

# Course Prospectus

## For THL 320: Introduction to Church History

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## OVERVIEW

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Important details of the early church in the late first and early second century are found in Revelation 2-3. These two chapters tell of the spiritual conditions present in seven of the congregations of the Church of God in Asia Minor, along a Roman mail route, while under the oversight of Apostle John—Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. They also provide a prophetic outline, which lies imbedded within the text, of the historical development of the church in seven eras or historical epics.

The literal prophecies in Revelation 2-3 were fulfilled in their own time as churches in Asia Minor, but they have important prophetic meaning, fulfilled over the course of nearly 2,000 years as successive eras in church history, as well. Revelation is a prophetic book. The seven churches have prophetic significance, or it makes no sense to embed otherwise disconnected historical accounts in a major prophetic book. Overlooked by historians far too long, these two chapters provide a general outline of church history from the birth of the church in 31 CE to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ at the end of the Age. In this sense Revelation 2-3 constitute a prophetic history of the Church of God with an important message for the people of God in every century.

The period extending from the founding of the Church of God until the Resurrection and Christ's return is distinctly the Age of the Church in seven successive stages. These should be viewed as telescoping from one stage into another, rather than a series of fixed dates, as one stage would come to an end while another arose. In other words, there were overlapping decades at the times of beginning and ending.

Our task in this course is the examination of the history of the Church of God to arrive at a fuller understanding of our spiritual roots and "for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3). To trace the Church through the centuries as led by its head Christ Jesus, we have to place ourselves in a first-century Christian mindset, or as some have put it, we have to look at the New Testament through the Judeo-Christian lenses of the early followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

When we undertake a critical study of the history of the Church we confront a totally different body than the mass Christianity of today's world. For those who seek the faith once delivered, it is important to understand what the Church is, how it came to be what it is today, what constitutes its central doctrines, and who has comprised its leadership.

### Course description

This course traces the history of the Church of God from apostolic times to the present day. Topics include significant events in the life of the Church and its theology through each of its seven distinct eras. Upon completion, students should be able to identify and analyze significant developments in the history and theology of the Church.

### Prerequisites and corequisites

There are no Prerequisites or corequisites for this course.

### Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

## INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

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

1. Describe the cultural milieu in which the ancient church evolved;
2. State and detail the defining characteristics of the Church of God in each of its successive stages and identify its leaders;
3. Describe the development of traditional Christianity through the Greek (Orthodox) and Latin (Roman Catholic) churches and identify significant doctrinal differences with Judeo-Christianity;

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4. Describe and explain the Protestant Reformation and show the differences in approach and doctrine with the Church of God in its progressive stages;
5. Demonstrate the history of the Church of God as it relates to the development of traditional orthodox Christianity;
6. Relate the history of the Living Church of God and its predecessors; and
7. Define basic terms and develop basic research skills in the field of church history.

## YOUR INSTRUCTOR

The instructor of record for this course is Dr. Michael P. Germano. To contact him on course details and issues please use the email feature in the e-learning system (Populi) or [mgermano@livinguniv.com](mailto:mgermano@livinguniv.com). His telephone is 704-708-2291. You may text him at 704-247-0683.



Dr. Germano held responsibilities in Ambassador University's involvement in archaeological excavations at the south Temple Mount directed by Benjamin Mazar, the Umm el-Jimal Project directed by Bert de Vries, the Mozan Expedition directed by Giorgio Buccellati and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati, and the Hazor Excavations in memory of Yigael Yadin directed by Amnon Ben-Tor. His research focus has been on early church history and archaeology.

Based on his research in Jerusalem he presented a paper, "The Ancient Church of the Apostles: Revisiting Jerusalem's Cenacle and David's Tomb," to the Near Eastern Archaeological Society (NEAS) and has a book in preparation, *The History of The Church Jesus Built: An Introduction to Church History*, as a textbook for this course. You will have various chapters as downloadable assigned readings.

Ordained in 1983, Dr. Germano is an elder in the Living Church of God and serves as President of Living University.

## COURSE PROTOCOLS

### Technology access

This course requires that students have web access and an established email 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> which can then be installed and used to access PDF documents on this site.

### 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 by email (on the "Course Info" page, click on the instructor's name and then select "Send E-mail").

### Attendance in this online course

One of the most vital aspects of the college and university experience is attendance and punctuality in the learning environment. Regularity of attendance is necessary to maintain a satisfactory academic record and for students to derive maximum benefit from a course, whether in an online course or in an on-campus course. We have noticed that students who fall behind in their coursework typically drop out. Therefore, we highly encourage you to complete your assignments on time, as we want you to succeed. Remember Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."

