

HISTORY 387 / RELIGIOUS STUDIES 376
A Global History of Christianity
Spring 2017

Prof. Mack Holt, History

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Course Description:

This course is organized around a comparative examination of the many forms of global Christianity over the past two thousand years. Chronologically, it begins with the ancient Jewish, Greek, and Roman contexts of early Christianity and continues through the present. Students will become familiar with many kinds of Christianity across the globe, including Asian, African, Latin American, European, and North American Christianities. In each geographic and chronological contexts, students will explore several themes: use of sacred texts and the experiences of a typical church service, the relationship between Christianity and politics, and cultural aspects such as marriage and sexuality. Students will also consider Christianity as a series of global systems organized around missions, migration, trade, and warfare.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, students should:

1. Display familiarity with Christianity in a variety of global contexts across time.
2. Demonstrate specific knowledge of selected topics, such as Christendom, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment.
3. Articulate themselves clearly both verbally and in writing.

Class Procedures:

The format of this class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Students should come to class having read the assigned material and should be prepared to discuss those readings in class. You must have a copy of the texts assigned for each day available in class. Grades are based upon two in-class essay exams, two out-of-class essays, and a series of short writing assignments.

Required Reading:

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, paperback (Penguin, 2011).

Other reading as noted on the daily schedule of classes.

Grade Evaluation:

Midterm exam: 15%

Final exam: 25%

Two essays (chosen from three possible topics, worth 15% each)

Short writing assignments (four): 5% each

Class participation: 10% (includes discussion and reading quizzes)

Final grades will be assigned as follows: 98-100 = A+, 93-97 = A, 90-92 = A-, and so on.

Honor Code:

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. Instances of plagiarism will receive a strict penalty, which includes the possibility of a grade of "F" for the course.

Attendance:

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. The exams and essay assignments will draw on lectures for material not readily available elsewhere. For most students, whether or not they attend class is the single best indicator of their performance in the course.

Classroom Etiquette:

The use of cell phones is not permitted; they must be switched off and hidden. Students may use laptops to take notes in class and laptops/tablets to read assigned PDFs.

Students must activate their GMU e-mail accounts: students are responsible for making sure that they receive e-mail communications sent by the instructor.

Disability Services:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see the professor and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

Important Semester Enrollment and Withdrawal Dates:

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.

Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.

Last day to drop without financial penalty: January 30

Last day to drop: February 24

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for non-academic reasons.

Policy on late short assignments:

Assignments are due at the start of class. No late short assignments. Essays due at the start of class.

Essays received later that same day will receive a 1/3 letter-grade penalty and another 1/3 for each additional day late.

Plagiarism Warning:

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism in the assignments for this course. Plagiarism consists of presenting the writing, research or analysis of others as one's own. It applies not only to the lifting of the verbatim text of another author's work without quotation marks and accurate citation, but also to the taking of specific information, analysis or opinions—even if not in the exact words of the author him/herself—and presenting them without citation in one's own paper. This applies both to material in printed format and to material found on internet sites. Any instance of outright plagiarism, as described above, will result in the student receiving a grade of 0 on this paper, and the student will not be given the opportunity to rewrite the paper.

Course Outline:

Readings from MacCulloch are given by chapter. Other readings will be available as PDFs on Blackboard. Read all assignments for the date on which they are listed, and bring reading materials and notes with you to class.

Week 1: The First Thousand Years 1

Jan. 24 – Introduction

Jan. 26 – From Ancient Israel to Rabbinic Judaism

READ: MacCulloch, chapter 2; Isaiah 7:10–17, 52:13–15 and 53:1–12; and Daniel 1:1–21 and 7:1–28

Week 2: The First Thousand Years 2

Jan. 31 – Jesus and the New Testament; Greece and Rome

READ: M, chapter 1; Matthew 1:1–3:17; Mark 1:1–11; Luke 1:1–3:38; and John 1:1–34

Feb. 2 – Early Christianity

READ: M, chap. 3; Acts chaps. 9, 10, and 15; Galatians chaps. 1-2; *Didache*, chs. 1-5, 7, 9-10; Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, ch. 5-6, 9-10, 61, 65-67.

