

Global History of Christianity (Spring 2019)

This syllabus comes from <https://lincolnmullen.com/courses/christianity.2019/>. Only the online version of this syllabus is authoritative, and it may be updated as necessary.

Course: HIST 384-001 and RELI 384-001

(https://historyarthistory.gmu.edu/courses/hist384/course_sections/38684). Spring 2019. Department of History and Art History, George Mason University. 3 credits. Meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00-4:15pm in Robinson B224.

Instructor: Lincoln Mullen (<https://lincolnmullen.com>) <lmullen@gmu.edu (<mailto:lmullen@gmu.edu>)>. Office: Research Hall 457. Office hours: Mondays, 11:00-12:00pm; Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45am.

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 goals

At the end of this course, you will be able

1. to display familiarity with Christianity in a variety of global contexts across time;
2. to demonstrate specific knowledge of topics in the history of Christianity, such as Christendom, the Reformation, missions, and Pentecostalism; and
3. to write clearly and coherently about the history of Christianity.

This course fulfills the Mason Core requirement for Global Understanding (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/#global>).

Essential information

This class will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and in-class assignments. Come to class having read the assigned material and be prepared to discuss those readings in class. You must have a copy of the texts assigned for each day available in class. On any day for which there is a reading assignment but not a short writing assignment (i.e., most days), you should write down two questions or comments on any of the assigned readings and bring them to class.

You are always welcome to talk with me during office hours. While you can drop in, I strongly encourage you to book an appointment (</page/office-hours/>). If the scheduled times don't work for you, email me (<mailto:lmullen@gmu.edu>) and suggest a few other times that would work for you.

These books are required. Other readings will be available on Blackboard or through the GMU libraries.

- MacCulloch, Diarmaid. *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*. Penguin, 2009. ISBN: 9780143118695.
- Jensen, Robin M. *The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy*. Harvard University Press, 2017. ISBN: 9780674088801.

Assignments

Grades will be based on the following assignments. Final grades will be calculated using the typical percentage-based grading scale (A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 88-89, B = 83-87, B- = 80-82, ... F = 0-59).

Readings and class participation (10%). Any class may include a brief quiz over the assigned readings. The participation grade will be based on these quizzes and on your participation in class discussions.

Short writing assignments (6 × 5% each = 30%). Six short writing assignments are due in Blackboard before the start of class on the day assigned (no exceptions). The prompts for these writing assignments are on the schedule below.

Site visits and paper (15%). You will be asked to visit two local Christian communities throughout the semester. After these visits you will write a reflection paper drawing on those visits and on your readings throughout the semester. More information will be provided early in the semester.

Midterm exam (20%) and final exam (25%). In-class exams will include essay and identification questions.

Schedule

Wednesday, January 23: Introduction

- In class: Acts 2.

Monday, January 28: From Ancient Israel to Rabbinic Judaism

- MacCulloch, ch. 2.
- Isaiah 7:10-17, 52:13-15, and 53:1-12; Daniel 1:1-21 and 7:1-28.

Wednesday, January 30: Jesus and the New Testament

- MacCulloch, ch. 3.
- Jensen, ch. 1.
- In class: Matthew 1:1-3:17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 1:1-3:38; and John 1:1-34.

Monday, February 4: Early Christianity; Greece and Rome

- MacCulloch, ch. 1.
- Acts ch. 9, 10, and 15; Galatians ch. 1-2; *Didache*, ch. 1-5, 7, 9-10; Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, ch. 5-6, 9-10, 61, 65-67.
- **Short writing assignment 1:** How do the authors of Acts and Galatians, respectively, describe conflicts between different groups of early Christians? According to this group of readings, what were the most significant rituals and practices among early Christians? Write one double-spaced page on each of these questions. Use quotations from the primary sources as evidence in your response.

Wednesday, February 6: Creeds and Heresies

- MacCulloch, pp. 121-147.
- Gospel of Thomas.

Monday, February 11: The Church and the Roman Empire

- MacCulloch, pp. 155-176.
- Jensen, ch. 2.
- *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity*.

Wednesday, February 13: Councils from Nicaea to Chalcedon

- MacCulloch, pp. 189-200, 211-228.
- Creed of Nicaea; Chalcedonian Definition.
- **Short writing assignment 2:** What was the chief question at the Council of Nicaea? How did the Council of Nicaea resolve it? What was the chief question at Chalcedon? How did that church council respond to it? Write two double-spaced pages. Use quotations from the primary sources as evidence in your response.

Monday, February 18: Augustine and the Making of Latin Christianity

- MacCulloch, pp. 289-312.
- Augustine, *Confessions*, book 2; Egeria, *Pilgrimage*; Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Moses*.

Wednesday, February 20: Asian and African Christianities

- MacCulloch, ch. 7 and pp. 267-269.
- Jensen, ch. 3.
- *Kebra Negast*

Monday, February 25: Muhammad and the Coming of Islam

- MacCulloch, pp. 255-267, 277-285.
- John of Damascus, *Fount of Knowledge*.
- **Short writing assignment 3:** Write a two-paragraph summary of John of Damascus's discussion of Islam, followed by a one-page, double-spaced response of any sort.

