

## REL 204: Christian Traditions – Spring 2020

MWF 12:15-1:25PM, Spence 201

Dr. Andrew Monteith

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Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30; Thursdays 2-3; and by appointment

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Welcome to Christian Traditions! This course is designed to familiarize students with Christian history, with the key topics which have been relevant to assorted Christians, and with the diversity that falls under the umbrella term “Christianity.” Although we will frequently discuss theology, this class is not a theology course—whether various interpretations, practices, or approaches to Christianity are right or wrong is beyond the purview of this class. Instead of examining whether a particular Christian or community is correct, we will ask the question: “why did these particular Christians do as they did?” Our goal here is to understand different styles of Christianity and the impact those different styles have had for the course of human societies.

As subthemes, this particular iteration of Christian Traditions will also frequently investigate demonology. Demons have served important roles in Christian thought ever since its foundations, and continue to do so today. At various points during this semester, we will also consider how gender may affect or shape different Christians’ experiences.

This course does not require students to come with prior knowledge of Christianity or religious studies.

## Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1) Students will develop a working knowledge of Christian history
- 2) Students will be able to explain key points and questions that have been important to Christians
- 3) Students will demonstrate an awareness of Christian diversity, both historically and contemporarily, and the relationship between this diversity and other social phenomena
- 4) Students will recognize how demons and evil have been important subjects for different Christians
- 5) Students will be able to explain some ways that gender has shaped individual experiences

**Reading Responses/Attendance 15%:** Nearly every class will begin with a “reading response.” You will be handed a half-sheet of paper. Once our class time begins, I will ask everyone to respond to some facet of the assigned reading for that day. This is meant to 1) get you thinking about the material, and 2) allow you to show me that you did the reading. It additionally doubles as a way to take attendance. These are never trick questions, and they often have multiple possible answers.

Attendance is expected in class, except in instances of excused absences. Excused absences are fine in moderation and grades are simply omitted for the first two. Beyond those first two, students with multiple excused absences may be asked to do some minor makeup work to replace the missing grades.

These will be scored out of three points:

1/3 – you wrote down your name, showing that you were here. Reading response did not show working knowledge of the assigned reading.

2/3 – you answered the reading response, but while it isn’t flat out wrong, it doesn’t demonstrate that you read carefully

3/3 – you answered the reading response question with an answer that makes sense in the context of the question.

Let’s pretend you were assigned the Book of John to read for class. A reading response might be something along the lines of, “what themes did John emphasize in his take on Jesus?” If someone answered “he wanted to create a new religion to make money,” that would demonstrate zero familiarity with the actual text. If someone just wrote down “he was interested in the right approach to salvation,” that’s *technically* a correct answer, but it is so vague that it doesn’t clearly demonstrate knowledge of the text. To get all three points, though, someone could down “he interpreted Jesus to be an incarnation of the Divine Word,” or “he understood Jesus as a theologically subversive teacher for his day,” or “he thought Jesus was a miracle-worker and the messiah, though a somewhat mysterious one who rose from the dead instead of going to war with Rome.” All of those are different, but they all would demonstrate important premises of that particular text. (Better yet if the answer offers some specific evidence, too!)

**Tests 50%:** this semester, you will have three tests. These will be part multiple choice and part short response. Each will measure your knowledge over the material that has come up since the previous test. These will take roughly 10-15 minutes, and, while they are worth points and you should study for them, they are not meant to be burdensome. They are designed to hold students responsible for learning the course material.

**Short Paper 10%:** On the last day of class (May 11), you will turn in a short paper (2-4 pages). This paper should address the following question: why do different Christians sometimes reach such different conclusions? Your response should involve course materials. A good paper will take some issue we've covered in class (gender, Satan, etc.) and use it as evidence for how/why different Christians reach different conclusions. You do not need outside sources.

**Final Exam 25%:** Think of it as a very fancy quiz. There will be some multiple choice questions, and there will be some short answer questions. There will be one essay that asks you to respond to one of the topics listed in the Student Learning Outcomes. While the individual quizzes only cover specific sections of the class, this will ask you to respond to the entire course.

### **Required Texts:**

Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980).

Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003)

C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001 [1946])

Everything else will be available on Moodle.

