



AMBROSE  
SEMINARY

## **CH 501-1 *Christianity in History* (3)**

**Winter 2014**

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**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, 1:30-3:30 p.m., or by appointment  
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**Class Time:** Tuesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m.  
**Classroom:** A2141

### **Course Description**

This course is an overview of the history of Christianity from the time of the early Church to the present. As we consider the development of Christian ideas and institutions within their corresponding social, cultural and political contexts, we will meet influential Christians, discover devotional treasures, and encounter the diverse Christian traditions that have shaped and been shaped by the world around them.

### **Course Objectives**

- ✓ Learn the broad sweep and key issues of church history, including at least fifty of the most important people, events, ideas and institutions from the Christian past.
- ✓ Appreciate the dynamic nature of Christianity as embodied in the Church—in other words, that the Church's theology, practises and institutions are not eternal and unchanging in nature, but deeply intertwined with human civilization and its historical development.
- ✓ Identify your personal Christian/church histories within the history of the Church universal, and understand the influences that have shaped your own faith tradition(s).
- ✓ Grow in your ability to exegete your cultural environment, to understand the forces that influence your church, and to draw on your understanding of church history in order to formulate effective strategies for thriving as a Christian and church leader.
- ✓ Grow in your personal appreciation of and ability to draw from the spiritual journey, testimony and devotional legacy of Christians from the past, knowing that all Christians undergo a common journey from spiritual infancy to maturity.

## Texts

1. Paul R. Spickard and Kevin M. Cragg, *A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994).
2. Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith (eds.), *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*, revised and expanded (New York: HarperOne, 2005).
3. Selected lectures and primary source documents available on the Moodle course site.

## Evaluation

Readings/Responses/Participation	30%
Devotional Classics Presentation	10%
Biography Review	15%
Application Assignment	35%

## Readings/Responses/Participation

Much of your work in this course will revolve around readings from our two texts and various primary source documents, some of which you will respond to online (on the Moodle site) and others of which we will take up in class.

For each chapter in **Spickard/Cragg** (*Global History*), I will post some questions for you to answer in a forum on Moodle. Please respond to these in order, and I will read them and may post follow up questions or comments to stimulate dialogue around the issues we're considering.

Read at least three entries in each chapter of **Foster/Smith** (*Devotional Classics*) in preparation for class the class in which we will discuss the chapter.

Read each set of **primary source documents** and try to uncover the meaning (i.e. message) and historical significance of each document.

My assessment will be based on the depth with which you engage with the ideas in our readings (and reflect on your own assumptions about Christianity and the Church, as they're challenged by or confirmed in the readings). Your ability to put your thoughts into clear, concise, and expressive writing or speaking will also play a role in determining your mark.

## Devotional Classics Presentation

I will randomly assign you to a text in the *Devotional Classics* text, for which you will prepare a short presentation (8 minutes maximum) identifying the author and/or context in which the text was written, explaining the message of the text, and answering one or two of the reflection questions.

**Due at various times, depending on which class you are scheduled for.**

## Biography Review

One of the ways to relate church history to contemporary life and ministry is to examine an individual character from church history, to see how he or she attempted to live the Christian faith in his or her time. To that end, you are required to sign up for (on the Moodle site) and read a biography chosen from the list provided at the end of this syllabus, and submit an 800-1000 word review paper, answering the following questions:

1. According to the book, *who* was this person, and what did they think or do?
2. Briefly, *why* did you choose this person to read about?
3. *In what ways* were they a product of their times?
4. *In what ways* did their lives pose a challenge to those around them?
5. What positive and negative lessons do you take away from the biography?

Be sure to write the response in your own words. Please use examples, references, or short quotations (no footnotes; rather, use page numbers in parentheses) to support your answers. Include a title page with your personal information, the course information, the assignment name, and the date. Format according to the History Style Guide.

**Due February 10, 2014, in the appropriate Moodle assignment module.**

My assessment will be based on the quality of your understanding of the book and its subject, the level of engagement with the person you are reading about, and the quality of your writing.