Please be aware that all students who fall behind in an online course and do not complete twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total assignments and other required activities for a course, on or before "Last

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day to withdraw from a course” as set forth in the University Academic Calendar, will receive a grade of “W” for it. After that date, the grade will be a “WF” and counted in a student’s GPA. Moreover, an instructor may drop a student from a course whenever the instructor concludes that a student’s class attendance or punctuality endangers the student’s success or places other students at risk.

### Withdrawing from or dropping this course

It is the responsibility of a student to drop a course if he or she cannot meet the requirements of the course. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing from it risks receiving a punitive grade for that course. A student who finds it necessary to drop a course after the Late Registration (Drop/Add) Period must notify the Registrar’s Office in writing. Please note the following:

- If a student drops a course on or before the “Last day to withdraw from a course without a grade penalty” as published in the University Academic Calendar, even if his or her work is not of a passing grade, then a “W” is recorded.
- If a course is dropped after that date, but before the last 21 calendar days of the semester, then the instructor determines the grade. The faculty member will at this time record a grade of “W” if passing (not computed in GPA) or “WF” if failing (computed in GPA).
- Students who drop a course, yet remain in one or more other courses during the last 18 calendar days of the semester, will receive a grade of “WF.”
- Students who completely withdraw from the University at any time during the semester may be given a grade of “W” on all courses.

If students do not initiate the withdrawal process, the instructor is required to initiate the administrative process and to record a grade of “W” or “WF” for the course, depending on the date the faculty member drops the student from the course. Students who register for a course as an audit, but then withdraw, will be assigned a grade of “W” for the course.

### Study Tips

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. Your instructor functions as a facilitator with you as the driving force in mastering course content. Do not put off completing your readings and assignments. While there are many different learning styles the following strategy should serve the needs of most students.

- Look over assigned readings.
- Read the assigned readings making notes before viewing the assigned lecture.
- Define terms in the lesson. The exams will specifically test basic terminology. Develop your biblical and theology vocabulary as you proceed lesson by lesson.
- As you view lectures complete your notes.
- Participate in the lesson discussion forum topic.
- Complete your answers for the writing assignment.
- Each week review your notes, geographical terms and locations, and the words you defined.
- If you have a question, ask. Questions should arise in the teaching-learning process. By bringing questions to our attention you not only acquire assistance but you also maintain the interaction necessary in higher education. To submit a question just click on the instructor’s name on the course “Info” page and send your question by email through the Populi system

## TEXTBOOKS

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The following are required textbooks for this course.

Germano, Michael P. *The History of the Church Jesus Built: An Introduction to Church History*.  
[Unpublished: chapters are downloadable in the lessons in this course.]

Fletcher, Ivor C. *The Incredible History of God’s True Church*. Charlotte: Living Church of God, 2014.  
(ISBN: 9781624799990) [LCG members should have received a free copy of this text.]

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### Supplemental (Optional) Texts:

- Ball, Bryan W. *The Seventh-day Men: Sabbatarians and Sabbatarianism in England and Wales, 1600-1800*. Cambridge, UK: James Clarke and Co., 2009. (ISBN: 9780227173114)
- Conybeare, Frederick Cornwallis. *The Key of Truth: A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia*. Elibron Classics. Chestnut Hill MA: Adamant Media Corporation, 2005. (ISBN: 9781402155925)
- Liechty, Daniel. *Sabbatarianism and the Sixteenth Century: A Page in the History of the Radical Reformation*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1993. (ISBN: 9780943872995)
- McGoldrick, James Edward. *Baptist Successionism*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1994. (ISBN: 9780810836815)
- Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996. (ISBN: 978006060677015)

Students may order books through the University Bookstore. The books used or referred to 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.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### Due dates and extensions

Submit assignments on or before the due date. Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

### Reading assignments

Reading assignments are integrated into the seven (7) lesson webpages on the course website.

### Viewing assignments

This course includes a series of lectures by Dr. Germano. Links to lectures are in the lessons.

### Icebreaker assignment

To officially begin this course you must complete an icebreaker assignment by which you introduce yourself to your classmates through posting a short autobiography on the course Discussion Forum. This assignment is to be submitted by the eighth day of class. You must read and comment on at least two other student icebreakers by the due date in order to get full credit for this assignment. It is worth **30 points**.

### Discussion forums

There is one discussion forum topic for each of the seven (7) lessons in this course. To earn points on each discussion assignment, enter your own contribution to the topic and then be sure to respond meaningfully to the postings of two other people. There is no partial credit. For full credit, you have to post your comment and two responses by the due date.

