

# **HISTORY/HRS 127**

## **HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY SINCE THE REFORMATION**

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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 taught by Professor Nystrom in Fall 2006, 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 the great leaders such as Martin Luther, Blaise Pascal, John Wesley and Pope Pius XII), institutional history (church-state relations, the clergy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Church of England, post-Vatican II developments in the Catholic Church) and religious sociology (deism and society in the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 religion is very important for an understanding of western culture, and indeed, of the culture of the human community. On the other hand, believers may come to a deeper understanding of their faith by knowing its roots. 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.
- Gain an appreciation of the importance of religious ideas and experiences for an understanding of the modern age.
- 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:

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 focus on the second half of the book.

Roland Bainton, **Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther**. A classic interpretation of the life, ideas and influence of the great reformer. Well written and entertaining. Treats its subject sympathetically. You should begin immediately reading this work.

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. An alternative biography is V.H.H. Green, **John Wesley**, which however is out of print.

José Sanchez, **Pius XII and the Holocaust: Understanding the Controversy**. A reasonable and balanced analysis of the controversy surrounding Pius XII's attitudes and actions on the Holocaust issue in World War II.

A source on the life of John Paul II: perhaps the DVD "Witness to Hope: the Life of John Paul II." based on the book by George Weigel, or another source to be determined early in the semester.

Students should also have access to a good translation of the **Bible** on several occasions.

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). You may lose up to one full grade point by poor attendance.

Course materials for this course are on the **course website** under HIST/HRS 127. In this course you will obviously have to have access to the Internet, either through your own computer or through one in a university computer lab. The easiest way to access the site is through the Search function on the CSUS homepage, where you may type in ‘George S. Craft.’ The webpage will include a summary of the lectures and discussions, additional reading texts, study materials, and testing materials; some of the materials posted on the website will be ‘mandatory’ and others ‘optional’. You are also encouraged to email me or any of your classmates for questions or discussion of class materials. I will compile and distribute a list of email addresses of students enrolled in this course.

This class does not stress the use of audio-visual information (PowerPoint, DVDs, etc.) in the classroom.

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) Writing is important in this course. You will be assigned **one paper** on Pope Pius XII’s reaction to the Holocaust in World War II. This paper, which should be 5-6 pages long, will be **due May 8**.

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).

The essay should be clearly and correctly written. **Grammar and clear expression** will count! You should focus on answering the question and not narrating or summarizing your sources. The first paragraph should define the issue and suggest your interpretation. Several paragraphs making up the body of the essay should develop your ideas and cite characters, events and ideas from the text to back up your interpretation. You must include several

quotations from your sources. You should end up with a short concluding paragraph summarizing your argument or bringing in an interesting new perspective.

Focus on developing your ideas and using the text of your sources to back up and illustrate your argument. **Do not plagiarize** material! When you copy words from a source, you must put them in quotation marks and give a reference (a footnote or endnote). When you paraphrase, there is no need to put your words in quotation marks, but you must give a **reference**. For reference form, you may use any reasonable system; but I suggest you use a simplified version of MLA form, which will be explained briefly in class. History majors should use the Chicago style, if possible. Every paper must have a **Bibliography** or **Works Cited** page (even if it contains only a single book) and adequate references. These instructions are explained in more detail in the ‘**Guidelines for Writing Thought Papers**’ posted on the website.

Your paper must include at least eight (8) references (endnotes, footnotes, etc.).

You may of course use internet materials, but I assume that your main source is the assigned Sanchez book.

**A particular warning about use of internet materials and plagiarism.** Do not rely exclusively on internet materials. If you use websites, be sure to cite them with the following: name of website; the URL (web address); and the date you accessed it. Any student discovered **plagiarizing** significant quantities of web or printed material will receive a low failing grade in that assignment.

b) You will also have **three tests using short essays** spaced at roughly equal intervals throughout the course – the first on approximately **March 6**, the second on **April 17**, and the third on the Final Exam date, **Tuesday, May 22 at 3:00 PM**. The exam questions will be drawn from a list 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.

c) As mentioned before, your grade may be significantly affected by your class participation and especially by your **attendance**. If you miss more than about 15% of the classes (about one in seven), expect your grade to suffer. On the other hand, good class attendance and an attentive and participatory approach in class may push your grade upward.