Wednesday, February 27: Expansion to Northwest Europe

- MacCulloch, pp. 200-210, 312-318, 329-345.
- Bede on England; Gregory of Tours on France and Germany.

Monday, March 4: Crusades

- MacCulloch, pp. 381-89.
- Four accounts of the First Crusade.
- **Short writing assignment 4:** What are the most striking differences you see in these four accounts of the First Crusade? Despite these differences, what similarities can you find? Write two double-spaced pages. Use quotations from the primary sources as evidence in your response.

Wednesday, March 6: Medieval Christianity

- MacCulloch, pp. 396-415.
- Jensen, ch. 4.

Monday, March 11: Spring break

Wednesday, March 13: Spring break

Monday, March 18: Byzantine Christianity and Orthodoxy

- MacCulloch, pp. 427-456.
- Jensen, ch. 7.

Wednesday, March 20: Midterm exam

Monday, March 25: Russian Christianity

- MacCulloch, ch. 15.
- *Russian Primary Chronicle*

Wednesday, March 27: Reform before Luther

- MacCulloch, ch. 16.
- Rule of St. Benedict; Rule of St. Francis.

Monday, April 1: Magisterial and Radical Reformers

- MacCulloch, ch. 17.
- Luther, "Ninety-five Theses" and *Freedom of a Christian*.
- **Short writing assignment 5:** What is Luther's concept of Christian freedom? In what specific ways does Luther emphasize social and moral discipline in an effort to construct a more godly society? Write two double-spaced pages. Use quotations from the primary sources as evidence in your response.

Wednesday, April 3: Catholic Reformation and the Council of Trent

- MacCulloch, pp. 655-667.
- Jensen, ch. 8.

Monday, April 8: Witch Hunts

- MacCulloch, pp. 686-688.
- Kramer and Sprenger, *The Hammer of Witches*.

Wednesday, April 10: Spread of Christianity in Africa, Asia, and the Americas

- MacCulloch, ch. 19.
- Christian inscription in Chinese; Chinese Christian Sutras

Monday, April 15: Enlightenment and Revolutions

- MacCulloch, pp. 769-787, 794-806, 830-838.
- Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason*; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion*.
- **Short writing assignment 6:** Friedrich Schleiermacher's *On Religion* attempts to answer Christianity's "cultured despisers." Having read Schleiermacher and Paine, how do you think Schleiermacher would respond to Paine? Write two double-spaced pages. Use quotations from the primary sources as evidence in your response.

Wednesday, April 17: American Christianities and the Latter-day Saints

- Joseph Smith, Letter to Samuel Smith; Emerson, "Divinity School Address," pp. 11-21, 27,

Monday, April 22: Christianity and Missions in the Modern Era

- MacCulloch, ch. 23.

Wednesday, April 24: Colonization and Decolonization

- MacCulloch, ch. 24.
- Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*; Latin American Bishops' Conference at Puebla, 1979.

Monday, April 29: Pentecostalism

- Nimi Wariboko, "Pentecostalism in Africa," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (2017): <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.120> (<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.120>).

Wednesday, May 1: Vatican II

- MacCulloch, ch. 25.
- Jensen, ch. 9.

Monday, May 6: Conclusion

- **Site visits and reflection paper:** This paper is due by the start of class, but it can be turned in at any time during the semester.

Monday, May 13: Final exam, 1:30-4:15pm

Fine print

This syllabus may be updated online as necessary. The online version of this syllabus is the only authoritative version.

You are expected to attend each class and to participate actively (exceptions made only for religious holidays). For most students, whether or not they attend class is the best indicator of how well they will do in the class. Computers, phones, and the like are to be used only for course work. Grades will be reduced due to repeated absences. Complete all the readings before the start of each class. No unexcused late work will be accepted, and no late short assignments will be accepted for any reason. No work will be accepted after the last day of class unless specifically assigned. I will discuss grades only in person during office hours.

Class communications will be sent to your MasonLive email account, which you must check.

Unless otherwise specified, you should work on your own for assignments. In general, every source that you use should be acknowledged in a note or bibliography entry. Sources must be adequately paraphrased, meaning (at a minimum) that word choice, sentence and paragraph structure, and the order of ideas must be made your own. Whenever you use others' exact words, you must mark them as such by quotation marks or block quotations with accompanying citations. Plagiarism consists of presenting the writing, research, or analysis of others as one's own. It applies not only to using the text of another author's work verbatim 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—and presenting them without citation in one's own paper. Any instance of plagiarism will result in, at minimum, the student receiving a grade of 0 on this paper, and the student will not be given the opportunity to rewrite the paper.

George Mason University has an Honor Code (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>), which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

See the George Mason University catalog (<http://catalog.gmu.edu/>) for general policies, as well as the university statement on diversity (<http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/>).

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources (<https://ds.gmu.edu/>) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/>.) The last day to add classes is January 29. The last day to drop classes is February 12. After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

"Render therefore to all their dues": This syllabus is based on versions of this class taught with or by my colleagues John Turner and Mack Holt.