### Writing assignments

All writing assignments in this course should follow the MLA style as set forth in *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* by Lester & Lester. Please cite your sources and use quotation marks where needed. The Files feature on the Assignment Submission page lets you submit your work so your instructor can have it handy for download, review and grading.

- **Biography** - Write a biography on Herbert W. Armstrong consisting of paper of 5-6 pages (not counting the Works Cited page). Include internal citations and a Works Cited page. **(95 points)**

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- **Research Paper** - Develop a short paper of 5-6 pages (not counting the Works Cited page) on just one of the second through fifth eras of the Church of God. Assume you are writing a historical article for a biblical dictionary or biblical encyclopedia and that the audience are Bible students, i.e. prepare the paper for publication. Include internal citations and a Works Cited page. **(95 points)**
- **What I Learned Essay** - Reflect on what you have learned in this course and then list the five major things (by number) you have learned and explain why they are important to you. Then provide three suggestions for improvement of this course. **(30 points)**

### Quizzes and examinations

Each of the seven (7) lessons has an associated online quiz of not more than 25 questions. They are closed book quizzes. Under no circumstances are students to print a quiz. Students have 60 minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes are objective tests which may include true/false, matching, and multiple-choice questions covering lectures, readings, vocabulary words and any discussion topics. Each quiz is worth **50 points**.

There are three (3) closed book exams of 50 objective questions each. **Exam 3 is a proctored examination** to be taken online. A proctored exam is one that is overseen by an impartial individual (called a proctor) who monitors or supervises a student while he or she is taking an exam. The proctor ensures the security and integrity of the exam process for all involved. Each of the three exams is worth **100 points**.

### Course evaluation

Student input is welcome for improving this course. Making suggestions by email 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 to assess 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. The course evaluation is worth **30 points**.

## GRADING

Your course grade will be determined based on the number of points you have earned over the semester as follows:

- Icebreaker Assignment (30 points)
- Discussion Forums (7, each worth 10 points, for a total of 70 points)
- Quizzes (7, each worth 50 points, for a total of 350 points)
- Biography (95 points)
- Research Paper (95 points)
- Exams (3, each worth 100 points, for a total of 300 points; all three exams are online; **exams 1 and 2 are closed book and closed-notes. Only Exam 3 is a proctored exam.**)
- What I Learned Essay (30 points)
- Course Evaluation (30 points)

### TOTAL 1000 points

Posting the Icebreaker assignment on time is worth **30 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. 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**

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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 or examinations, completely or in part, 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 OUTLINE**

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### **Welcome and Overview**

#### **Icebreaker Assignment**

### **Lesson 1 The Early Church–The Ephesian Era**

- Topic 1 The World of the First Christians
- Topic 2 Jesus of Nazareth
- Topic 3 The Judeo-Christians
- Topic 4 Independence and Apostasy

### **Lesson 2 The Great Separation–The Smyrnan Era**

- Topic 1 The Triumph of Greco-Roman Orthodox Christianity
- Topic 2 Christianity's Pseudo-Calvary
- Topic 3 Orthodoxy, Early Church Fathers and Quartodecimans
- Topic 4 The Orthodox Seizure of the Church of the Apostles

#### **EXAM 1 (Lessons 1-2)**

### **Lesson 3 Church in the Wilderness–The Pergamum Era**

- Topic 1 Fleeing the Roman World
- Topic 2 Vaudois and Waldenses
- Topic 3 The Lollards

### **Lesson 4 The Church in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century Britain–The Thyatiran Era**

- Topic 1 The Church of God in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century England

#### **EXAM 2 (Lessons 3-4)**

### **Lesson 5 The Period of Terrible Turmoil–The Sardis Era**

- Topic 1 The Church of God in 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Century England
- Topic 2 Colonial and Early American Sabbatarians
- Topic 3 Millerism and the Rise of Sabbatarian Adventism
- Topic 4 The Church of God (Adventist)

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**Lesson 6 The Revitalized Church–The Philadelphian Era**

Topic 1 Herbert Armstrong and the Radio Church of God (1933-1947)

Topic 2 Ambassador College

Topic 3 The Worldwide Church of God

Topic 4 The Church of God Today

**Lesson 7 The Church in Today's World–The Laodicean Era**

Topic 1 The Living Church of God

Topic 2 The United Church of God

Topic 3 The Church of God (A Worldwide Association)

Topic 4 The Lukewarm and Apostatizing Churches

**EXAM 3 (Lessons 5-7) [Proctored]**

**Lesson 8 Tomorrow's World and the Kingdom of God**

Course Evaluation

What I Learned Essay

**Epilog**