## Application Assignment

All of the reading, responding, and discussion in the course is meant to serve as the basis for the application assignment, the most important of all. Choose one of the two options to complete. Be sure to discuss your project with me during the conception and research phases, before the writing phase:

### Option 1: My Personal Christian Roots

If church history cannot connect contemporary Christians with the great traditions (theological, devotional, and historical) of the Church, it has not done its job. To that end, you are assigned the task of identifying your own personal Christian tradition(s)—these may be denominational, parachurch, or mission organizations, or theological traditions, important writers, liturgies or devotional traditions—and then of discovering, investigating, and explaining some ways that your Christian tradition(s) have shaped your own spirituality, beliefs, or philosophy of ministry.

Step 1: Post a short note in the appropriate Moodle forum identifying your tradition(s).

Step 2: Research the history and thought of your tradition(s), identifying important elements of your tradition(s) that have shaped you or that you admire and would emulate (e.g. the egalitarianism, pacifism, and separation of the Anabaptist tradition; the missional focus and pragmatism of the Christian and Missionary Alliance; the congregational independence and high view of Scripture of the Baptists; the inclusivity and liturgical practises of Anglicanism; the force of convictions about Calvinistic predestination; the cultural engagement of Lesslie Newbigin; the training, structures, and strategies of Youth For Christ; the holistic nature of Roman Catholicism).

Step 3: Reflect on the ways these important elements of your tradition(s) have influenced you. Think of specific examples to support your reflections. In other words, you need to try to explain (for example) how the egalitarianism of the Anabaptists, or the inclusivity of the Anglicans, or the theological concept of predestination has influenced you.

Step 4: Write a ten-to-fifteen-page paper combining your research (step 2) and your reflections (step 3), with about two-thirds of the paper devoted to the research aspect. Be sure to write your paper in your own words. Please use examples, references, or short quotations (cite your sources with footnotes) to support your answers. Format according to the Ambrose History Style Guide. Include a title page with your information, the course information, the assignment name, and the date.

**Due April 10, 2014, in the appropriate Moodle assignment module.**

My assessment will be based on your ability to understand and articulate your own Christian roots, the quality of your historical research into your personal Christian tradition(s), the level of reflection on your own formation in your tradition(s), and the quality of your writing.

### **Option 2: Teaching Christian History**

If church history cannot connect contemporary Christians with the great traditions (theological, devotional, and historical) of the Church, it has not done its job. To that end, you are assigned the task of writing a manual for teaching selected aspects of Christian history in a church or Christian educational setting relevant to your life and ministry. Your manual must include several elements:

1. **Introduction:** This will outline the intended audience, goals, and outcomes of the manual.
2. **Principles:** Here you must explain the principles, or guiding ideas, that you have used to develop the manual.
3. **Lesson Plans:** Develop at least four lesson plans for teaching sessions. Each must include an **overview**, a list of **goals/outcomes**, a list of **supporting materials** to be used (primary documents, illustrations, pictures, etc.), descriptions of any **activities or assignments**, and an **outline** of any lecture component, if employed.
4. **Lesson:** Develop at least one of these lesson plans into a full-fledged lesson that could be delivered in a church or Christian educational setting relevant to your life and ministry.
5. **Feedback:** Briefly describe the feedback you received from showing the project to a pastor or professor (other than me).

Include a title page with your information, the course information, the assignment name, and the date. Format according to the History Style Guide.

**Due April 10, 2014, in the appropriate Moodle assignment module.**

My assessment will be based on your ability to understand and articulate your own understanding of Christian history, the quality of your historical understanding of the historical subjects covered by the manual, the level of engagement with the project, and the quality of your organization and writing.

