



REL 310

History of Christian Thought

Tues, Thur 9:30-10:50
GAR 204

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Online Class Notes

Course Description:


An examination of the history of Christianity and the development of Christian thought through the reading and discussion of primary works in Christian theology and philosophy.

Course Objectives:

- to introduce students to the history of Christianity as a global religion, and to reflect on the diversity of its beliefs and practices.
- to read and critically reflect on primary philosophical and theological texts that have had a formative influence in the shaping of the Christian tradition.
- to understand how Christianity has been transformed in its self-understanding and culturally displaced in the modern Western world.

- to explore the future possibilities for Christian thought and practice in the 21st century.

Required Texts:

Book Cover 	Book Cover 	Book Cover 	Book Cover 	Book Cover 	Book Cover 
<i>Christianity: a Global History</i> by David Chidester	<i>Confessions,</i> by St. Augustine	<i>Discourse on Free Will</i> by Erasmus & Luther	<i>Attack upon Christendom</i> by Soren Kierkegaard	<i>Honest to God</i> by John Robinson	<i>The Next Christendom</i> by Philip Jenkins

[Click here to access the LVC Bookstore online](#)

Requirements/Grading:

- Reading Quizzes** (worth 20% of final grade): A total of 8 reading quizzes will be given over the course of the semester. Quizzes will cover the assigned reading for the week. No make-up quizzes will be given, and students who are late to class will not be given extra time to complete the weekly quiz. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped from the final quiz average.
- Reading Response Papers** (3 papers, each worth 20% of final grade): Papers are to be 5-7 pages in length. The first will be on Augustine's *Confessions*, the second on Kierkegaard's *Attack Upon "Christendom"*, the third either on Robinson's *Honest to God*, or Jenkins' *The Next Christendom*. Specific requirements for each paper will be distributed at least two weeks prior to paper's due date.
- Attendance/Participation** (worth 20% of final grade): Each student is entitled to one unexcused absence. Every absence thereafter will result in a half-letter deduction from the student's final participation grade.

Part I: Early Christianity

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1/13	Introductions		
1/15	Documentary: "The Search for Jesus"		
1/20	Documentary (continued)	Chidester, 3-27	
1/22	Jesus of History/Christ of Faith	Chidester, 28-42	Quiz #1
1/27	The Early Church	Chidester, 43-90	
1/29	The Christian Empire	Chidester, 91-140	Quiz #2
2/3	Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Augustine, Books I-III	

2/5	Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Augustine, Books IV-VI	Quiz #3
2/10	Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Augustine, Books VII-IX	
2/12	Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Augustine, Books X-XII	Quiz #4
2/17	No Class -- Writing Conferences		
2/19	Discussion of Paper #1		Paper #1

Part II: Christianity in the Middle Ages

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
2/24	Rise of Christendom	Chidester, 159-196	
2/26	Medieval Theology	Chidester, 216-235; Anselm and Aquinas Handout	Quiz #5
3/2	Mystics and Heretics	Chidester, 236-274	
3/4	Renaissance and Reformation	Chidester, 275-331	Quiz #6
3/9	Spring Break		
3/11	Spring Break		
3/16	Erasmus and Luther	<i>Discourse on Free Will</i>	
3/18	Erasmus and Luther (continued)		Debate

Part III: Christianity in the Modern World

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
3/23	Kierkegaard's <i>Attack</i>	Kierkegaard, 57-66, 77-114	
3/25	Kierkegaard's <i>Attack</i>	Kierkegaard, 115-232	Quiz #7
3/30	Kierkegaard's <i>Attack</i>	Kierkegaard, 237-294	
4/1	No Class -- Writing Conferences		
4/6	Discussion of Paper #2		Paper #2
4/8	Christianity in the New World	Chidester, 353-370, 389-411	
4/13	Christianity after the Holocaust	Chidester, 491-558	Quiz #8
4/15	The Future of Christianity?	Jenkins, 1-78; or Robinson, 7-63	
4/20	The Future of Christianity? (continued)	Jenkins, 79-162; or Robinson, 64-104	
4/22	The Future of Christianity? (continued)	Jenkins, 163-222; or Robinson, 105-141	
4/30			Paper #3