

History 4285-02W

Global History of Christianity

Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Dan Williams

Office Hours: TLC 3207

TTh, 10-10:45am

Wed., 10am-5pm

(Additional office hours available by appointment)

Email: dkw@westga.edu

Phone: 678-839-6034

Class Location:

Pafford 208

TTh, 2:00-3:20pm

Description:

This is a course about the development of Christianity over the past 2,000 years and the way in which it has shaped world history. This course will explore the development of Christianity as a global religion, and will examine its diverse manifestations on multiple continents. The course will look at theological and organizational developments in Christianity's 2,000-year history, and explore the religious practices of Christians from a wide range of cultures across the globe. The course will examine the impact that Christianity has had on political, intellectual, cultural, and social movements around the world.

This is a Discipline Specific Writing (DSW) course, so writing assignments will be a central component of this class. Writing assignments in this course include a research paper, an in-class essay exam, a take-home final exam, and CourseDen posts analyzing some of the assigned readings.

Learning Outcomes:

This course has the following learning outcomes, which will be assessed through the various assignments in this course:

- To demonstrate general knowledge of the global history of Christianity from the first century of the common era to the present (assessed through exams)
- To find useful primary and secondary sources (assessed through research paper bibliography)
- To analyze sources critically (assessed through primary source presentation, research paper, and CourseDen posts)
- To write in standard English (assessed through writing assignments)
- To construct a persuasive historical argument based on evidence (assessed through research paper)
- To present the results of historical research through the form of a research paper (assessed through research paper)
- To think historically (assessed through research paper and short essay assignment)

Assessment:

Students' final grades will be determined as follows:

Midterm exam	15%
Field research essay	15%
Research paper	25%
Primary source presentation	5%
CourseDen posts	20%
Final exam	20%

There will be no opportunity for extra-credit assignments in this course.

Grading Methodology: This university does not use a plus / minus grading system, but during the course of the semester, I will use plus / minus grades, as well as split-letter grades (e.g., an A- / B+), in order to evaluate students' written work with precision. In computing final course grades, I convert all grades into numeric scores according to the following system:

A = 95

A/A- = 94

A- = 92

A-/B+ = 90

B+ = 88

B+/B = 87

B = 85

B/B- = 84

B- = 82

B-/C+ = 80

(A similar pattern is used for grades in the C-range and D-range).

In computing final course grades, a grade average of 89.5 or higher converts to a course grade of A, a grade average between 79.5 and 89.49 converts to a course grade of B, and a grade average between 69.5 and 79.49 converts to a course grade of C. A grade average of 59.5, which converts to a D, is the lowest possible passing grade in the course.

A-range grades, including the grade of A-/B+, are reserved for work that is of exceptional quality. In order to receive an A-range grade on an essay assignment, a student's essay must show evidence of original thinking and the ability to synthesize information from a wide variety of sources, as well as an accurate understanding of the material and good writing technique. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or above must be cogent and persuasive in their argumentation, and they must be well written, well researched, historically accurate, and tightly organized around a strong thesis. In short, a paper that receives an A-range grade not only meets the basic requirements for the assignment, but also demonstrates that a student has mastered the interpretative, analytical, and writing skills expected for a course at this level.

B-range grades are given to essays that demonstrate a student's accurate understanding of the material, adequate use of the relevant documents, and competence in writing. They rarely contain the sophisticated analysis required for an A-range essay, but they meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

C-range grades are given to essays that contain factual inaccuracies, errors in interpretation, inadequate use of relevant sources, or poor writing technique, even though they usually meet most of the basic requirements for the assignment.

D-range and failing grades are assigned to work that fails to meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

Exams: There will be one in-class midterm exam and a take-home final exam. The midterm exam will consist of essay questions and I.D. terms, and will emphasize broad themes presented in the lectures, discussions, and readings. One week before the exam, you will receive a study guide that will give you more information about the material covered on the test. I will give a make-up exam only in cases of a pre-arranged, excused absence for which documentation must be provided, or in cases of a legitimate health or family emergency that must be documented with a doctor's note, dean's note, or similar measure of proof. In all other cases, a make-up exam will not be an option.

The take-home final exam will consist of essay questions. I will give you the exam questions on Tuesday, April 19, and you will have until 11:59pm on Tuesday, April 26 to write 8-10 pages in response to those essay questions.

Essay assignments: There are two major writing assignments in this course: a 5-8 page essay that will give you the opportunity to compare three different Christian traditions by writing an analysis based on your own field research (that is, your visits to the religious services of three different types of churches of your choice), and an 8-12 page research paper that may focus on any aspect of the history of Christianity from antiquity to the present. Guidelines for both of those assignments are posted on CourseDen.

