Nicene Creed](#)

Wednesday 2/17 Karen King, *The Gospel of Mary Magdala*, 3-36; 155-189 [[Blackboard](#)]

Thursday 2/18 Response 2 Due

Friday 2/19 David Frankfurter, "Female Figurines in Early Christian Egypt" [[Blackboard](#)]

Week VI Christianity in Europe

Monday 2/22 Chidester, 312-331

Wednesday 2/24 Martin Luther, *Treatise of 1520; The Babylonish Captivity of the Church; Statement at the Diet of Worms* [[Blackboard](#)]

Friday 2/26 Chidester, 331-344; 353-361

Week VII Mission and a New Global Church

Monday 2/29 **** **MIDTERM EXAM******

Wednesday 3/2 Shusaku Endo, *Silence*, pp. 3-78

Friday 3/4 Shusaku Endo, *Silence*, pp.79-120

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 7-11

Week VIII Christianity as "Salvation"

Monday 3/14 Shusaku Endo, *Silence*, pp. 121-191

Wednesday 3/16 Excerpts from Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* [[Blackboard](#)]

Thursday 3/17 Response 3 Due

Friday 3/18 Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 33-60

Week X The After Life and the End of Time

Monday 3/21 [Book of Revelation](#)

Wednesday 3/23 [Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins of The Left Behind Series discuss end times](#)

Friday 3/25 Begin Church Projects

Week XI Worship, Prayer, Devotion

Monday 3/28 [Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Guide to Prayer](#)

Wednesday 3/30: Chidester, 398-411; Holiness and Pentecostal movements

Friday 4/1 Chidester 537-558; PEW Research Center Reports on Pentecostalism in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (read parts IV, V, or VI as assigned in class)

Week XII The Imitation(s) of Christ

Monday 4/4 Excerpts from Thomas Celano, *The Life of St. Francis* and Thomas à Kempis *The Imitation of Christ* [\[Blackboard\]](#)

Wednesday 4/6 [God in America PBS site on Dorothy Day](#); Dorothy Day, Excerpts from [From Union Square to Rome](#); [Room for Christ](#); Father Geoffrey B. Gneuchs, [eulogy for Dorothy Day](#)

Friday 4/8 Martin Luther King, Jr., [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#); [March on Washington "I have a Dream" Speech](#)

Week XIII Christian Responses to Modernity

Monday, 4/11 Excerpts, Karl Giberson, *Saving Darwin* [\[Blackboard\]](#)

Wednesday 4/13 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy [\[Blackboard\]](#); Excerpt from Peter J. Gomes, *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart*, 144-172 [\[Blackboard\]](#)

Thursday 4/14 Response 4 Due

Friday 4/15 James Bielo, "Purity, Danger, and Redemption:
Notes on Urban Missional Evangelicals"

Week XIV Christians and Secular Society in America

Monday 4/18 Patriot's Day: No Class

Wednesday 4/20 PBS series: *God in America*

Friday, 4/22 Putnam and Campbell, "God and Caesar in
America: Why Mixing Religion and Politics Is Bad for Both,"
Foreign Affairs, 34-43 [[Blackboard](#)]

Week XV Christianity in Boston

Monday, 4/25: Group presentations on Boston Churches

Wednesday 4/27: Group presentations on Boston Churches

**April 27 will be our last day of class; we will not meet
April 29**

Church Project papers due: April 29