

# Syllabus for History of Christianity

[Institution]

[Semester]

[Class Times and Location]

[Instructor's name, contact information, and office hours]

## **Course Goals**

This purpose of this course is to give a broad overview of the diversity of the global Christian tradition from its beginnings in the gospel accounts of Jesus of Nazareth to the present day. Spanning 2000 years and every continent, impacting not just religion but also culture, the arts, philosophy, and global politics, the history of the Christian church is an essential thing to grasp for those seeking to understand the origins of the social forces that shape our world today.

This fifteen-week course will introduce students to the major historical moments, figures, events, conflicts, and thought patterns that have comprised the history of Christianity throughout the centuries in both the East and the West.

## **Required Texts:**

In addition to the main textbook, *Introduction to the History of Christianity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Tim Dowley (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), students will engage a number of online multimedia resources to aid their engagement with the material.

[insert other texts]

Please consult the course website regularly [insert URL].

## **Outline of Course Units**

### **Unit 1: Beginnings**

Goals: 1). Students will be able to describe the transition from the life of Jesus of Nazareth to the formation of early Christian communities. 2). Students will understand the ways in which early Christian communities did and did not mirror the norms of their cultural settings. 3). Students will gain familiarity with the multitude of competing early Christian claims (particularly around Christology) as well as the trajectories that led to the emergence of the categories of "orthodoxy" and "heresy."

### **Unit 2: Emergence**

Goals: 1). Students will grasp the complexity of church-state relationships before, during, and after the reign of Constantine. 2). Students will be able to trace the emergence of various tiers of church leadership and authority (bishops, councils, etc.) as the Christian movement becomes institutionalized in the context of empire. 3). Students will understand the complex ways in which early monasticism functioned vis-à-vis Christian institutional centers of power.

### **Unit 3: Christendom**

Goals: 1). Students will gain broad familiarity with the wealth of intellectual and theological trends that shaped the writings of the Christian medieval period. 2). Students will be able to describe the various crises of authority that shaped the solidification of the papacy in the West and the fluid church/state configurations of the East. 3). Students will gain insights into the ecclesial and political unrest that set the stage for the sixteenth-century Reformation in the West, including the role played by the emergence of Islam within Christendom.

#### **Unit 4: Reformations**

Goals: 1). Students will understand the multifaceted nature of the European Reformation as well as the multitude of actors whose work instigated the division of the church in the West. 2). Students will be able to describe the ways in which sixteenth-century ecclesial upheavals corresponded with the shifting political landscapes of European nation-states. 3). Students will be able to describe the nature of the Roman Catholic response to the growing challenge of Protestantism to Catholic theology, traditions, and structures of authority.

#### **Unit 5: Rationalism and Revival**

Goals: 1). Students will understand both the rationale and the methodology behind Protestant and Catholic global missionary work. 2). Students will gain familiarity with the broader philosophical and cultural trends that set the stage both for the fervor of Protestant revivalism and the rationality characteristic of the Enlightenment and its aftermath. 3). Students will be able to describe the complexities of how the Russian Orthodox church managed its relationship with monarchy and politics in the late medieval and early modern periods.

#### **Unit 6: Modernity Takes Hold**

Goals: 1). Students will be able to explain the impact of the Industrial Revolution upon both the institutional church and its theology in the nineteenth century. 2). Students will be able to contextualize contemporary debates concerning religion and science within the framework established during the nineteenth century especially. 3). Students will be able to describe the shifting methods and theological underpinnings of missionary work characteristic of this period.

#### **Unit 7: Ongoing Evolution**

Goals: 1). Students will be able to describe how the upheavals of the twentieth century (two World Wars, the Great Depression, emerging conflicts with communism, etc.) both impacted and were shaped by Christian movements. 2). Students will gain familiarity with the beginnings of Pentecostalism and its vitality as a global movement. 3). Students will gain insights into the emergence of theologies constructed by and for historically marginalized individuals (racial minorities, the poor, women, Third World theologians, etc.).

## Course Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Week 1	<b>Unit 1: Beginnings</b>	HOC Chapters 1-3 Bonus reading: On how philosophers and theologians have understood the concept of “miracles”: <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/miracles/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/miracles/</a>  Bonus reading: Theologian N. T. Wright on the resurrection of Jesus in historical and theological perspective: <a href="http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Jesus_Resurrection.htm">http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Jesus_Resurrection.htm</a>
Week 2	Unit 1: Beginnings	HOC Chapters 4-7 Bonus video: The martyrdom of Perpetua: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm1dozzn7v8">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm1dozzn7v8</a>
Week 3	<b>Unit 2: Emergence</b>	HOC Chapters 8-11
Week 4	Unit 2: Emergence	HOC Chapters 12-13 Bonus lecture on bishops in the early church: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BTUFjlg4KI">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BTUFjlg4KI</a>  Bonus podcast on Augustine and the Roman Empire: <a href="http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/augustine-city-of-god">http://www.historyofphilosophy.net/augustine-city-of-god</a>
Week 5	Unit 2: Emergence	HOC Chapters 14-15
Week 6	<b>Unit 3: Christendom</b>	HOC Chapters 16-18  Bonus reading: John of Damascus defending icons: <a href="https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/john-of-damascus/">https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/john-of-damascus/</a>
Week 7	Unit 3: Christendom	HOC Chapters 19-21  Bonus reading: Julian of Norwich: <a href="http://www.ccel.org/ccel/julian/revelations">http://www.ccel.org/ccel/julian/revelations</a>
Week 8	<b>Unit 4: Reformations</b>	HOC Chapters 22-24  Bonus: Check out the Reformation-era art of Lucas Cranach: <a href="http://www.artinthepicture.com/artists/Lucas_Cranach-the-Elder/1">http://www.artinthepicture.com/artists/Lucas_Cranach-the-Elder/1</a>

		Bonus reading: Luther on the “Freedom of a Christian”: <a href="https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-freedomchristian.asp">https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-freedomchristian.asp</a>
Week 9	Unit 4: Reformations	HOC Chapters 25-27  Bonus reading: If you’re curious about where the matter of justification stands between Roman Catholics and Lutherans today, check out this official 1999 document on the subject: <a href="http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html">http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_31101999_cath-luth-joint-declaration_en.html</a>
Week 10	<b>Unit 5: Rationalism and Revival</b>	HOC Chapters 28-29  Bonus lecture: Yale’s Lammin Saneh on missions in Africa: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crrYlsmvbfQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crrYlsmvbfQ</a>
Week 11	Unit 5: Rationalism and Revival	HOC Chapters 30-31  Bonus video on Catherine the Great: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-Anc3fakFM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-Anc3fakFM</a>
Week 12	<b>Unit 6: Modernity Takes Hold</b>	HOC Chapters 32-34
Week 13	Unit 6: Modernity Takes Hold	HOC Chapters 35-36  Bonus video: Huxley vs. Wilberforce on evolution: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXq8LZ3b2YQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXq8LZ3b2YQ</a>
Week 14	<b>Unit 7: Ongoing Evolution</b>	HOC Chapters 37-39  Bonus reading: The Barmen Declaration: <a href="http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/barmen.htm">http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/barmen.htm</a>
Week 15	Unit 7: Ongoing Evolution	HOC Chapters 40-43