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are overdue.

For all writing assignments, please consult the writing guidelines that the history department has posted on the College of Arts & Humanities' website for DSW courses (http://www.westga.edu/dsw/index_10083.php), as these guidelines will be used as a standard to evaluate work produced in this course.

Plagiarism policy: Plagiarism, which is the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own, is a serious offense that will not be tolerated. It should go without saying that all papers that you write in this course must be your own work. Any students who are caught copying words or ideas from another student's work, a website, a textbook, or any other source, and presenting these words or ideas as their own work without proper attribution, will be charged with plagiarism. Students who have engaged in academic dishonesty will automatically fail this

course and will be reported to the university administration for possible further disciplinary action. Please look at the course website to find guidelines on proper footnoting procedures, tips for avoiding inadvertent plagiarism, and a detailed explanation of what constitutes plagiarism. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to properly cite sources, please ask, because I will be happy to provide explanations. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarism; it is your responsibility to read the materials on plagiarism that are posted on the course website and to take all necessary steps to avoid plagiarizing someone else's work.

The UWG history department's policy on plagiarism can be found here: http://www.westga.edu/~histgrad/academic_honesty.html. As this document states, "Any use of the ideas, information, or words of anyone else, including paraphrasing of the words and ideas, without crediting them is plagiarism and is a crime. A direct quote of the words (even only a few words) of someone else must be in quotation marks as well as have a note indicating its source."

More information about the university's honor code and the consequences for violating it can be found here:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester.

CourseDen posts: Your CourseDen post grade will be based on your CourseDen summaries of two types of sources: 1) the five assigned books; and 2) ten of the assigned online primary source documents. Short, two-paragraph summaries of each of the five assigned books are due on the CourseDen discussion board on the night before each scheduled book discussion. (Because we will discuss the first two of these books on the same class date, you can post a single summary for both of these books, which means that you will need to submit only four CourseDen book summary discussion posts). Each book summary should consist of at least two paragraphs that briefly summarize the book, highlight an idea that you found particularly interesting or provocative, present an observation that will lead to further discussion, and suggest at least one intriguing question for the class to discuss. I will not assign these CourseDen posts a letter grade, nor will I evaluate them on the basis of grammar or structure, but I will instead treat them as I would comments that you make in class, and I will consider their content when I formulate class participation grades at the end of the semester.

After posting your summaries of the book, you should comment on the ideas presented in at least two other student posts. You should post your comments sometime before the class meeting in which we discuss the assigned book. Thus, for example, you should post your summary of *The Life of St. Macrina* and *The Life of Antony* (which we will discuss in class on January 28) no later than 11:59pm on January 27, and your responses to at least two other students' summaries of these two books no later than 2pm on January 28. For more information on this assignment, please consult the guidelines for the book summaries that are posted on the course website.

You are also required to submit ten short CourseDen posts (each of which should be approximately one or two paragraphs long) commenting on the assigned online primary source

readings. Each CourseDen post should analyze one or more of the assigned primary source readings for a particular class day and should be submitted prior to that day's class meeting. For example, at any point before 2pm on January 19 you could submit a CourseDen post analyzing one of the assigned readings for that class day (e.g., The Martyrdom of Polycarp) or comparing two or more of the assigned readings (e.g., a comparison between Polycarp's martyrdom and the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity). Your CourseDen posts may summarize the reading or comment on a particular issue raised by the reading. I would especially encourage you to use material from class lectures and other assigned readings to analyze the historical context of the primary source documents that your CourseDen post discusses.

Primary source presentation: Each student will be required to give one 5-minute class presentation on one of the class's assigned primary source texts. The first three presentations will be scheduled for January 19, and will focus on assigned primary source documents listed on the syllabus for that day. During the first week of class, I will post an online signup sheet so that you can select the date for your class presentation.

Each presentation should answer the following questions about the assigned primary source document: 1) What was the historical context in which this document originated? Who was its author and its intended context? When was the text written? 2) What does this text tell us about the history of Christianity? In what way can we use this document as historians? 3) What is the message of this document? 4) What questions do you have about this text? Is there anything in particular that you think we should discuss as a class as we examine this document? For the first six presentations, I have also suggested questions that you can consider for your presentation. I have not suggested questions for the remaining nineteen presentations, but I would be happy to discuss possible questions with you if you would like some suggestions for preparing an effective presentation.

