

History 209

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

(5 credits)

DR. TIM HEINRICHS, INSTRUCTOR

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WELCOME--

History 209 follows the 2000-year story of Christianity from its Jewish origins to modern times. Our emphasis will be placed on mainstream Christianity. This means that we will focus our attention on the three major branches: Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox (to a lesser extent). We will explore both the institutions and belief systems that have made up the world's largest religious body.

Religions generally have small beginnings, but few can rival Christianity for an unpromising one. It began in a remote part of the Roman Empire, among the Jews of Palestine, a people not very much liked or honored by their rulers in Rome. The movement's leader thoroughly offended the religious chiefs of his nation with his claims and his revolutionary teachings. He was betrayed to these leaders by one of his own inner circle, put on trial, and executed in the most painful and shameful method imaginable—by crucifixion. And yet his remaining followers rallied and spread the message that they proclaimed was the “good news.” Their faith not only defied and survived persecution, but won over the Roman Empire and took the lead in framing Western culture. Today Christianity is has more adherents than any other religion and is still adding many new converts around the world.

Christianity has been especially relevant in the history of the Western Hemisphere since European settlement began there around 1500. Spanish, Portuguese, and French missionaries spread the Roman Catholic version of Christianity to the indigenous populations. The English Puritans sought to create in America a “Modell of Christian Charitie,” a society based on relationships inspired by Christian love. Since those early days, the history of the United States has been strongly influenced by evangelical Christian “Great Awakenings,” powerful revivals of revived religious fervor. These advanced the American commitment to democracy and spawned such reform movements as abolitionism, women's rights, civil rights, education, and

causes for political and social justice. Christianity has also inspired numerous humanitarian outreaches in the United States and elsewhere such as homes for orphans, hospitals, shelters, and hunger relief. On the other hand, church history has featured un-Christian behavior as well—the massacres that took place in the medieval Crusades; the Inquisition; the use of slavery; the volume of warfare in the name of Christ; etc. Whether one dwells on the achievements or on the misdeeds of the adherents of Christianity, their faith is undeniably relevant to any study of U. S. or world history.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS--

Books

- Mark Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in Christian History* (Baker, 2008)
- Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* (Thomas Nelson, 2008)
- Other readings will be placed online at MyBCC.

Strategy

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Explain the significance of key people, beliefs, and events in the history of Christianity, and develop standards to judge them from a historical-cultural perspective
2. Demonstrate the importance of traditions of thought and ethical values in historical change
3. Expand their vocabulary
4. Evaluate historical arguments, judging the appropriateness of both logic and content
5. Adapt scholarly processes of analysis, interpretation, and synthesis to articulate their own points of view, demonstrating a command of relevant facts and a framework of logical deduction...
 - *drawing inferences from data*
 - *differentiating between facts, value judgments, and generalizations*
 - *differentiating between description and explanation*
 - *recognizing the role of cause and effect in historical analysis*

Coursework

Total package: By the end of the term, you will have completed:

- *weekly textbook and reader assignments;*
- *writing four Discussion essays (300-450 words each)--two of them by the end of the fifth week;*
- *writing a 6-8-page paper, due March 14;*
- *meeting me for a 15-minute slot during office hour twice during the term;*
- *taking a midterm exam February 14, covering the first half of the course;*
- *taking a final exam March 221 at 9:30, covering the second half of the course.*

Note that course documents such as paper assignments will usually be made available at *mybc.net*.

Class participation

The 20% class participation grade reflects your performance in quizzes and class discussions. Daily attendance is expected, and your class participation grade will take excessive absences into account.

Discussion essays

Each week a brief essay assignment is made from the week's readings, including both textbooks but also primary writings that are posted in "Shared Documents" in MYBC.net. You will choose four of these, two from Weeks #1-#5 and two from the remaining weeks. For each assignment that you choose, you will write an essay of 300-450 words. The deadlines for these fall on Mondays, or Tuesdays when Monday is a holiday. (Extra credit is possible for a fifth or sixth discussion essay if they meet the deadline.)

Grading

The following is a breakdown of the final grade:

<i>Class participation</i>	20%
<i>Paper</i>	20%
<i>Discussion essays</i>	20%
<i>Midterm exam</i>	20%
<i>Final exam</i>	20%

All items will be assigned percentage grades, whose average will be translated into a letter grade according to the following:

93-plus A	77-79% C+
90-92% A-	73-76% C
87-89% B+	70-72% C-
83-86% B	67-69% D+
80-82% B-	60-66% D

Late work

Students are expected to finish all assignments and exams on the assigned dates. However, I recognize that unusual situations sometimes arise that prevent timely completion of the coursework. Here are policies governing late work, including submissions of late work at the end of the term.

Policy #1: Normally, late discussion essays and late papers are accepted, but with a penalty of two percent per day, up to a maximum of 10 percent. This can be avoided if you obtain permission for an extension in advance of the due date and have a compelling reason for that. Note: weekly essays are graded on a 25-point scale, so the late penalty amounts to .5/25 per day (up to a maximum of 2.5/25).

Policy #2: No work will be accepted after Final Exam day if you have not completed at least half of the coursework by then. That means at least two discussion essays and the midterm must be in by the day of the final, or no work will be accepted, and no incomplete grade will be granted.

Policy #3: If a problem prevented you from taking the final exam, you will be allowed to take it another time before the end of the term, but with a 10% grade subtraction. This subtraction will be waived if

you informed me of a conflict before the day of the exam and I agreed to reschedule it for you. It will be waived in case of an unforeseen valid emergency. It will be waived if the problem was the responsibility of myself or of Vista, but not if it was with your computer or a scheduling problem.

Policy #4: The “I” grade, if granted, has to be fulfilled during the next term or it will change to F.

Again, welcome to History 209. If you’re ever not sure you’re on top of it all, if you have any questions about the course, ask questions by email. Or call and leave a message at 425-564-2114.