

REL 3385 – History of Christianity: 1500 – 1900 AD  
(prerequisite: REL 1330)

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Website: [www.mcm.edu/~eppleyd](http://www.mcm.edu/~eppleyd)                      Office Hours: T, Th, 10-12, 1-3.

Introduction:

In this course we will explore ideas that have shaped Christianity throughout the centuries and continue to impact the tradition today. We will place each author in context, looking at how circumstances shaped his vision of a Christian life and also how his understanding of Christianity in turn shaped the world around him. We will also discuss the continuing importance of the ideas discussed for modern Christians.

Attendance and Late Submissions:

Attendance at all class meetings is expected, role will be taken at the beginning of each class session, and students who arrive after class begins will be considered absent (although allowed to join the class). For each unexcused absence over four, the student will be penalized 2% on his or her final grade. Absences due to illness or school-sponsored events will be excused; all others (including for work) will not. Late assignments will be penalized at my discretion depending on the circumstances with penalties up to and including receiving a zero on the assignment in question.

Student Conduct and Academic Honesty:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is conducive to learning; behavior that is disruptive of the class or disrespectful to me or to other students will not be tolerated. Students guilty of such behavior may be asked to leave the class, and if such behavior persists will be dropped from the course. All work submitted for this class must be the student's own work; any student who presents another person's work as his or her own will be considered guilty of cheating. Action will be taken against any student guilty of cheating ranging from receiving a zero on the assignment in question to receiving a grade of F for the course. The student's behavior will also be brought to the attention of the Dean of Students, who may take action resulting in the expulsion of the student from the University.

Grading:

Grades will be determined based on a mid-term exam, a final exam, a research paper, and class presentation/participation.

Midterm Exam: 25% of final grade

Final Exam: 30% of final grade

Research Paper: 30% of final grade

Class presentation/participation: 15% of final grade

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A=93-100%; A-=90-92%

B+=87-89%; B=83-86%; B-=80-82%

C+=77-79%; C=71-76%; C-=68-70%

D+=65-67%; D=61-64%; D-=58-60%; F=0-57%

The midterm and final exams will be 2-4 essay questions. Prior to each exam I will provide you with several possible exam questions and the exam questions will be selected from among these.

The research paper will be over a topic of the student's choice related to the life or thought of one of the figures on whom the course is focused. The paper may not be a general survey of the individual's life or thought; a particular topic must be chosen. The paper must be 8-12 pages (typed, double-spaced, 10 or 12

point font) to receive full credit. The paper will be due December 1. At the midterm each student must provide a 1 page (typed, double-spaced, 10 or 12 point font) summary of the paper topic with a second page of bibliography including at least 5 published works (not counting internet sources) and at least 1 primary source (this may be a text used for the course). A student who fails to turn in the 1 page summary by the midterm will lose 25% of his or her points on the final paper.

Class presentation/participation points will be based on attendance, preparation, and engagement in discussions. In addition to general preparation and discussion, for each of the authors discussed in class some students will be assigned to act as “experts” on that person, his context, and his ideas. Each student will be assigned to be an expert on one of the authors (since we are spending longer on Kierkegaard, we will only have experts for the first 5 classes on him). The experts will be expected to do some outside reading to learn about the author as well as take a leading role in discussion of the readings by that author, including asking questions to lead your fellow students through the reading. To help students prepare for this role, each leader will be required to turn in a minimum of three leading questions that they plan to use in class and that reflect a careful reading of the assigned text. These may be hand written, and must be handed in for review at the beginning of class. A student who is absent for any reason other than an emergency on a day that she or he is assigned to act as a leader will receive a zero for that day – if you know of days that you will miss in advance, you are responsible for making sure that you do not lead on that day. Finally, students are strongly encouraged to consult with me about the assignments that they are scheduled to lead. I will be glad to help with finding sources or with understanding the assigned text more thoroughly.

#### Required Texts:

William Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian Man

Desiderius Erasmus, On the Freedom of the Will

Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will

Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone

Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love

#### Class Schedule:

##### The Reformation (1500-1600):

1. 8/25: Introduction
2. 8/27: Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly (selections), pp. 1-21.
3. 9/1: Desiderius Erasmus, The Praise of Folly (selections), pp. 21-36.
4. 9/3: Martin Luther, Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (selection).
5. 9/8: William Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian Man, pp. 3-49.
6. 9/10: William Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian Man, pp. 49-108.
7. 9/15: William Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian Man, pp.108-148.
8. 9/17: William Tyndale, The Obedience of a Christian Man, pp. 149-191.
9. 9/22: Desiderius Erasmus, On the Freedom of the Will, Preface-Part II.
10. 9/24: Desiderius Erasmus, On the Freedom of the Will, Part III-Epilogue.
11. 9/29: Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will, Introduction-Part I.
12. 10/1: Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will, Part II-Part III.2.
13. 10/6: Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will, Part III.3-9.
14. 10/8: Martin Luther, On the Bondage of the Will, Part VI-Conclusion.
15. 10/13: Midterm

##### The Enlightenment (1750-1850)

16. 10/15: Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, Section 1.
17. 10/20: Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, Book I, pp. 21-49.
18. 10/22: Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, Book II, pp. 54-84.
19. 10/27: Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, Book III.1, pp. 87-114.

20. 10/29: Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, Book III.2, pp. 115-138; Book IV, pp. 139-141, 179-190.
21. 11/3: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Divinity School Address"
22. 11/5: Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling (selections)
23. 11/10: Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, Preface-I (pp. 5-22)
24. 11/12: Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, I-II (pp. 9-36)
25. 11/17: Søren Kierkegaard, Practice in Christianity, II.[D].1-7 (pp. 123-144)
26. 11/19: Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, Foreword-Part 1.II.A (pp. 19-57)
27. 11/24: Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, Part 1.III.A (pp. 99-136)
28. 12/1: Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, Part 2.II-III (pp.-213-246)
29. 12/3: Søren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, Part 2.VII, IX (pp. 292-305, 317-329)
30. 12/8: Conclusion