



**CH 501 *Christianity in History* (3)
Winter 2006**

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Class Time:	Mondays, 2:30-5:15
Location:	tba

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, 1994). More people-centred than other histories of Christianity, it still surveys the growth and development of Christian theology and church institutions.
2. Selected primary source documents and focused articles will also be assigned for reading, in order to add depth to the examination of specific issues and eras.

Evaluation

Biography Review/Presentation	25%
Christian roots assignment	45%
Christian Diversity assignment	20%
Participation	10%

Biography Review/Presentation

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 read a biography chosen from the list provided (or request approval for your own suggestion), write an 800-1000 word review, and give a 10 minute presentation to the class.

The review will consist of four tasks:

1. Briefly (a few sentences to a half a page) describe the subject of the book (e.g. life of Mother Teresa, career of Martin Luther). This is simply the who, what, when, and where information.
2. Briefly explain the thesis/argument/interpretation (I'm using these terms interchangeably) around which the author structures his or her account of the person (e.g. Augustine fundamentally changed the shape of Western Christian thought through his confessional autobiography, his defence of Christianity against heresy, and his cosmic reinterpretation of the Roman empire; or, John Wesley was the source and foundation of both evangelicalism and the holiness movement in the Western church). Often the thesis will be broken down into several main points (as with the Augustine example). Sub-sections of the book or chapter titles may provide clues to this. Usually, the thesis/interpretation is outlined in the introduction or preface or concluding chapter, just as sub-points are generally outlined in the opening and closing paragraphs of individual chapters. That said, it is important to note that biographers usually develop their arguments using a narrative approach, rather than topically or thematically. Still, unless the book is blandly descriptive, there will be a thesis or argument to deal with somewhere in there.
3. Analyze two or three sections of the book in detail, in order to explain in more detail how the author of the biography develops the thesis (i.e. constructs and supports his or her interpretation of the subject of the biography). In other words, what lines of argument and what kinds of source material does the author use to try to convince you of his or her point of view? How convincing is the argument? Are there alternative interpretations that would

make more sense, given the evidence provided? Are there other sources of evidence that would have helped the author make a stronger case? By asking these kinds of questions of a couple of key sections in the book (it would be far too much to do this for the whole book), your review will provide a good sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the book (clear? well-organized? quality sources? convincing argument? balanced or biased?).

4. Briefly sum up the strengths and weaknesses of the book, and perhaps the significance of the subject of the biography.

Be sure to write the review in your own words. Quotations should be limited to snippets. Reference the specific sections of the book that you are discussing by means of page numbers in parentheses (e.g. Smith completely misunderstands Luther's anxiety over the state of his own soul (34) and assumes that the reformer was motivated only by "political considerations relating to the state of the German nation" in the early sixteenth century (38).) Don't use subheadings or numbered sections—just use paragraphs to outline the structure of your writing. Finally, use proper grammar and descriptive vocabulary.

The presentation will mirror the review. It cannot be an extended account of the life of the person whose biography you have reviewed. It should include a brief overview of the life, followed by the argument of the biography and some details from the specific sections of the biography that you analyzed. For the presentation, please also share some short excerpts of your biographical subject's writings (devotional, pastoral, theological, or literary). If you would like to prepare a one-page handout or a PowerPoint presentation, please let me know in advance and ensure that these are ready in good time.

Reviews are due (stapled, please, and no binders or DuoTangs) and presentations will take place during the class period of 13 February 2006. Please do not leave the preparation of a presentation to the last minute. No late work will be accepted.

Christian Roots Assignment

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), then discovering, investigating, and explaining three influences that have shaped that tradition (or those traditions). These may be denominational traditions, parachurch movements, theological traditions, important writers, liturgical traditions, or broad Christian influences in the society in which you were raised. Finally, you are assigned the task of reflecting briefly on how these traditions have shaped (or ought to shape) your ministry.

