

840 (Religion):122—Saints, Sinners, and Scholars: A History of Christianity

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:15-3:35

Heldrich Science Building 106, Cook/Douglas Campus

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 4:00-5:00 and by appointment

Office Location: Loree Building 110 (70 Lipman Drive, Douglass Campus)

Overview:

The study of Christianity is the study of history, of philosophy, of people, places and cultures, of texts, of art, of economics, society and politics, of relationships between people and relationships between ideas. Over its two-thousand-year history, Christianity has shaped and been shaped by its surroundings, has influenced and been influenced by its intellectual climate. It has been, and continues to be, a huge presence in the world's political landscape. This course is an overview of Christianity, a jumping-off point for further study and a way of familiarizing yourself with the diversity and history of one of the driving forces in society today.

So, what is Christianity? Sandra Frankiel defines it simply as "the religion of those people who believe in Jesus Christ as the savior of the world." But, as Frankiel points out, "this immediately raises more questions: Who is Jesus Christ? What is a savior? What is meant by 'believe in'?" Christians throughout history have debated all of these terms. Was Jesus fully human or fully divine? How is the messiah (the Jewish term meaning "anointed one," which is translated into Greek as "Christos" or "Christ") supposed to save the world? And, for that matter, what do we mean by "world"? Is salvation accessible to everyone? And what does that salvation look like? All of these issues (and many, many others!) have, at one point or another, caused differences of opinion in Christian history, making Christianity an incredibly diverse phenomenon (such that it is more accurate to speak of "Christianities" rather than "Christianity") and giving it a very convoluted and intriguing history.

This course will follow that history, beginning with Jesus and the gospels (canonical and non-canonical), weaving through Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Reformation and the American context before ending with discussions of contemporary issues in Christianity. But to make this vast range of topics manageable in seven weeks, we will focus on saints, sinners, and scholars, attending to them as individuals, as heroes/anti-heroes, and as ideological constructs that Christians sought to navigate.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Become conversant in the major moments and developments in Christian history, gaining an appreciation of the tradition's historical and contemporary diversity.
- Acquire familiarity with and facility in recognizing a broad spectrum of Christian ideas.

- Learn and hone critical thinking tools for use in exploring the history and current manifestations of any religious tradition.
- Master Religious Studies methodologies by practicing them in written and class-based assignments.

Grade Breakdown and Assignments:

1. **Participation (20%):** You will get credit for coming to class, and you will be expected to participate in class discussion.
2. **In-Class Quizzes (20%):** These daily quizzes will check on your reading retention and your attention to detail, and will serve both as guidelines for the class lecture and as fodder for the exams. Your lowest four grades will be dropped.
3. **Writing Assignments (20%):** Two short essays (3 pages) designed to guide your reading, spur your thinking, encourage expression and improve your ability to write in an academic context.
4. **Take-Home DBQ's (20%):** Two document-based question sets (DBQ's) designed to hone your primary-source reading skills. These will be posted on Sakai after class and due by the beginning of the next class period.
5. **Final Exam (20%):** There will also be a cumulative final exam, which will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions, and for which there will be a study guide and a review session.

Readings:

- Weaver, Mary Jo and David Brakke. *Introduction to Christianity*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.
- All other readings will be posted to Sakai. These are numbered.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments			
	Date	Class Topic	Readings and Assignments
Week #1: Themes, Theories, and Background			
1	10/25	Themes, Theories, and Background	1. Genesis 1-3; 15; 17 (in class)
2	10/27	Apocalyptic Origins	2. Genesis 22 • Weaver and Brakke, 3-18.
Week #2: Christian Beginnings			
3	11/1	Christian Beginnings	• Weaver and Brakke, 19-35 3. Gospel beginnings and endings (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John, and Thomas) 4. Gospel Parallels (in class) <i>DBQ #1 posted after class, due before next class</i>
4	11/3	The Early Church:	• Weaver and Brakke, 36-51