Your grade for the primary source presentation will be based on my assessment of your level of understanding of the selected primary source and its historical context, as well as the quality of your presentation. You are welcome to use PowerPoint for your presentation, although this is not required.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly.

To protect students' privacy rights, I will not return graded papers or exams to any third party (e.g., a student's friend or relative who asks to pick up a student's work on that person's behalf) unless a student gives me permission in writing (e.g., an email) to do so. There are occasions when I must disclose a student's grade to university administrators, other history department faculty (e.g., the department chair), or athletic coaches who need to know the academic status of students on their team, but in all other cases, I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades.

I would like to do whatever I can to help you succeed in this course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about any subject pertaining to this class. I make it a priority to respond promptly to emails from students, and I am happy to talk with students during my

office hours, so please feel free to stop by my office to introduce yourself and discuss any concerns that you may have about this course. I believe that this will be an excellent semester, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this class.

Required readings:

Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of St. Macrina*, translated by Kevin Corrigan (Wipf and Stock, 2005)
(An older translation is available for free online:
http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/gregory_macrina_1_life.htm)

Athanasius, *The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, translated by Robert C. Gregg
(Paulist Press, 1979)
(An older translation is available for free online: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2811.htm>)

Richard Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent: The Dramatic Story of the Earliest Encounters between Christians and Muslims* (Penguin Books, 2003)

Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Harvard University Press, 2005)

Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Class Schedule:

- 1/12 Introduction: The Greco-Roman Religious Context
- 1/14 Jesus and the Jewish Origins of Christianity
 Reading assignment and class discussion: Isaiah 9:1-7; Isaiah 53:1-17; Mark 14:12-16:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Philippians 2:5-11 (available online at biblegateway.com; recommended translations include the New Revised Standard Version, New International Version, and the English Standard Version, although any translation is acceptable)
 1 Enoch 46:1-48:11 (http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/enoch.html#Enoch_46)
- 1/19 From Paul to Perpetua: Christianity's First Two Centuries
 First presentation and reading assignment: 1 Peter 1:1-12, 2:11-25, 4:12-19 (available online at biblegateway.com); and Pliny's correspondence with the emperor Trajan (<http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/texts/pliny.html>)
 Questions for presentation: Using 1 Peter as your source, how would you describe early Christians' view of the Roman imperial government? Using Pliny's correspondence with Trajan as a source, how would you describe the Roman imperial administration's view of the Christians in the early second century?
 Second presentation and reading assignment: The Martyrdom of Polycarp (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/martyrdompolycarp-lake.html>)
 Questions for presentation: What does this text suggest about the way that Roman officials approached the task of punishing Christians in the second century? What does it suggest about the way in which Christians viewed interrogation and martyrdom?
 Third presentation and reading assignment: The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/primary/perpetua.html>)
 Questions for presentation: How did Perpetua and Felicity view their family obligations and their roles as women in relation to their identity as Christians? What does this source tell us about gender roles, martyrdom, and Christian identity in the early church?
- 1/21 Orthodoxy and Heresy
 Fourth presentation and reading assignment: Infancy Gospel of Thomas (<http://www.tonyburke.ca/infancy-gospel-of-thomas/the-childhood-of-the-saviour-infancy-gospel-of-thomas-a-new-translation/>). Questions for presentation: Compare the Infancy Gospel of Thomas with Luke 2:39-52. How does the Infancy Gospel of Thomas's portrayal of Jesus's childhood differ from Luke's description? What does the Infancy Gospel possibly borrow from Luke? How would you interpret these similarities and differences?
 Fifth presentation and reading assignment: The Gospel of Thomas (<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gthlamb.html>). Questions for presentation: How does the Gospel of Thomas portray Jesus? What similarities and differences do you notice between the Gospel of Thomas and the canonical gospels (i.e., Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John)?
 Sixth presentation and reading assignment: The Gospel According to Mary Magdalene (<http://gnosis.org/library/marygosp.htm>). Questions for presentation: How does the Gospel According to Mary Magdalene depict Jesus and his teachings?