Almost every day of class will have an assigned reading. These are listed under the date. So "Joseph Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History*, 1-22" is the reading that you should complete before coming to class on February 5.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 - The First Christians; Early Christian Scriptures**

**M / Feb 3:** Syllabus and introduction to key themes – no reading assignment

**W / Feb 5:** Joseph Lynch, *Early Christianity: A Brief History*, 1-22

**F / Feb 7:** Group One: Galatians / Group Two: James

## Week Two: Gnosticism, Mysticism, Martyrdom, Authority, and Asceticism

**M / Feb 10:** Gospel of Judas [Gnostic]

St. Augustine “On the Eucharist” [Catholic]

St. Ignatius, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans [Catholic]

**W/ Feb 12:** Acts 7

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

**F/ Feb 14:** Athanasius, *The Life of Antony* 29-60 [stop at the end of chapter 38]



## Week Three: Monasticism, Ecclesial Development, the Middle Ages

**M / Feb 17:** Athanasius, *The Life of Antony* 60-99

**W/Feb 19:** Joseph Lynch, *The Medieval Church* 19-29; 267-283 [test 1]

**F/Feb 21:** Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages*, Introduction (This starts at page 1)

## Week Four: Gender and Medieval Possessions

**M/Feb 24:** Caciola, Chapter 1 (This starts on page 31)

**W/Feb 26:** Caciola, Chapter 3

**Thurs Feb 27: 7:30-8:45am, Drop In Hours, McEwen Dining Hall**

**F/Feb 28:** Caciola, Ch 6

**F/Feb 28: 2-3:30PM – Drop In Hours – Oak House**

## Week Five: The Reformation and Protestants

**M/Mar 2:** Martin Luther, “Concerning Christian Liberty” (you can ignore the preface addressed to Leo X)

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/luther-freedomchristian.asp>

The purpose of these drop-in hours on Thurs and Fri is to have a casual check in and hear how you are feeling about the course. What’s going well? What’s murky? Stop by and have breakfast (Thurs) or a coffee (Fri).



**W/Mar 4:** John Calvin, “Geneva Confession” 26-33; “Articles concerning Predestination,” 179-180

[Council of Trent, Sixth Session](#) – I, III, IX, XII, XIV, and skim through “Decree on Reformation”

[Council of Trent, Seventh Session](#) – “On the Sacraments in General”

**F/Mar 6:** John Wesley, “I Felt My Heart Strangely Warmed,”

<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.ii.xvi.html>

Count von Zinzendorf, “Concerning the Proper Purpose of the Preaching of the Gospel,” 24-33; and “On the Essential Character and Circumstances in the Life of a Christian,” 74-87

### Week Six: Mormonism, Fundamentalism

**M/Mar 9:** Joseph Smith, “Articles of Faith” and “Revelations” 164-172

[test 2]

**W/Mar 11:** James Woodrow, “Evolution” 284-302

**F/Mar 13:** Billy Sunday, “Backsliding,” <http://billysunday.org/sermons/backsliding.html>

Harry Fosdick, “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5070/>

Aimee Semple McPherson, “Revival Fires Fall,” 117-129

[https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.\\$b28834](https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.$b28834)

### Mar 14-23: Spring Break



### Week Seven: C.S. Lewis, Lived Religion

**M/Mar 23:** C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*

**W/Mar 25:** Robert Orsi, *The Madonna of 115<sup>th</sup> St.*, lvii-13

**F/Mar 27:** Hugh Urban, “The Native American Church”

### Week Eight: Christianity and Race, Gender, and Power

**M/Mar 30:** Kelly Baker, *Gospel According to the Klan*, 31-69

**W/Apr 1:** Chad Bauman, “Redeeming Indian “Christian” Womanhood? Missionaries, Dalits,

and Agency in Colonial India”

**F/Apr 3:** John Burgess, *Holy Rus*, 1-23

### **Week Nine: Premillennialism, Charismatic Christianity**

**M/Apr 6:** Hal Lindsay, *The Late Great Planet Earth* 11-18, 59-71, 98-113

**W/Apr 8:** Tanya Luhrmann, *When God Talks Back*, 3-38

**F/Apr 10:** Katheryn Kuhlman, “Sent Home to Die!” 23-30

Beni Johnson, “Warfare Through Worship and Joy” 119-134, 185-190

### **Week Ten: Eschatology; American Revelation; Charismaticism**

**M/Apr 13:** no class (Easter observed)

**W/Apr 15:** meet with Father Peter Tremblay; discussion, Q&A.

**F/Apr 17:** No class (time reallocated to May 17 lunch)

### **Week Eleven: Charismatic Deliverance (exorcism), Gender**

**M/Apr 20:** Pablo Battari and Pablo Deiros “Deliverance from Dark Strongholds” **[test 3]**

David Oyodepo, *Signs & Wonders Today* 61-71

**W/Apr 22:** R. Marie Griffith, *Born Again Bodies*, 1-18

**F/Apr 24:** Jeffrey Hemmer, *Man Up! The Quest for Masculinity*, xi-xv, 128-129, 142-159

Stephen Casper, *The Biblical Masculinity Blueprint*, 190-205 (you can just skim 195-205)

### **Week Twelve: Liberation Theology; Liberation and Gender**

**M/Apr 27:** Gustavo Gutierrez, “The Meaning of the Term *Liberation*” 15-17

James Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 17-30

Rachel Held Evans, “It might not look like it, but the resistance is winning”

<https://rachelheldevans.com/blog/inspired-excerpt-resistance-stories>

Optional reading: Jose Miranda, “Christianity is Communism” 160-175

**W/Apr 29:** Readings TBA [the readings will be drawn from current Christian discussions about immigration; we will compare how various Christians are thinking about this.]