WRITE: How do the authors of Acts and Galatians, respectively, describe conflicts between different groups of early Christians? According to this group of readings, what are the most significant rituals and other spiritual practices among early Christians? Write one double-spaced page on each of these questions and submit via Blackboard as **Short Assignment #1. Due by the start of class on Feb. 2.**

Week 3: The Early Church

Feb. 7 – Creeds and Heresies

READ: M, chap. 4; Gospel of Thomas

Feb. 9 – Church and the Roman Empire

READ: M, chap. 5

Week 4: Empire Divided

Feb. 14 – Councils from Nicaea to Chalcedon

READ: M, chap. 6; Creed of Nicaea; Creed of Constantinople

Feb. 16 – Augustine and the Making of Latin Christianity (M, chapter 9)

READ: M, chap. 9; Augustine, *City of God*, book 14

Week 5: Christianity and Islam

Feb. 21 – Asian and African Christianities

READ: M, chap. 7

Feb. 23 – Muhammad and the coming of Islam

READ: M, chap. 8, and John of Damascus, *Fount of Knowledge* (excerpt on Islam)

WRITE: A one-paragraph summary of John of Damascus's discussion of Islam, followed by a one-page, double-spaced response. Submit as **Short Assignment #2. Due by start of class on Feb. 21.**

Week 6: Expansion of Christianity West and East

Feb. 28 – Expansion to Northwest Europe

READ: Bede on England; Gregory of Tours on France and Germany

March 2 – Crusades

READ: M, pp. 381–89; accounts of First Crusade

Week 7: Medieval Christianity

March 7 – Medieval Christianity

READ: M, chap. 12; **Essay choice #1 due at beginning of class on Mar. 7; submit via Blackboard.**

March 9 – Byzantine Christianity and Orthodoxy

READ: M, pp. 427–456

Spring Break: March 13-18

Week 8: Mid-Term Exam and Orthodox Christianity

March 21 – Russian Christianity

READ: M, chap. 15

March 23 – **MID-TERM EXAM. Bring an exam booklet and pen.**

Week 9: Protestant Reformations

March 28 – Reform before Luther

READ: M chaps. 16 and 17

March 30 – Luther, Calvin, and Radicals

READ: Selections from Luther, *95 Theses*, *Freedom of a Christian*, and *Letter to the German Nobility*.

Week 10: Catholic Reformations and the Great Witch Hunt

April 4 – Council of Trent and the Jesuits. **Essay choice #2 due at beginning of class on April 4; submit via Blackboard.**

READ: M, chap. 18

April 6 – The Great Witch Hunt

READ: Kramer and Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches*

Week 11: Spread of Christianity Beyond Europe

April 11 – Christianity in Africa, Asia, and North America

READ: M, chaps. 19 and 20

April 13 – Enlightenment and Revolutions

READ: M, chap. 21; excerpts from Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion*

WRITE: Friedrich Schleiermacher's *On Religion* attempts to answer Christianity's "cultured despisers." Having read Schleiermacher and Paine, how would Schleiermacher respond to Paine? Two pages, double spaced. Submit as **Short Assignment #3 due beginning of class on April 13.**

Week 12: American Christianities

April 18 – Latter-day Saints

READ: M, chap. 22; Joseph Smith, Letter to Samuel Smith; Emerson, Divinity School Address, pp. 11-21, 27

April 20 – Christianity and Missions in the Modern Era

READ: M, chap. 23. **Essay choice #3 due at beginning of class on April 20; submit via Blackboard.**

Week 13: Christianity in the Global South

April 25 – Colonization, Decolonization, and Movements for Justice

READ: Euclides da Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands*

WRITE: How does Euclides da Cunha explain the prophetic appeal of Antonio Conselheiro? Pay attention to both the prophetic tradition within the long history of Christianity *and* the social conditions of late-nineteenth-century Brazil. Submit as **Short Assignment #4 due at the beginning of class April 25.**

April 27 – Pentecostalism

READ: M, chap. 24

Week 14: Reform and Evolution of Global Christianities

May 2 – Vatican II

READ: M, chap. 25

May 4 – Conclusion and review for final exam

FINAL EXAM: May 16, 10:30a.m. – 1:15p.m. Bring an exam booklet and pen.

