

CHS505: INTRODUCTION TO CHURCH HISTORY

Nazarene Theological Seminary

Semester II, 2009-2010

Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.

3 hours credit

Dr. Harold Raser

Catalog Description

"A survey of the life of the Christian Church from Apostolic times to the present. Attention is given to the influential persons, ideas, movements, and events that have shaped the Christian Church through the centuries" (*NTS Academic Catalog, 2009-2010, p. 70*).

Course Narrative and Rationale

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with basic familiarity with the historical development across the centuries of the central doctrines, practices, and institutions of the Christian Church, as well as the principal leaders involved in that process. It is assumed that students taking this course have little or no previous exposure to the systematic study of the history of Christianity.

This course specifically addresses the goals and objectives of each of the NTS degree programs, which call for students to develop an understanding of the history and heritage of the Christian faith and familiarity with the context in which ministry takes place today.

Course Outcomes

1. Students will gain knowledge of the basic facts necessary for understanding the broad outline of the history of Christianity from New Testament times to the present.
2. Students will develop ability to accurately tell the story of the Church in broad outline, and to identify and describe the significance of major persons, ideas, movements and events in that story.
3. Students will gain insight into the dynamic, ongoing interaction between Church and world, Christianity and culture which characterizes the life of the Church in history.
4. Students will develop understanding of, and ability to describe how the Church has implemented its mission in the world throughout the centuries.
5. Students will acquire a growing ability to use the story of Christianity as a resource for understanding the context of contemporary Christian life and ministry.

6. Students will acquire resources to enter into critical and fruitful conversation with the past in order to appropriate the historical heritage of the church as a resource for responsible and faithful ministry in the present and future.

Required Texts and Course Materials

1. ***INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY***, edited by Tim Dowley (Fortress Press, 2002).
2. ***TURNING POINTS: DECISIVE MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY***, Mark A. Noll (Baker Books, 1997).
3. ***WHY STUDY THE PAST? THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL CHURCH***, Rowan Williams (Eerdmans, 2005).
4. ***HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY*** (provided on MOODLE).

Format and Procedure

Class periods are given to a combination of lectures/presentations by the professor, class discussion, small group work, and other learning activities (including films, videos, etc.). Professor lectures/presentations range widely across the history of Christianity but they do not necessarily follow the outline of the course text (Dowley). They may highlight a particular significant person, idea, movement, event or series of related events, etc. A regular part of classroom activity is discussion of primary source material (which is provided to students on the course site on MOODLE). This material includes excerpts from a variety of original documents and writings from Christian history that give students more *direct* access to the persons, ideas, and events described in the text books.

Course Assignments and Requirements

1. **Class Participation** – consistent attendance and prepared and thoughtful participation in class discussion and small group work.
2. Completion of all **assigned reading**.
3. Reasonable **mastery of assigned materials** – to be evaluated by the professor through data quizzes (see below), reading reviews, contribution to the assigned group project (see below), and the final comprehensive essay exam (see below) as well as regular informed participation in class discussion.
4. A **written reflection essay** on ***WHY STUDY THE PAST? THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL CHURCH*** by Rowan Williams. This should be approximately 750-1,000 words in length and should discuss how the book affected the student's thinking about the study of the history of Christianity. This essay is **due Thursday, February 18**.

5. Satisfactory **completion of 3 Data Quizzes**. These will be made available on MOODLE during: 1) the **week of FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 6**; 2) the **week of MARCH 28-APRIL 3**; and the **week of MAY 2-MAY 8**. The data quizzes will test familiarity with the major persons, ideas, events, and developments highlighted in the assigned sections of the text, ***INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY***.

6. Full **participation in a group research and reporting project**. Each student will join with 2-3 other students to research and make a presentation to the class on a topic of significance in the history of Christianity. These reports will be presented during the weeks after Reading and Research Week.

7. Satisfactory **completion of a comprehensive essay exam**. This exam and detailed instructions for completing it will be made available to students by week 4 of the course. Broadly speaking, this involves researching and responding in writing to a series of questions that address some major developments, issues, problems, or controversies in the history of Christianity. These questions call for research and reflection, for careful critical analysis and “using” and applying the information to which students are introduced by the assigned reading and other learning activities.

Method for Submitting Assignments

For all written assignments there is an “**assignment**” section for the class on **NTS MOODLE**. Instructions for the assignment are available there (as well as in the course syllabus and/or any instructions handed out in class) and completed assignments may be posted there. **All assignments are due no later than 11:59 p.m. (Central Time) of the day they are due**. Late work is reduced ½ letter grade for every three days (or portion thereof) overdue.

