HRS 142: “INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY”
GE CATEGORY C2
DR. NYSTROM
MENDOCINO 4004
W 5:30-8:20
SPRING 2015

CONTACT INFORMATION:

2011 Mendocino
Office Hours: MW 3-4, 8:20-8:50, and by appointment
Email: nystromb@csus.edu (please do not use the SacCT email system)
Phone: 278-5334

COURSE TITLE: “Introduction to Christianity”


LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Students who successfully complete this course will be able to identify the major events and themes in the history of Christianity; describe essential Christian beliefs, practices, and institutions; explain the contributions of women and the peoples of Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas to the Christian tradition; and explain how Christianity has both influenced and been influenced by the various civilizations within which it has developed.

OUR APPROACH: This course will take an objective approach to describing, analyzing, and understanding Christianity as a form of cultural expression. We will not endorse, defend, or criticize Christianity, and we will refrain from making judgments about matters that lie beyond the scope of academic investigation (e.g., the existence of God, the validity of Christian beliefs). Students should be willing to consider Christianity from a variety of perspectives and to express themselves thoughtfully and respectfully in class discussions and on papers.

TEXTS:

Alister McGrath, Christianity: An Introduction (Blackwell)
Anthony Wilhelm, Christ Among Us (HarperCollins)
Timothy (Kallistos) Ware, The Orthodox Church (Penguin)
Supplementary Readings posted on SacCT

Alister McGrath is professor of historical theology at Oxford, where his scholarship focuses on the history of Christian thought and the dialogue of Christianity and culture. His Christianity: An Introduction is intended for readers new to the study of Christianity. While it seeks to give a balanced treatment, the book is sometimes apologetic. Also, it tends to emphasize Catholicism and Anglicanism (McGrath is a member of the Church of England) at the expense of Orthodoxy and Protestantism.
Anthony Wilhelm is a Roman Catholic religious educator whose *Christ Among Us* is a popular adult catechism (a book designed to introduce converts to Roman Catholicism). Since *Christ Among Us* is confessional rather than academic in its approach (that is, its purpose is to explain Christianity from a Roman Catholic point-of-view), reading assignments from this book are made only in the second half of the course, when we will be interested in the particular points-of-view of various groups.

Timothy (Kallistos) Ware is emeritus professor of Eastern Orthodox Studies at Oxford. A British convert to Orthodoxy, he became an Orthodox bishop (titular metropolitan of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Great Britain) in 1982. Ware is the most famous spokesperson for Orthodoxy in the world today and his *The Orthodox Church* is widely regarded as a classic. While it is generally academic in its approach, there are some passages in which Ware’s personal commitment to Orthodoxy is very clear.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES:**

Your course grade will be based on your performance on four multiple-choice quizzes (50 points each, and each consisting of 25 two-point questions) and the midterm and final exams (100 points each). Only your three highest quiz scores will count toward your course grade. Thus, there is a total of 350 points possible in the course.

The material for which you will be responsible on quizzes and exams is described in the “Schedule of Quizzes and Exams” below.

The midterm and final examinations will consist of two parts. In the first part (50 points), you will be asked to identify and comment on the significance of five terms taken from the list found under “ID Terms” below. A single score will be assigned for the ID section of the exam. In the second part of the midterm and final exams you will be asked to write an essay based on one of the topics described in the list of “Big Issues” below.

Course grades will be based on the percentage you earn of the 350 points possible in the course:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%%</td>
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Please do not tell me at any point during the semester that you need a particular grade.

**MAKE-UP POLICY:**

There are no make-up quizzes. However, you may miss one quiz without penalty since only your three highest quiz scores will count toward your course grade. If the instructor thinks a make-up midterm is appropriate a penalty will be imposed.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS:

Week 1: Introduction; Jesus; Old Testament
Week 2: Old Testament; New Testament; History of Christianity
Week 3: History of Christianity
Week 4: Quiz; History of Christianity
Week 5: History of Christianity
Week 6: History of Orthodoxy
Week 7: The American Experience; New American Churches
Week 8: Quiz; Midterm
Spring Break
Week 9: Beliefs
Week 10: Beliefs
Week 11: Worship
Week 12: Quiz; Monasticism; Mysticism
Week 13: Mysticism; Devotional Practices
Week 14: Music; Art; Architecture
Week 15: Wrap-Up; Review
Finals Week: Quiz; Final

SAC-CT:

Every student should be prepared to use SacCT, the CSUS online course management system. On SacCT you will find your grades, the course syllabus, and Supplementary Readings.” To log into SacCT, go to the CSUS website and take the WebCT/SacCT link to the login page.