## **YOUR GRADE**

I will calculate your final grade according to the following:

Three ‘short essay’ exams	70%
Paper on Pius XII	30%

And a consideration of your class participation and especially attendance.

## TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

### Week Beginning (in each week only the Tuesday date is recorded)

- January 30            Jesus and the Christian tradition before the Reformation; the Latin Church and “mechanical Christianity” in the Late Middle Ages (the 15<sup>th</sup> century). Background to the Reformation. What is Protestantism?
- Bokenkotter (‘Bok’), chs. 17, 18.  
Bainton, *Here I Stand*.
- February 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.
- Bok, ch. 19.  
Bainton, *Here I Stand*.
- February 13           Luther, continued.  
The Reformed Tradition: John Calvin – similarities with Luther, but also differences on key points – predestination.  
Protestant Radicalism: Anabaptist and Mennonite trends.
- Bainton, continued.  
Bok, ch. 20; handouts.
- 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. The Council of Trent. The Jesuits. The Saints of the Counter-Reformation. The Jesuit Missions in the Far East.
- Bok, ch. 21; handouts.
- February 27           Counter-Reformation, continued.  
Reason and Revelation in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The ideas of Blaise Pascal – the influence of Calvin in the Catholic Church (Jansenism), the “Wager”, and opposition to the Jesuits. The nature, evolution and impact of Jansenism.
- Bok, chs. 22, 23.  
Handouts on Pascal and Jansenists.
- March 6                **Test #1: March 6.**
- The 18<sup>th</sup> century: the established churches in Old Regime France and

Hanoverian England. The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment – skepticism, natural religion, deism, and hostility to Christianity: Voltaire, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson.. The sleepy Anglican establishment.

Begin reading Tomkins, *John Wesley*.

March 13 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. Its influence in England.

Finish reading Tomkins.

March 20 Prelude to a century of change – the decomposition of the Old Regime’s Catholic Church; the French Revolution transforms Catholicism in France. The 19<sup>th</sup> 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. A time of dechristianization where large proportions of the European population abandon religious practice.

Bok, ch. 24.

[March 27 Spring (Easter) Break]

April 3 The Catholic response to secular culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the triumph of Ultramontaniam. The challenge of the Liberal Catholics. The Oxford movement – John Henry Newman. But Pius Nono builds his walls and vanquishes the Liberals: the cult of the Virgin, the “Syllabus of Errors,” and the declaration of papal infallibility; Pius X’s condemnation of Catholic Modernism (Alfred Loisy).

Bok, chs. 25, 26, 27, 29.

April 10 The Protestant response in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – adaptation and accommodation to a secular century. Schleiermacher’s theology of religious experience; the development of historical criticism of the Bible; adaptation to scientific ideas in Biology, e.g., Darwinian Evolution. The Liberal Protestantism of Adolf Harnack, who appears to abandon the traditional Reformation view of the transcendence of God.

Finish Bokenkotter chapters from previous assignment. Handouts.

April 17 **Test #2: April 17**

The 20<sup>th</sup> century as a time of crisis – industrialization, the world wars, and economic crisis.

The Catholic Church confronted with war, revolution and dictators: passive self-interest or apostolic protest?

Bok, ch. 32; handouts.

Begin reading Sanchez, *Pius XII and the Holocaust*.

April 24

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.

Finish reading Sanchez. Numerous items available on the course website.

May 1

Protestant churches react in a “radical” direction: Social Christianity; theological radicalism as seen in the ideas of Bultmann, Paul Tillich, etc. Must 20<sup>th</sup> century Christians abandon traditional categories of Christian thought?

Bok, ch. 28; handouts from Robinson, *Honest to God*.

May 8

**Paper on Pius XII due: May 8.**

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 the victory of the Liberal Catholics?

Bok, ch. 33; Vatican II handouts.

May 9

The Catholic Church since the end of the Council. Needed modernization or is the bark of Peter without a rudder? Internal dissent on disciplinary and moral issues. Does the Church have a social mission – Liberation theology in Latin America? What has been the impact of the pontificate of John Paul II, 1979-2005. Who is Benedict XVI? Has the Church been transformed by the Vatican Council?

Bok, chs. 33, 34; handouts; John Paul II DVD.

May 18, 10:15 AM **Test #3 (not comprehensive).**