



AMBROSE  
SEMINARY

## **CH 501 *Christianity in History* (3)**

**Winter 2012**

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<b>Class Time:</b>	Online
<b>Moodle:</b>	CH 501

### **Course Description**

This course is an overview of the history of Christianity from the time of the early Church to the present. As we consider the development of Christian ideas and institutions within their corresponding social, cultural and political contexts, we will meet influential Christians, discover devotional treasures, and encounter the diverse Christian traditions that have shaped and been shaped by the world around them.

### **Course Objectives**

- ✓ Learn the broad sweep and key issues of church history, including at least fifty of the most important people, events, ideas and institutions from the Christian past.
- ✓ Appreciate the dynamic nature of Christianity as embodied in the Church—in other words, that the Church's theology, practises and institutions are not eternal and unchanging in nature, but deeply intertwined with human civilization and its historical development.
- ✓ Identify your personal Christian/church histories within the history of the Church universal, and understand the influences that have shaped your own faith tradition(s).
- ✓ Grow in your ability to exegete your cultural environment, to understand the forces that influence your church, and to draw on your understanding of church history in order to formulate effective strategies for thriving as a Christian and church leader.
- ✓ Grow in your personal appreciation of and ability to draw from the spiritual journey, testimony and devotional legacy of Christians from the past, knowing that all Christians undergo a common journey from spiritual infancy to maturity.

## Texts

1. Paul R. Spickard and Kevin M. Cragg, *A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).
2. Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith (eds.), *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*, revised and expanded (New York: HarperOne, 2005).
3. Lectures, historical documents, and other course material on the Moodle course site.

## Evaluation

Readings/Responses	50%
Biography Review	15%
Application Assignment	35%

## Readings/Responses

Much of your work in this course will revolve around readings from our two texts, lectures, and primary source documents, which you will respond to online (on the Moodle site). Specific instructions will be provided on the Moodle site, so please read carefully. In general, however:

Unless otherwise noted, the required length for initial forum postings will be 300-500 words.

For each chapter in **Spickard and Cragg's *Global History***, I will post some questions for you to answer in a forum on Moodle. Please post your answers to these by Thursday of each week, and use the Friday and Saturday to respond to at least three other postings with substantive comments or questions. I will add my thoughts and post follow up questions for you, either individually or as a group, in order to stimulate dialogue around the issues we're considering.

In each section of the course, you will have to read and respond to various selections from **Foster and Smith's *Devotional Classics***. In the appropriate Moodle forum, please post your responses to each of the authors you read (use the reflection questions in the book itself) by Thursday of each week, and use the Friday and Saturday to comment on at least one other person's response (choose a different person each week). I will read your responses and may post follow up questions or comments to stimulate dialogue around the issues we're considering.

Other course material (lectures, historical documents, etc.) will also be posted regularly, and linked to Moodle forums or other exercises for you to complete. Instructions will be posted in the appropriate sections of the Moodle site.

My assessment will be based on the depth with which you engage with the ideas in our readings (and reflect on your own assumptions about Christianity and the Church, as they're challenged by or confirmed in the readings). Your ability to put your thoughts into clear, concise, and expressive writing will also play a role in determining your mark.

## Biography Review

One of the ways to relate church history to contemporary life and ministry is to examine an individual character from church history, to see how he or she attempted to live the Christian faith in his or her time. To that end, you are required to select (on the Moodle site) and read a biography chosen from the list provided, and submit an 800-1000 word review paper, answering the following questions:

1. According to the book, *who* was this person, and what did they think or do?
2. Briefly, *why* did you choose this person to read about?
3. *In what ways* were they a product of their times?
4. *In what ways* did their lives pose a challenge to those around them?
5. What positive and negative lessons do you take away from the biography?

Be sure to write the response in your own words. Please use examples, references, or short quotations (with footnotes) to support your answers. Include a title page with your personal information, the course information, the assignment name, and the date. Format your paper according to the Ambrose History Style Guide.

**Due May 31, 2012 in the appropriate Moodle assignment module.**

My assessment will be based on the quality of your understanding of the book and its subject, the level of engagement with the person you are reading about, and the quality of your writing.

## Application Assignment

All of the reading, responding, and discussion in the course is meant to serve as the basis for the application assignment, the most important of all. Choose one of the two options to complete. Be sure to discuss your project with me during the conception and research phases, before the writing phase:

### Option 1: My Personal Christian Roots

If church history cannot connect contemporary Christians with the great traditions (theological, devotional, and historical) of the Church, it has not done its job. To that end, you are assigned the task of identifying your own personal Christian tradition(s)—these may be denominational, parachurch, or mission organizations, or theological traditions, important writers, liturgies or devotional traditions—and then of discovering, investigating, and explaining some ways that your Christian tradition(s) have shaped your own spirituality, beliefs, or philosophy of ministry.