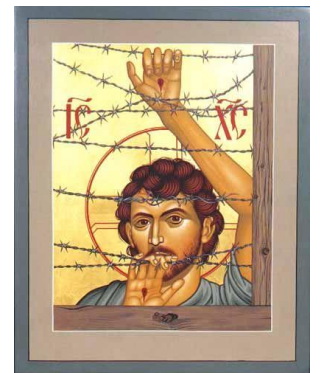
**F/Apr 31:** Mary Daly – “After the Death of God the Father” 53-67

Kat Armas – “Yes, Churches Need Women Who Lead, Teach, and Preach”

<https://relevantmagazine.com/culture/actually-need-women-teach-lead-preach/>

Rachel Held Evans, “Patriarchy Doesn’t ‘Protect’ Women: A Response to John Piper”

<https://rachelheldevans.com/blog/me-too-john-piper>



### **Week Thirteen: LGBTQA+; *Dogma***

**M/May 4:** Jennifer Knapp, *Facing the Music: My Story* 38-71, 87-91, 132-149, 166-188, 242-258 [this will go quicker than it looks; it's about 45-60 minutes of reading]

Jennifer Knapp "Dive In" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKfY6BBkelk>

[NOTE: This class will be held in the McEwen Dining Engagement room.]

**W/May 6:** Tanya Erzen, *Straight to Jesus*, 1-21

**F/May 8:** *Dogma* [in class]

### **Week Fourteen**

**M/May 11** – Finish *Dogma* [Short paper due]

**Sun/May 17**, Noon-1:30PM – Review Lunch – McEwen Dining Hall, Dining Engagement Room

**Monday, May 18 (8am-11am): Final Exam**

### **Technical Matters and Policies**

**Honor Code:** Elon's honor pledge calls for a commitment to Elon's shared values of Honesty, Integrity, Responsibility, and Respect. To be clear about what constitutes violations of these values; students should be familiar with code of conduct policies described in the student handbook.

Students with questions about the specific interpretation of these values and violations as they relate to this course should contact this instructor immediately. Violations in academic-related areas will be documented in an incident report which will be maintained in the Office of Student Conduct, and may result in a lowering of the course grade and/or failure of the course with an Honor Code F.

Violations specifically covered by academic honor code policies include: plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing, and the facilitation of another's dishonesty. Multiple violations may result in a student's suspension from the University.

**Disabilities Resources:** If you are a student with a documented disability who will require accommodations in this course, please register with Disabilities Resources using the following link: [https://elon-accommodate.symphonicity.com/public\\_accommodation/](https://elon-accommodate.symphonicity.com/public_accommodation/). You may reach out to Disabilities Resources for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.

Disability Resources is located in the Koenigsberger Learning Center (Belk Library 226; 336-278-6568). For more information about Disabilities Resources, please visit the website:

<https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/koenigsberger-learning-center/disabilities-resources/>.

**Religious Holidays Policies:** In supporting religious diversity, Elon has a policy and procedures for students who wish to observe religious holidays that are in conflict with the academic calendar, allowing students an excused absence. Students who wish to observe a holiday during the semester must complete the online [Religious Observance Notification Form](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious_life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml) (RONF) by September 17, 2018, with the exception of Rosh Hashanah. Excused absence requests for Rosh Hashanah Day 1 and Day 2 must be submitted by September 7, 2018.

[http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious\\_life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml](http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/religious_life/ReligiousHolidays.xhtml).

This policy does not apply during the final examination period. Students are required to make prior arrangements with the instructor for completion of any work missed during the absence. Once the completed RONF is received, the Truitt Center will confirm the excused absence with notification to the instructor and the appropriate academic dean, along with a copy to the student. Students may contact the Truitt Center staff with any questions (336-278-7729).

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance still expected. (Since you need to be physically present to do the reading quizzes, there is a kind of indirect grading for attendance.) In the event of a medical emergency or similar event that last for more than the two free passes built into the reading quizzes grade, a case-by-case reprieve can be worked out. In such situations, please provide the appropriate documentation (i.e. a doctor's note).

**Technology Policy:** studies show that when students use laptops to browse the internet, answer emails, or shop, the person browsing is distracted, but those other students who can see their screen are far more distracted than the person doing the browsing. Except for special occasions when you are asked to bring your laptop, please leave your devices at home. Please print out readings for class ahead of time so that you can consult them during class. (If cost of printing is an issue, let me know privately and we can work something out.) **Cell phones should be in your bag on silent** for the entire duration of class; please do not have them out.