SCHEDULE OF QUIZZES AND EXAMS:

February 17: **QUIZ #1** (50 points) on all lectures; McGrath, chapters 1-4 and chapter 7 pp. 171-199; Ware, chapters 1-2; and the following Supplementary Readings on SacCT:

- Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5-7)
- The Incarnation of the “Word” (John 1:1-18)
- Jesus’ “Parable of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10)
- The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2)

March 18: **QUIZ #2** (50 points) on all lectures since the last quiz; McGrath, chapter 7 (pp. 199-250); Ware, chapters 3 (pp. 43-61), 4 and 5; and the following Supplementary Reading on SacCT:

- St. Francis of Assisi, “Canticle of the Sun”

**MIDTERM** (100 points) on all lectures since the beginning of the course as well as all assigned readings and viewings.
April 22: **QUIZ #3** (50 points) on all lectures since the midterm; McGrath, chapters 5, 6, and 9 (pp. 289-313); Ware, chapters 10-14; Wilhelm, chapters 3, 6-15, 18-19, and the following Supplementary Readings on SacCT:

The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom  
Text of Roman Catholic Mass  
Order of Worship for Edenton Street United Methodist Church  
The Nicene Creed

May 20: **QUIZ #4** (50 points) on all lectures since the last quiz; McGrath, chapters 8 and 9 (pp. 314-345) and the following Supplementary Readings on SacCT:

Hesychasm and the Divine Light  
House of God  
Orthodox Art and Architecture  
The Benedictine Rule

**FINAL EXAM** (100 points) on all lectures and assigned readings for the course. Some terms on the ID section of the exam will be discussed both before and after the midterm, others only after the midterm.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. See the campus policy on academic dishonesty at [http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm](http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm).

Students who leave the classroom during exams will not be allowed to return. If this policy represents a hardship for you, you may make appropriate arrangements with the Testing Center.

**THE BIG ISSUES:**

You will be prepared for the midterm and final exams if you are able to demonstrate familiarity with the material presented in lectures, readings, and videos on the following topics, on which the midterm and final exam questions will be based.

**Midterm**

The life and teachings of Jesus.

The Old and New Testaments. What kinds of texts are included in the Old Testament? What topics do they cover and what story do they tell (as a whole)? The four genres of New Testament literature: gospel, acts, epistle, and apocalypse. What are the main characteristics of each of these genres (types) of literature? For what purpose(s) was each employed by the writers of the New Testament?
Describe the Church as it existed by the end of antiquity (that is, about 500). Where could it be found? How was it organized? What kinds of offices were included in the “clergy” and what were the roles of each? Why was the doctrine of Apostolic Succession important? What were the major theological issues in antiquity and how were they addressed by ecumenical councils?

The Reformation. Factors that contributed to the Protestant Reformation. The essential teachings and significance of Martin Luther and John Calvin. "The leading features of Protestantism," as described my McGrath. The Roman Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation. The Orthodox response?

Final

Christian teachings about God, Creation (the world), humanity, Jesus, sin, and salvation.

Patterns of Christian worship: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. Major features of each pattern.

The sacraments. What are they? What are their functions and how are they thought to operate? How do the different Christian traditions understand the sacraments?

The Liturgical Year. Its seasons and major holidays. How do these evince basic Christian teachings?

Christian mysticism. What is it? What forms has it taken? Who are some of the most important Christian mystics and why are they important?

Be able to compare the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant traditions, noting the essential features of each and the more important ways in which they are similar and different. Be able to compare these three traditions with respect to ecclesiastical government, theology, worship, and devotional practices.

**ID TERMS:**

Midterm

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Testament</th>
<th>Persecution</th>
<th>Great Schism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covenant</td>
<td>Constantine</td>
<td>Martin Luther</td>
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<td>Moses</td>
<td>Apologists</td>
<td>Radical Reformation</td>
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<td>Yahweh</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Council of Trent</td>
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<td>David</td>
<td>Ecumenical Councils</td>
<td>Syllabus of Errors</td>
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<td>Gospels</td>
<td>Bishops</td>
<td>Fundamentalism</td>
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<td>Paul</td>
<td>Apostle Succession</td>
<td>Evangelicalism</td>
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<td>Logos</td>
<td>Byzantine Empire</td>
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<td>Kingdom of God</td>
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<td>Messiah</td>
<td>Crusades</td>
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<td>Christ</td>
<td>Scholasticism</td>
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Final

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<tr>
<th>Trinity</th>
<th>Heaven and Hell</th>
<th>Gothic Architecture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>Monasticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Original Sin</td>
<td>Liturgical Year</td>
<td>Benedictine Rule</td>
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<td>Incarnation</td>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>Mysticism</td>
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<td>Salvation</td>
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<td>Theories of Atonement</td>
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<td>Church</td>
<td>Veneration of Saints</td>
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<td>Sacraments</td>
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<td>Eucharist</td>
<td>Holy Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Romanesque Architecture</td>
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