

History/HRS 127: The History of Christianity since the Protestant Reformation

**Spring 2014
TR 12:00-1:15; ARC 1008**

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

HIST/HRS 127. European Christianity from the Reformation to the present. Emphasis on the evolution of Christian thought, the coexistence of the Catholic and Protestant traditions, and the relationship of religious and secular values in European society. 3 Units.

GE: The course fulfills GE Category C4.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, which is a continuation of the History/HRS 126, will survey the main trends in European Christianity from the Protestant Reformation to the present. We will consider both the Catholic and Protestant traditions. In the latter our emphasis will be on the principal Protestant traditions (Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist) and Anglican) in Europe with little weight on American and evangelical trends. The course will focus primarily on religious ideas (justification by faith, religious enthusiasm, the humanity of Jesus, religion and secular reform, etc.), but we will also look at biography (the lives of leaders such as Martin Luther, John Wesley, and Pope Pius XII), institutional history (church-state relations, the clergy of the 18th century Church of England, post-Vatican II developments in the Catholic Church) and religious sociology (deism and society in the 18th century, dechristianization in modern Europe, etc.).

This is not a theology course. We will talk often about religious ideas, but in simplified form and as an aware educated person might perceive them.

Perhaps the main theme of the course is the churches' reactions to the secularization of western culture in the modern world: against the background of dechristianization, the Protestant response has been generally to accommodate modern culture, while the Catholic Church, despite some internal diversity, adopted a "fortress" and "triumphalist" mentality of authoritarian rejection of modern culture.

This course is meant for both believers and non-believers. On the one hand, the history of Christianity is very important for an understanding of western culture, and indeed, of the history of the human community. On the other hand, believers may come to a deeper understanding of their faith by knowing its roots. The course does not favor any trend of Christianity at the expense of any other. The outcome of the course should be a renewed appreciation of the fundamental unity of all Christian peoples.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Gain a chronological overview of the development of Christian ideas and institutions (mainly in Europe) from the Reformation to the present.
- Further your understanding of how Christian writers and leaders have interpreted human experience and human destiny.
- Develop an understanding of the differences and similarities in the different branches/churches of the Christian tradition.
- Improve your critical and writing skills by discussion of topics in class and by writing critical thought papers.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following assigned books are available in the Hornet Bookstore. You are free of course to purchase them on line or in some other bookstore.

Thomas Bokenkotter, **A Concise History of the Catholic Church**. A sensible, readable survey of Catholic history through the 1980's. The author, A Catholic priest, has no trouble being critical when he feels the need. We will use the second half of the book.

Martin Marty, **Martin Luther**. A recent short biography of the originator of the Protestant Reformation by a famous American scholar. Succinct and reasonably clear.

Stephen Tomkins, **John Wesley: a Biography**. A good short biography of the founder of the Methodist Church. A solid, readable and sometimes critical account of the life, work, and legacy of the great evangelical reformer.

Michael Phayer, **The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965**. One of the most intelligent and balanced of the books written about the attitudes and actions of the Catholic Church and Pope Pius XII when faced with the Jewish Holocaust.

Students should also have access to a good translation of the **Bible** especially in the beginning of the semester.

You will also receive short excerpts taken from writings by religious leaders. Most of the excerpts will be available on the course website (see below). Keep a **loose-leaf binder** for the numerous materials you will be downloading from the course website.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

Most of class time will be devoted to lectures and a structured discussion of the texts. I will give you precise reading assignments accompanied by study lists when possible. I expect you to have the reading done by the day of the assignment.

Participation in class discussions is important. To encourage your participation, I may assign discussion "**specialists**" for the reading assignments. Specialists would be expected to have read the assigned material carefully and to help lead the discussion with questions and informed comments.

As a great deal of the learning in this course occurs in class, I expect all of you to attend class regularly (at least 85% of the time). A portion of your grade for the course will be determined by your class attendance.

Course materials for this course are on the **course website** under HIST/HRS 127 (<http://www.csus.edu/indiv/c/craftg/Hist127/overview.htm>). In this course you must have access to the Internet through your own computer or through one in a university computer lab. The webpage will include a summary of the lectures and discussions, additional reading texts, study materials, and testing materials. You are also encouraged to email me or any of your classmates for questions or discussion of class materials. I will communicate with you at various times via the email function in 'My Sac State'.

The focus of learning activity in this course is primarily in **the classroom**. The presence of course materials on the web does not excuse you from complying with the participation and attendance requirements detailed above. Students with poor attendance will find their grades significantly penalized.

TESTING AND WRITING

a) You will have three tests using short essays (and perhaps identifications) spaced at roughly equal intervals throughout the course. The exam questions will be drawn from lists of study questions that I will post on the website as that part of the course progresses. You will have a choice of questions to write on. The third test will not be cumulative, but will be based only on the course material covered since the second test. You will receive plenty of additional information on the tests as the semester progresses.

b) You will have a short, 3-page essay on each of the assigned monographs (Luther, Wesley, and Pius XII and the Holocaust) due on dates outside of the exams. You will have a choice of essay questions.