Course Evaluation and Grading

1. **Classroom participation** throughout the semester **counts 15%** of the final grade. Students are evaluated on the consistency of their attendance and the consistency and quality of their preparation for and participation in class activities.
2. The reflection essay on ***WHY STUDY THE PAST?*** counts **15%** of the final grade.
3. The 3 **Data Quizzes combined** count **25%** of the final grade.
4. Contribution to the **group research and reporting project** counts **20%** of the final grade.
5. The **comprehensive essay exam** counts **25%** of the final grade.

For all written work, the following criteria are employed in evaluation and grading: 1) **"A" quality work** – is superior in every way – writing is clear, essentially without errors in syntax, spelling, word usage, etc. – content evidences a high level of reflection, insight, and originality; 2) **"B" quality work** -- is above average – writing is generally clear, with few errors in syntax, spelling, word usage, etc. – content evidences careful preparation and meets the expectations of the assignment; 3) **"C" quality work** – average – writing is adequate, but may have significant errors – content is adequate – meets the minimum expectations of the assignment, but lacks insight and originality; 4) **"D" quality work** – below average – writing is poor, marred with excessive errors – content evidences lack of insight or lack of understanding of the assigned material; 5) **"F" quality work** – failure to do satisfactory work – work evidences haste, lack of careful preparation, lack of basic understanding of the assigned material.

All students are expected to be familiar with the *NTS HANDBOOK FOR INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE* (available from the Dean's Office) and to follow its guidelines in the preparation of written work.

NOTE: NTS is committed to make every reasonable effort to facilitate the learning of students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student that has a condition that may hinder full demonstration of his or her learning abilities (e.g., difficulty hearing or seeing, dyslexia or other learning challenges) should contact the instructor as soon as possible, to discuss learning needs and mutually acceptable learning and teaching strategies to ensure the student's full participation and appropriate evaluation in the course.

Consulting with the Instructor

My office is Room 352 (through the door behind the organ in the chapel, to the top of the stairs, and down the hall). I aim to be available to students outside of class as much as I possibly can. Please do not hesitate to see me for an appointment if you wish to discuss course matters, or any other matter in which I might be of help to you. Also, you may contact me by e-mail if you wish or by phone. My e-mail address is: school – heraser@nts.edu ; home – hjderaser@aol.com My phone number at school is 816-268-5489.

TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

Date	Topic
Feb. 4	I. The historical study of Christianity – why we do it, how we do it, how it fits into the larger endeavor of theological reflection
Feb. 11	II. The transition of the Church from Apostolic to Post-Apostolic times – the context, challenges, and leaders of this era.
Feb. 18	III. The Church expands into new regions and cultures – the challenges to carefully define its faith and practices.
Feb. 25	IV. The “outlaw” cult becomes the “establishment” Church – the opportunities and pitfalls of “success”
Mar. 4	V. The Church in the “Middle Ages” (I) – the growing importance of monasticism; the deepening division between “Eastern” and “Western” Christianity; the importance of ongoing doctrinal debate and the development of new forms of Christian scholarship
Mar. 11	VI. The Church in the “Middle Ages” (II) – the institutional “hardening” of the Church; the rise of “Scholasticism;” popular piety; early impulses toward “reform” of the Church
Mar. 18	VII. The Reform of the Church – Renewal and Division – the development of Reform movements in various parts of the European Church, the persons and issues involved and the major results.
MARCH 22-26	READING AND RESEARCH WEEK (NO CLASSES)

- Apr. 1 **"CHURCH HISTORY MOVIE MORNING" –
"Luther"**
- VIII. European Christianity in the Post-Reformation Era: Conflict, Expansion, Adaptation – religious warfare; the role of Christianity in the exploration and settlement of "New Worlds;" new forms of Christian life and practice.
- Apr. 8 IX. The Age of Reason and Revival – the development of the Enlightenment and Pietism.
- Apr. 15 X. Christianity in a "Revolutionary" and "Modern" World – the spirit of revolution in Europe and North America; Christianity in North America; the rise of "secularism" and its consequences for Christianity.
- Apr. 22 XI. Christianity in a "Modern" and "Post-Modern" World (I) – the "modern missionary movement;" modern "protest" and reform movements within Christianity (e.g. Pentecostal and Charismatic forms).
- Apr. 30 XII. Christianity in a "Modern" and "Post-Modern" World (II) – intellectual and ideological challenges to Christianity; the impinging "faith worlds" of today; the "shifting" geographical and cultural world of Christianity.
- May 6 **"CHURCH HISTORY MOVIE MORNING" –
"The Mission" -- and Final Course Wrap-up Session**

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