Thus, this applied research assignment requires you to engage in sufficient historical research as to be able to describe the relevant historical background of those traditions you are rooted to, and to identify the specific elements of those traditions 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 Francis

Schaeffer; the training, structures, and strategies of Youth For Christ; the intellectual or spiritual aspects of Canadian Theological Seminary). However, it also requires you to be able to connect aspects of your own experience to these specific elements of these traditions that comprise your Christian roots. In other words, you need to try to explain how the egalitarianism of the Anabaptists, or the inclusivity of the Anglicans, or the force of predestinationism has influenced you. The more specifically you can identify your Christian historical roots and their influences on your experience, the better.

Please book a time to see me (or for us to talk on the phone) before the end of January, in order to discuss the roots you would like to investigate. Please produce a detailed outline of your project before the end of February, and meet with me for a second consultation. The final copy (stapled, please, and no binders or DuoTangs) of this assignment is due Monday, 27 March 2005. Late essays will be penalized one letter grade (A to B, B+ to C+, etc.), and no essay will be accepted after the final day of exams at the end of the semester.

Christian Diversity Assignment

Students of church history should be exposed to the amazing diversity of expression in the Christian faith. To that end, *A Global History of Christians* will serve as the backbone to the course, while primary source readings and occasional articles will round out our perspective. Please submit a reading report with details about the amount you have read on or before the last day of class.

To further emphasize the element of Christian diversity, you are required to read three editions of *Christian History* (a topically oriented journal) that are not related to either their biographical review or Christian roots assignment, and write a 300-400 word reflection on *each* one, describing why you chose the edition, what impressed or moved you about the topic, and what relevance you see in knowing about it. Use examples, references, or short quotations to support your answers. Like the reading report, these three reflection papers are due on the final day of class (feel free to staple them all together – no binders or DuoTangs, please). Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade (A to B, B+ to C+, etc.), and no Christian diversity assignments will be accepted after the final day of exams at the end of the semester.

Course Outline

1. Introduction and Context of the Early Church
2. Establishing canon and creed
A Global History 1-2
3. Changing status within and after the Roman Empire
A Global History 3
4. Medieval Christendom
A Global History 4
5. Beyond the Western Church
A Global History 5-6
6. Waning of Western Christendom (or, Decline and Reform)

- A Global History* 7-8
7. The Reformation Spreads (or, The Destruction of Western Christendom)
A Global History 10
 8. The New Order (and its implications for Christianity)
A Global History 10
 9. Christianity sails to America (and beyond)
A Global History 9, 11
 10. Revolutionary modern ideologies challenge the Faith (and the faithful)
A Global History 13-14
 11. Evangelicalism and power in Britain and North America
A Global History 12, 15, 16
 12. Holiness and Pentecostal Movements
 13. The Church at the Millennium
A Global History 17

Important Notes

- Last day to enter a course without permission, and to withdraw receiving tuition refund: January 20, 2006.
- Last day to voluntarily withdraw from course or change to audit without academic penalty: March 10, 2006.
- It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to CTS Academic Policies, such as the policies on Plagiarism, Cheating, and Penalties and Procedures for Academic Dishonesty, which are stated in the current academic calendar. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and is defined as the “presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own.” This includes unattributed copying from the Internet, purchasing essays, and close paraphrasing--changing a few words from the sources. All quotations and paraphrases from published material must be annotated by means of footnotes or endnotes (Turabian please). All sources used in written assignments must be listed in a bibliography. Plagiarism or cheating leads to disciplinary action such as failure in the course and/or dismissal from the Seminary.
- The grading system used for this course is outlined in the Academic Policies section of the CTS academic calendar. A student's final grade in a course is recorded as a letter grade on the student's permanent record of marks. Each letter grade has a corresponding grade point value which is used to determine the number of quality points (4 point scale) earned by the student for a given course. Quality points are used to compute the student's grade point average.
- The Instructor reserves the right to change elements of this syllabus if external circumstances necessitate alterations or if the interests of the students are better served by altering course components.