Writing is important in this course. The grade I assign your paper will be affected by both content (depth, inventiveness, cohesion of your ideas) and writing style (correctness, clarity and elegance). Your take-home essays should demonstrate to the instructor that you have read the book and mulled over it.

You will receive additional instructions regarding the paper.

YOUR GRADE

I will calculate your grade according to the following:

- 1) Each exam will be worth 60 points, 20 for each of three short essays.
- 2) Each paper will be worth 40 points.
- 3) Class attendance will be worth 40 points, according to the following scale:

Miss	0-1 class	40 points
	2 classes	39
	3	36
	4	33
	5	31
	6	20
	7	27
	8	20
	9	16
	10-11	12

12-13	8
14-18	4
>18	0

3) Extra credit assignments to be determined.

The final grade is calculated according to standard percentages, e.g., .9 x Total Point for an A-, .8 x Total Points for a B-, etc. I reserve the right to adjust borderline grades either up or down in the interest of justice, particularly for students who have participated actively in class discussions (up) or for students who do unusually poorly on the exams (down).

TENTATIVE AND APPROXIMATE COURSE OUTLINE

Week

Jan 28, 30	Jesus and the Christian tradition before the Reformation; the Latin (Catholic) Church and “mechanical Christianity” in the Late Middle Ages (the 15 th century). Background to the Reformation. What is Protestantism?
Feb 4, 6	The scriptural basis of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation – Catholic and Protestant texts. Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Luther’s psychology, his reaction to Rome, and the path to protest. His theology. His later years. His influence.
Feb 11, 13	Luther, continued. The Reformed Tradition: John Calvin – similarities with Luther, but also differences on key points – predestination. Protestant Radicalism: Anabaptist and Mennonite trends.
Feb 18, 20	*** Luther Essay due approximately February 20 *** Elizabeth I wants religious and political peace: the Church of England’s “Via Media” between Protestantism and Catholicism. Catholic Traditions in the Counter-Reformation (or Catholic Reformation) – authoritarian, dogmatic, sacramental, mystical, apostolic.
Feb 25, 27	The Council of Trent. The Jesuits. Saints and the Jesuit Missions.
Mar 4, 6	*** Exam #1: March 4 *** The 18 th century: the established churches in Old Regime France and Hanoverian England. The 18 th -century Enlightenment – skepticism, natural religion, deism, and hostility to Christianity:
Mar 11, 13	Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson. The sleepy Anglican establishment. The Evangelical Reaction. The Great Awakening and John Wesley – the return of religious enthusiasm in the Church of England. John Wesley’s career and religious ideas – evangelical enthusiasm linked with conservative theology. The founding of Methodism.

Mar 18, 20	<p>The French Revolution transforms Catholicism in France.</p> <p>The 19th century as a secular century: challenges to religious culture in liberalism, separation of church and state, science (evolution), the critical and historical spirit in biblical criticism. The new Catholicism: Ultramontanism and popular Catholicism.</p> <p>*** Wesley Essay due approximately March 20 ***</p> <p>[March 24-30 Spring Recess; no classes held]</p>
Apr 1, 3	<p>The challenge of the Liberal Catholics. But Pio Nono builds his walls and vanquishes the Liberals: the cult of the Virgin, the “Syllabus of Errors,” and the declaration of papal infallibility.</p> <p>The Protestant response in the 19th century – adaptation and accommodation to a secular century. Historical and cultural criticism of the Bible.</p>
Apr 8, 10	<p>The quest for the historical Jesus – Renan and Schweitzer.</p> <p>Adaptation to scientific ideas in Biology, e.g., Darwinian Evolution.</p>
Apr 15, 17	<p>*** Exam #2: April 15 ***</p> <p>The 20th century as a time of crisis – industrialization, the world wars, and economic crisis.</p> <p>Protestant churches react in a “radical” direction: theological radicalism as seen in the ideas of Bultmann, Paul Tillich, etc. Must 20th century Christians abandon traditional categories of Christian thought?</p>
Apr 22, 24	<p>The Vatican and Nazism/the Holocaust during World War II. What did Pius XII do? Did he do enough? Did he ignore Nazi war crimes in order to protect the interests of the Vatican? Examine his background and his motives.</p>
Apr 29, May 1	<p>The papacy of John XXIII, 1958-63. The Second Vatican Council, 1962-65 – the storms and vicissitudes of renewal. Read some of the key decrees of the Council. Was this a belated victory of the Liberal Catholics?</p>
May 6, 8	<p>*** Pius XII Essay due approximately May 6 ***</p> <p>The Catholic Church since the end of the Council. Needed modernization or is the bark of Peter without a rudder? Internal dissent. What has been the impact of the pontificate of John Paul II, 1979-2005. Has the Church been transformed by the Vatican Council? Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.</p>
May 13, 15	<p>Does the Church have a social mission – Social Christianity and Liberation theology in Latin America. Rerum Novarum. Leonardo Boff.</p>
Tuesday, May 20, 12:45-2:45 PM	<p>Exam #3 (not comprehensive).</p>