

Course Prospectus

For THL 421 History of Christianity I

Overview

This course will survey the development of Christianity in Western Europe and its continued expansion from the first to the 16th centuries. The focus is on some of the institutions which came out of this movement and how such institutions contributed to shaping of the religious, political, economic and social landscapes of their day.

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION FOR THIS COURSE

This course deals with the history of Christianity from the first century to the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation. Focuses on the growth and development of Christianity during the early centuries in the Mediterranean World as well as its expansion into Europe and the East. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate understanding of major events, movements, and theological trends.

PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

There are no Prerequisites or Corequisites for this course.

COURSE CREDIT

Three (3) semester hours.

Instructional objectives

On successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. Define basic terms and develop basic research skills in the field of Christian history;
2. Demonstrate the development of traditional Christianity through Greco-Roman Christianity and the Protestant Reformation;
3. Relate the history of Christians not a part of traditional orthodox bodies;
4. Describe the cultural milieu in which the Christianity evolved;
5. Describe the general story lines of Christian history and the development of the major doctrines and creeds;
6. Identify and understand the significance of the major figures, themes, and events in the Christian church from its early period to the eve of the sixteenth-century Reformation; and
7. Understand the contributions of significant early theologians, and their relationship to their social context and their influence upon the Christian tradition.

Students with disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities have a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students having a disability requiring an accommodation should inform the instructor through the “Contact Instructor” link on the course home page.

Technology access

This course requires web access and the student has to have an established e-mail account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. One can download the reader free at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

Course evaluation

Student input is welcome for improving this course. Making suggestions by e-mail is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course students have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make e-learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning a student’s experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate students letting us know how we can improve our products and services for them and other distance learners.

Textbooks

Textbooks for this course are:

González, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Vol. I. San Francisco: Harper & Rowe Publishers, 1984.

Richardson, Cyril C. *Early Christian Fathers*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co, Inc., 2006.

Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Students may order these through the University Bookstore.

The textbooks used in this course are commercial publications. They represent the views and ideas of their authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse these texts nor vouch for their accuracy. We simply employ them in helping you master the content of the course.

Icebreaker assignment

To begin this course, students must complete an icebreaker assignment to introduce themselves to their classmates through the posting of a short autobiography on the course Forum. The icebreaker

assignment is due by the eighth day of the semester. Students post their biographies as a reply to the "Bios" topic on the course forum. A student can earn 25 bonus points in this course by doing so “on time.” As there are people from all over the world enrolled in this course each autobiography will help all know, understand and appreciate each other. Students are to read and comment on each other's bios throughout the first week of class.

Course requirements and grades

DUE DATES AND EXTENSIONS

Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

READING AND WRITING EXERCISES

Refer to “Course outline and assignments” section for reading assignments.

FILING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

For instructions in how to post assignments, visit the Frequently Asked Questions pages through the link on the course homepage.

STUDY TIPS

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. The instructor functions as a facilitator with the student as the driving force in mastering course content. Students are encouraged not to put off completing their readings and assignments.

Grading

A course grade will be determined based on the number of points a student has earned over the semester as follows:

Writing Assignments (four, each worth 150 points, for a total of 600 points)

Exams (four, each worth 100 points, for a total of 400 points]

TOTAL 1,000 points

Posting the autobiography on time can earn a student 25 bonus points. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing.

Grades are in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning, we believe that the measure of mastery of course subject matter is completion of 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want students to earn at least 800 points in this course. If they do not do so then they have not achieved the level of the mastery we would like them to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades (if you do not know what that means, do not worry about it). Mastery of the material is what one's goal should be.

Grades, assigned by points, are as follows:

A 900-1000 points

B 800-899 points

C 700-799 points

D 600-699 points

F Below 600 points

Academic irregularity

Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were the writer's own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned.

In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members may refuse to grade such papers, completely or in part, or examinations, and to record each of them as a failure.

If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

Course calendar

Part 1 The Early Church CE 31—306 (August 17-30)	Reading Assignments
Topic 1 Introduction	González xv
Topic 2 The Fullness of Time	González 7-17
Topic 3 The Church in Jerusalem	González 18-22
Topic 4 Mission to the Gentiles	González 23-30

Topic 5 First Conflicts with the State	González 31-38
Topic 6 Persecution in the Second Century	González 39-48
	Clement's First Letter, Ignatius to the Ephesians and to the Magnesians
Topic 7 The Defense of the Faith	González 49-57
Topic 8 The Deposit of the Faith	González 58-66
Topic 9 The Teachers of the Church	González 67-81
Topic 10 Persecution of the Third Century	González 82-90
Topic 11 Christian Life	González 91-101
Topic 12 The Great Persecution and Final Victory	González 102-112
Writing Assignment 1 (Analysis of a Significant Individual) due August 30	

Exam 1 due September 6

Part 2 The Imperial Church CE 306—410 (August 31-October 25)

Reading Assignments

Topic 13 Constantine	González 113-128
Topic 14 Official Theology: Eusebius of Caesarea	González 129-135
Topic 15 The Monastic Reaction	González 136-150
Topic 16 The Schismatic Reaction: Donatism	González 151-157
Topic 17 The Arian Controversy and the Council of Nicaea	González 158-167
Topic 18 The Pagan Reaction: Julian the Apostate	González 168-172
Topic 19 Athanasius of Alexandria	González 173-180
Topic 20 The Great Cappadocians	González 181-188
Topic 21 Ambrose of Milan	González 189-193
Topic 22 John Chrysostom	González 194-200
Topic 23 Jerome	González 201-206
Topic 24 Augustine of Hippo	González 207-216
Topic 25 The End of an Era	González 217-230

Writing Assignment 2 (Critique of The Rise of Christianity by Stark)

due October 25

Exam 2 due November 1

**Part 3 Medieval Christianity CE 410—1460 (October 26-
November 25)**

Reading Assignments

Topic 26 The New Order	González 231-250
Topic 27 Eastern Christianity	González 251-265
Topic 28 Imperial Restoration and Continuing Decay	González 266-276
Topic 29 Movements of Renewal	González 277-291
Topic 30 The Offensive Against Islam	González 292-300
Topic 31 The Golden Age of Medieval Christianity	González 301-323
Topic 32 The Collapse	González 324-341
Topic 33 In Quest of Information	González 342-361
Topic 34 Renaissance and Humanism	González 362-377

Writing Assignment 3 (Critical Book Review)

due November 25

Exam 3 due December 6

**Part 4 The Beginnings of Colonial Christianity CE 1460-
1521 (November 30-December 18)**

Reading Assignments

Topic 35 Spain and the New World	González 378-399
Topic 36 The Portuguese Enterprise	González 400-412

**Writing Assignment 4 (Exploration of a History of
Christianity) due December 19**

Exam 4 due December 23