- 1/26 The Church after Constantine: Christendom and the Christianization of Europe
Seventh presentation and reading assignment: Nicene Creed
(<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3801.htm> - read first paragraph and Synodal Letter at end of document)
- 1/28 Monastics and Saints
Book discussion: *The Life of St. Macrina* and *The Life of Antony* (read pp. 29-99)
(CourseDen post due by 11:59pm on 1/27)
- 2/2 Christianity in the Greek-Speaking East
Eighth presentation and reading assignment: John of Damascus, "In Defense of Icons"
(<https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/johndam-icons.asp>)
Research paper topic and research plan for field research essay due
- 2/4 The Church of the East: Christianity in Arabia, India, and China
Ninth presentation and reading assignment: Timothy's dialogue with the caliph (read first four pages) (http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/timothy_i_apology_01_text.htm)
- 2/9 Medieval European Christianity
Tenth presentation and reading assignment: Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*
(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kempis/imitation.ONE.1.html>) – Read chapters 1-14 of book 1.
Eleventh presentation and reading assignment: Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/julian/revelations.i.ii.html>) – Read chapters 2-5.
- 2/11 Christianity and Islam: The Historical Background of the Crusades
Discussion of *The Cross and the Crescent* (CourseDen post due by 11:59pm on 2/10)
- 2/16 Medieval European Christian Theology from Augustine to Thomas Aquinas
Twelfth presentation and reading assignment: Augustine, *Confessions*, book 2 (read chapters 1-10) (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/augustine/confess.iii.i.html>)
Thirteenth presentation and reading assignment: Thomas Aquinas, Proof of the Existence of God (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/aquinas3.asp>)
Source list for research paper due
- 2/18 Crises in the Late Medieval Western Church
- 2/23 The Reformation: Luther and other Early Reformers
Fourteenth presentation and reading assignment: Luther's 95 Theses
(<http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>)
- 2/25 The Radical Reformation and the Catholic Reformation
Fifteenth presentation and reading assignment: Menno Simons on baptism
(<http://www.mennosimons.net/baptism.html>)
Sixteenth presentation and reading assignment: Ignatius Loyola, *Rules for Thinking with the Church*

(<http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/seil/seil82.htm>)

Seventeenth presentation and reading assignment: Excerpts from the Council of Trent
(<https://history.hanover.edu/texts/trent/ct07.html>)

- 3/1 Calvin and His Influence on the English and Dutch Reformations
- 3/3 Protestant and Catholic Christianity after the Reformation
Eighteenth presentation and reading assignment: Pierre Cholonec, excerpt on life of Catherine (Kateri) Tekakwitha (document 6 in *Converging Worlds*, ed. Louise A. Breen, available on GoogleBooks)
- 3/8 The Fracture of Protestantism and the Rise of Deism
Nineteenth presentation and reading assignment: Benjamin Franklin's letter to Ezra Stiles
(<http://www.constitution.org/primarysources/franklin-stiles.html>)
- 3/10 **Midterm Exam**
- 3/14-3/18 Spring break (no classes)
- 3/22 Pietism and Evangelicalism
Twentieth presentation and reading assignment: Jonathan Edwards, Personal Narrative of Conversion (<http://www.calltoworship.org/calltoworship/testimony/jonathan.html>)
Thesis statement for research paper due
Week of March 22: Meeting with instructor to discuss research paper
- 3/24 Black Christianity in the New World
Discussion of *Rebecca's Revival* (CourseDen post due by 11:59pm on 3/23)
- 3/29 Christian Missions and the Expansion of Global Christianity
First draft of research paper due (submit via CourseDen by 11:59pm)
- 3/31 American Sects: Mormonism and Other Nineteenth-Century Religious Movements
Twenty-first presentation and reading assignment: Joseph Smith, History
(<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1?lang=eng>)
- 4/5 Liberal Protestantism and Unitarianism
Twenty-second presentation and reading assignment:
Harry Emerson Fosdick, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?"
(<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5070/>)
- 4/7 No class (instructor at a conference)
Constructive feedback on classmates' research paper drafts due by 11:59pm
- 4/12 Fundamentalism and Pentecostalism
Twenty-third presentation and reading assignment:
Testimony of Florence Crawford (<http://www.azusastreet.org/AzusaStreetCrawford.htm>)

Field research essay due (submit via CourseDen by 11:59pm)

- 4/14 Catholicism in the Modern World: Before and after Vatican II
Twenty-fourth presentation and reading assignment:
Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*
(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html)
Twenty-fifth presentation and reading assignment:
Vatican II, *The Church in the Modern World*, chapter 2: “The Community of Mankind”
(http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)
- 4/19 Christianity in the Global South
Discussion of *The New Faces of Christianity* (CourseDen post due by 11:59pm on 4/18)
- 4/21 Christianity, Secularism, and Religious Pluralism
Final version of research paper (submit via CourseDen by 11:59pm)
- 4/26 **Final exam essay due at 11:59pm**