### **Course Outline**

1. **January 14 - Beginnings:** Introductions – What Good is Christian History? – Of Churches and Trees – Liturgy, Canon, and Creed

2. **January 21 - Early Church:** Early Christian Theological Questions – Early Christian Worship – Early Church Leadership – Christian-Jewish Relations – Devotional Classics (Preparing for the Spiritual Life)
  - Readings: *Global History* 1 & 2 (Early Christians, Roman World); *Devotional Classics* 1 (Preparing for the Spiritual Life); Early Christian Documents
3. **January 28 - Medieval Christianity:** Constantine – Papacy – Orders – Crusades – Cathedrals
  - Readings: *Global History* 3 & 4 (Turning Point, Age of Faith); Medieval Documents
4. **February 4 - A Bigger Picture:** Non-western Churches – Stories of Christianity – Unity and Diversity in the Church – History of Church-State Relations

Note: No class session due to 2014 Downey Lectures with William Willimon. Our coursework will be done online. See Moodle for details.

- Readings: *Global History* 5 & 6 (Eastern Orthodoxy, Other Non-Western Churches)
5. **February 11 - Humanism and Reform:** Late Medieval Troubles – Renaissance Humanism – Luther
    - Readings: *Global History* 7 (Renaissance); Renaissance Documents; Luther Documents
  6. **February 25 - Reformation(s):** European Reformations – Reformation Legacies – Devotional Classics (Contemplative Tradition)
    - Readings: *Global History* 8 (Reformation); Reformation Documents); *Devotional Classics* 2 (The Prayer-Filled Life)
  7. **March 4 - Crossing Cultures:** Early European Missions – Devotional Classics (Holiness Tradition)
    - Readings: *Global History* 9 (Global Expansion); *Devotional Classics* 3 (The Virtuous Life); Early Missions Documents

**Early Modernity:** Pietism – Enlightenment – Wesley and Methodism – Baptists – History of Hymns

- Readings: *Global History* 10 (European Christianity); Early Modern Documents; Hymn Activity
8. **March 11 - Early North America:** Christianity in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century America and Canada – Revolution, Reaction, and Reform – Devotional Classics (Charismatic Tradition)
    - Readings: *Global History* 11 & 12 (Early America, 19<sup>th</sup> Century); *Devotional Classics* 4 (The Spirit-Empowered Life)
  9. **March 18 - Modern North America:** Modernity (worldviews) – Liberalism and Fundamentalism – Holiness and Social Gospel Movements – Canadian Christianity – Devotional Classics (Social Justice Tradition)
    - Readings: *Global History* 14 & 16 (Modern Context, 20<sup>th</sup> Century America); *Devotional Classics* 5 (The Compassionate Life)

10. **March 25 - A Global Faith:** Rise of World Christianity – Pentecostalism – Devotional Classics (Evangelical Tradition)

- Readings: *Global History* 13 (Worldwide Christianity); *Devotional Classics* 6 (The Word-Centered Life); Global Christianity Documents

11. **April 1 - Europe in Crisis:** War, Dictatorship, and the Churches – German Church Struggle – Impact of the Holocaust – Ecumenism

- Readings: *Global History* 15 (20<sup>th</sup> Century Europe); Church Struggle Documents

12. **April 8 - The Past 50 Years:** Recent Trends in World Christianity – Devotional Classics (Incarnational Tradition) – What Have We Learned?

- Readings: *Global History* 17 (Around the World Since WWII); *Devotional Classics* 7 (The Sacramental Life)

### **Important Notes/Dates:**

The last day to enter a course without permission and /or voluntary withdrawal from a course without financial penalty (drop): January 19, 2014. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript.

Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the "audit" up to the "drop" date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees. Please note that this is a new policy, beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year.

Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (withdraw): March 21, 2014. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Grading: The available letters for course grades are as follows:

Letter Grade	Description
A+	
A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Satisfactory

C-	
D+	
D	Minimal Pass
F	Failure

Please note that final grades will be available on your student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension" from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline (as listed in the Academic Calendar <http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Students may use laptops in class for note-taking and referring to assigned readings. All other uses not in accordance with course objectives are prohibited. Cell phones are to be turned off in class.

Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.