Step 1: Post a short note in the appropriate Moodle forum identifying your tradition(s). I will open a discussion with you on the forum, and you are free to read and comment on each other's thoughts. Together we will shape the outline of your work.

Step 2: Research the history and thought of your tradition(s), identifying important elements of your tradition(s) that have shaped you or that you admire and would emulate (e.g. the egalitarianism, pacifism, and separation of the Anabaptist tradition; the missional focus and pragmatism of the Christian and Missionary Alliance; the congregational independence and high view of Scripture of

the Baptists; the inclusivity and liturgical practises of Anglicanism; the force of convictions about Calvinistic predestination; the cultural engagement of Lesslie Newbigin; the training, structures, and strategies of Youth For Christ; the holistic nature of Roman Catholicism).

Step 3: Reflect on the ways these important elements of your tradition(s) have influenced you. Think of specific examples to support your reflections. In other words, you need to try to explain (for example) how the egalitarianism of the Anabaptists, or the inclusivity of the Anglicans, or the theological concept of predestination has influenced you.

Step 4: Write a 3000-word paper combining your research (step 2) and your reflections (step 3), with about two-thirds of the paper devoted to the research aspect. Be sure to write your paper in your own words. Please use examples, references, or short quotations to support your answers. Follow the Ambrose History Department Style Guide format. Include a title page with your information, the course information, the assignment name, and the date.

**Due May 31, 2012 in the appropriate Moodle assignment module.**

My assessment will be based on your ability to understand and articulate your own Christian roots, the quality of your historical research into your personal Christian tradition(s), the level of reflection on your own formation in your tradition(s), and the quality of your writing.

### **Option 2: Teaching Christian History**

If church history cannot connect contemporary Christians with the great traditions (theological, devotional, and historical) of the Church, it has not done its job. To that end, you are assigned the task of writing a manual for teaching selected aspects of Christian history in a church or Christian educational setting relevant to your life and ministry. Your manual must include several elements:

1. **Introduction:** This will outline the intended audience, goals, and outcomes of the manual.
2. **Principles:** Here you must explain the principles, or guiding ideas, that you have used to develop the manual.
3. **Lesson Plans:** Develop at least four detailed lesson plans for teaching sessions. Each must include an **overview**, a list of **goals/outcomes**, a list of **supporting materials** to be used (primary documents, illustrations, pictures, etc.), descriptions of any **activities or assignments**, and an **outline** of any lecture component, if employed.
4. **Lesson:** Develop at least one of these lesson plans into a full-fledged lesson that could be delivered in a church or Christian educational setting relevant to your life and ministry.
5. **Feedback:** Briefly describe the feedback you received from showing the project to a pastor or professor (other than me).

Include a title page with your information, the course information, the assignment name, and the date.

**Due May 31, 2012 in the appropriate Moodle assignment module.**

My assessment will be based on your ability to understand and articulate your own understanding of Christian history, the quality of your historical understanding of the historical subjects covered by the manual, the level of engagement with the project, and the quality of your organization and writing.

## Course Outline

1. **Beginnings:** introductions, the nature of church history, early Christian worship and tradition (liturgy, canon, and creed)
2. **Early Church:** Early Christian theological questions and leadership
3. **Medieval World:** western monastic and Roman Catholic Christianity, non-western churches, and the history of church-state relations
4. **Reform:** late medieval troubles and 16<sup>th</sup> century reform in Germany, Switzerland, and England
5. **Early Modern Christianity:** mission impulses, Pietism, Baptists, Wesley, and the beginnings of North American Christianity
6. **The Revolutionary West:** Enlightenment and Modernity, French Revolution and 19<sup>th</sup> century responses, Evangelicalism
7. **A Global Faith:** missions and the rise of World Christianity, Canadian Christianity, Pentecostalism
8. **20<sup>th</sup> Century:** war, dictatorship, and Christianity, the German Church Struggle, ecumenism, and fundamentalism

### Important Notes/Dates:

The last day to enter a course without permission and /or voluntary withdrawal from a course without financial penalty (drop) – Sunday, January 22, 2012. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript.

Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the “audit” up to the “drop” date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (withdraw) – Friday, March 23, 2012. A grade of “W” will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Grading: The available letters for course grades are as follows:

Letter Grade	Description
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good

B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory
C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “Course Extension” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the appropriate deadline (as listed in the Academic Calendar <http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control.”

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.