		Internal and External Conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Acts of the Apostles (selections) 6. Ignatius of Antioch, <i>Letters to the Trallians, Philadelphians, and Smyrnaeans</i> (in class) 7. Justin Martyr, <i>First Apology</i> (in class)
Week #3: Growth and Diversity			
5	11/8	The Late Ancient Church: A Society of Saints or a School for Sinners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. William Harmless, <i>Augustine in His Own Words</i>, 1-38, 232-237, 373-383. 9. Augustine of Hippo, excerpts from Anti-Pelagian and Anti-Donatist writings 10. Pelagius, <i>Letter to Demetrias</i> (selections)
6	11/10	The Western Middle Ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke, 53-78 11. Correspondence of Henry IV and Gregory VII (in class) 12. Pope Urban II's Call to Crusade (in class) 13. Abelard, <i>Historia Calamitatum</i> (in class) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>DBQ #2 posted after class, due before next class</i></p>
Week #4: Reformations			
7	11/15	Reformations, I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke, 79-100 14. Luther, <i>On Christian Freedom</i> (selection) 15. Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> (selection) 16. Erasmus, <i>On the Freedom of the Will</i> (selection) 17. Zwingli/Luther Debate (in class)
8	11/17	Reformations, II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Thomas More, <i>Response to Luther and Confutation of Tyndale's Answer</i> (selection) 19. Henry VIII, <i>Act of the Six Articles</i> 20. Ignatius of Loyola <i>Letters</i> (selection) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Writing Assignment #2 due Tuesday, 11/ 22 at 11:55pm via Sakai</i></p>
Happy Thanksgiving!			
Week #5: Modernity and Mission			
9	11/29	Faith and Reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke, 101-111 21. John Locke, "The Reasonableness of Christianity" (selections) 22. John Toland, <i>Christianity not Mysterious</i> (selections) 23. John Wesley, <i>An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion</i> (selections) 24. Soren Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> (selection)
10	12/1	Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke, 161-174 25. Marie of the Incarnation (selections from letters) 26. Juan Gines de Sepulveda, <i>On the Just Causes for War Against Indians</i> (selection) 27. Bartolome de las Casas, <i>A Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indies</i> (selection)

Week #6: Christian Diversity in the American Context			
11	12/6	17 th and 18 th Century America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke 111-118 28. Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" 29. Thomas Jefferson, Syllabus of the Jefferson Bible 30. Methodist hymns
12	12/8	19 th and 20 th Century America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke 139-159 31. Walter Rauschenbusch, <i>The Social Gospel</i> (selection) 32. Reinhold Niebuhr, "Ten Years that Shook My World" (selection) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Writing Assignment #2 due on Friday at 11:55pm via Sakai</i></p>
Week #7: Contemporary Christianity			
13	12/13	Christians and the World, I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weaver and Brakke, 183-218 33. George W. Bush, Iraq Speech 34. American Friends Service Committee Mission Statement
14	12/15	Christians and the World, II	Readings determined by students' topic choices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">○ Wealth/Poverty <li style="width: 50%;">○ Sexuality <li style="width: 50%;">○ Race <li style="width: 50%;">○ Environment <li style="width: 50%;">○ Gender
FINAL EXAM MONDAY, DECEMBER 19 12:00-3:00 PM			

Classroom Policies:

1. **Civility:** This semester we will at times be discussing most of the things you are not supposed to discuss in polite company. In order to ensure that everyone feels comfortable participating in these discussions, we must all show respect to one another, to one another's ideas, and to the material we are discussing. Dismissive or abusive comments will not be tolerated.
2. **Technology:** Any and all technology is welcome in the classroom, with a few caveats:
 - a. **All texts must be available to you at the beginning of class.** Whether that means printing them out or downloading them so they are ready to go on whichever devices you intend to use, you must have all of the day's readings accessible for your reference during class. You should be able to reference texts easily, without having to wait for a page to load. Not having your texts ready to go at the start of class is akin to coming to class unprepared, and your participation grade may suffer accordingly.
 - b. **Do not become distracted.** If I notice that you are distracted, you will lose half of your participation points for the day.
 - c. **Do not distract your classmates.** If I notice that you are distracting your classmates, you will lose all of your participation points for the day. If you are being distracted by another student, please let me know so that I can let them know they are being distracting.