Essay Assignment, Choice #1

In a short essay of 5-8 pp. (typed and double-spaced), answer the following questions, based on a careful reading of MacCulloch, pp. 381-389 and the four different accounts of the First Crusade (1096-1099) we have read and discussed in class, (1) Fulcher of Chartres (Christian), (2) Solomon Bar Simson (Jewish), (3) Ibn Al-Athir (Muslim), and (4) Anna Comnena (Byzantine):

1. What are the most striking differences you see in these four accounts? And despite these differences, what similarities can you find?

2. How do the Hebrew, Muslim, and Byzantine authors characterize western Christianity? And how does Fulcher of Chartres—the European Christian--depict Jews, Muslims, and Byzantines in his account?

You should use no sources for this essay other than the required reading listed above. And you should document your ideas with **numerous** references to the four texts. Formal footnotes (or endnotes) are not necessary, though you may use them if you like. At the very least, you should include **numerous** page numbers in parentheses to make it clear to which specific passage in the texts you are referring. Finally, you should avoid directly quoting the texts as much as possible. Short phrases are fine if the point of the quotation is to discuss language. Otherwise simply summarize the ideas in the text in your own words and put in a reference to the page number to which you are referring. Thus, your essay should be made up of your words, not the words of the texts, and it should be an analysis of the texts, not a reproduction of the texts themselves.

Also, you should keep the following guidelines in mind as you write the essay: **(1) The essay should be your work and your work alone. (2) The essay should be written in correct and elegant English. There is no distinction between style and content; any such distinction is false and artificial.**

Essay Assignment, Choice #2

In a short essay of 5-8 pp. (typed and double-spaced), answer the following questions, based on a careful reading of MacCulloch, pp. 604-621 and Martin Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses" (1517), "An Appeal to the Ruling Class" (1520), and "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520).

1. In what specific ways did Luther's theology demonstrate a shift away from a communal and public religion toward a more individualized and private religion?
2. In what specific ways did Luther emphasize social and moral discipline in an effort to construct a more godly society?

You should use no sources for this essay other than the required reading listed above. And you should document your ideas with **numerous** references to Luther's writings. Formal footnotes (or endnotes) are not necessary, though you may use them if you like. At the very least, you should include **numerous** page numbers in parentheses to make it clear to which specific passage in Luther's writings you are referring. Finally, you should avoid directly quoting Luther's writings as much as possible. Short phrases are fine if the point of the quotation is to discuss Luther's language. Otherwise simply summarize Luther's ideas in your own words and put in a reference to the page number to which you are referring. Thus, your essay should be made up of your words, not Luther's; it should be an analysis of Luther's writings, not a reproduction of the writings themselves.

Also, you should keep the following guidelines in mind as you write the essay: **(1) The essay should be your work and your work alone. (2) The essay should be written in correct and elegant English. There is no distinction between style and content; any such distinction is false and artificial.**

Essay Assignment, Choice #3

In a short essay of 5-8 pp. (typed and double-spaced), answer the following questions, based on a careful reading of MacCulloch, chapter 21; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trns. and ed., Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 18-54; Joseph Smith, Letter to Silas Smith, 1833, in Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, Brent M. Rogers, Grant Underwood, Robert J. Woodford, William G. Hartley, eds. *The Joseph Smith Papers, Documents, vol. 3, February 1833-March 1834* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2014), 301-308; Ralph Waldo Emerson, *An Address...* (Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1838):

1. What was the Enlightenment, and what challenges did it pose toward European and American Christianities?
2. How did Friedrich Schleiermacher, Joseph Smith, and Ralph Waldo Emerson respond to those challenges? Compare and contrast their responses.

You should use no sources for this essay other than the required readings listed above. And you should document your ideas with **numerous** references to the assigned readings. Formal footnotes (or endnotes) are not necessary, though you may use them if you like. At the very least, you should include **numerous** page numbers in parentheses to make it clear to which specific passages you are referring. Finally, you should avoid directly quoting the writings as much as possible. Short phrases are fine if the point of the quotation is to discuss language. Otherwise simply summarize the ideas in your own words and put in a reference to the page number to which you are referring. Thus, your essay should be made up of your words, not those of Schleiermacher, Smith, and Emerson; it should be an analysis of their writings, not a reproduction of the writings themselves.

Also, you should keep the following guidelines in mind as you write the essay: **(1) The essay should be your work and your work alone. (2) The essay should be written in correct and elegant English. There is no distinction between style and content; any such distinction is false and artificial.**