HIST/CLAS/RELS 220: The History of Christianity
TR 9:35-10:50
Spring 2011
ANIN 215

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Course Description
This course surveys the history of Christianity from its inception until the beginnings of European colonial expansion in the first half of the sixteenth century. From the earliest period, the movements associated with the person of Jesus of Nazareth were oriented toward evangelism and expansion. This course begins in the first century and traces the growth of Christianity as it spread throughout the Mediterranean basin, into Mesopotamia, Africa, Northern Europe and central Asia. This expansion required Christians to negotiate diverse social, political, and geographical situations. As they did this, the faith developed differently theologically, ritually, and morally. This course will investigate the variety of Christian expression in the history of global Christianity.

Prerequisites:
None

Core Objectives for Language, Philosophy and Culture Foundational Component Area
Critical Thinking (to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information)

Communication (to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication)

Social Responsibility (to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities)

Personal Responsibility (to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making)

Course Aims
This course seeks to orient students to the world history of Christianity. Historical accounts of the history of Christianity often focus on the developments relevant to explaining Christianity
in Western Europe and North America. Traditions which developed outside of this trajectory are often ignored. Take, for example, the traditions which developed in Egypt and Persia following the Christological controversies of the fifth century. As western countries continue to receive increased immigration of Middle Eastern Christians and as African missionary activity in the United States begins to grow, traditional understandings of what is relevant to understanding Christianity in the West must change. Christianity is a global religion which took on a variety of expressions from its inception. Through close readings of primary sources and the course textbook you will come to understand how Christianity developed in various regions throughout the world and how the cultural forces it faced in these locations produced expressions of Christianity unique to each place.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**
Through this course, students will be able to:

1) evaluate and synthesize primary and secondary historical writings related to the history of Christianity from its inception to the early sixteenth century.

2) express their own ideas effectively in written and oral form.

3) identify historical and social contexts that created diversity in the development of Christianity Civilization and in present-day human cultures.

4) apply knowledge about the human condition—in the historical development of Christianity and in the present—to their personal lives and studies.

**Required Course Readings**

John W. Coakley and Andrea Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History. Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453.* Abbreviated below as RWCH.

Various readings listed below as Online are available through online course reserves. Readings listed as Bible below you may read from any printed version or on-line at http://www.cccl.org/wwsb/.

**Class Format**
The material covered in this class is most exciting when experienced through the primary sources, that is, through the literature produced in the period under consideration. As a result, we will split our time between lecture and class discussion of primary sources. Our Tuesday classes will be based on lecture, leaving our Thursday class free for the discussion of primary sources. Due to the large size of the class, facilitating this discussion will take a certain amount of creativity. Each student will choose a seat which s/he will use for the rest of the semester. On Tuesdays, we will all be together for lecture and the assigned seating will be used to take attendance (on which, see below). On Thursdays we will break into two groups (based on your seat assignment) and hold two separate discussion sections in opposite corners of the lecture hall,
one led by me and the other by the TA, Mr. Weber. While this is not ideal logistically, I am confident that any discussion is better than none!

**Attendance**
Attendance in class and participation in discussion are expected. On Thursday of the first week you will be assigned a seat for the entire term. Please choose carefully and sit in that same seat every day. If you have no unexcused absences for the semester, you will receive two percentage points added to your final grade. If you have only one unexcused absence, you will receive one percentage point added to your final grade. You are permitted two unexcused absences without an adverse impact on your final grade. However, unexcused absences beyond two will each earn a one percent drop in your final grade. Being late is the same thing as being absent! If you want to receive credit for attending class you must be in your seat when the TA takes attendance.
I will handle all absences and work related to them in accordance with TAMU Student Rules: Attendance (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07)

**Assignments**
**Participation (10 points):**
We take attendance because we expect you to be present mentally as well as physically. When we have discussion I want all of you to participate and you will be rewarded when you do so. If you are physically present but chose to talk, text, or browse the web in a way that disturbs others this will harm your participation grade.

In order for you to be prepared for each of these class sessions, you will need to read all assigned sections listed as Secondary for our Tuesday class session and all the assigned readings listed as Primary for the Thursday session.

Questions to ask of readings:
1. What is the author’s main point in writing this text?
2. What part of the reading was most interesting to you? Why?
3. What part of the reading disturbed you? Why?
4. What part of the reading did you not understand? (Compose a question for class discussion which will help clarify a part of the text which was confusing for you.)
5. In what way does this reading address similar themes or questions to the texts we have previously read?

**Map Quiz (10 points):**
We will cover a great deal of geography in this course. It will help you tremendously to know where things are located. In order to facilitate this learning we will have a map quiz.

**Short Paper (40 points):**
We will spend a considerable amount of time reading primary sources in this course. As such, you will also be expected to write about primary sources. Each of you will write a short 2-3 page paper on prompts provided to you. They will ask you to think more deeply about primary sources we have read and discussed together. These assignments will be due on a rolling basis with individual discussion groups submitting papers on the dates set in the course schedule below.
Exams (140 points): You will take two midterms (40 points each) and a final exam (60 points). Due to the large size of the class, these will be multiple choice exams for which you must bring a long thin green scantron. These exams will require you to be familiar with primary and secondary readings as well as the class lectures.

Course Grading (based on points)

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<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>First Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Second Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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200 Total Possible

Grading Scale (by percentage):

- 90-100: A
- 80-89: B
- 70-79: C
- 60-69: D
- 59 & below: F

All grades are final! We will not negotiate the grades you have earned on exams or papers.

ADA- Students with Disabilities:
The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination law that provides civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this law requires that students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If a student believes that they have a disability requiring accommodation, they should contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall (campus phone 845-1637). For additional information visit [http://disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu)

Academic Integrity:
"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do." Students are expected to be aware of and adhere to the Aggie Honor Council Rules and Procedures, available at [http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu)

Class Schedule [Schedule and specific readings subject to change as necessary]

Week 1 -- January 18-20: Introduction to the Study of Christian History
Secondary HWCM, vii-21
Primary Matthew 5-7 (Bible)
Didache (RWCH, 12)
Week 2 -- January 25-27: Christianity in the Roman World
Secondary HWCM, 22-74
Primary Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 1-2, 17 (Bible) Acts of Paul and Thecla (RWCH, 48) Correspondence of Pliny and Trajan (RWCH, 23)

Week 3 -- February 1-3: The Expansion of Christianity
Secondary HWCM, 74-115
R. D. Young, "Martyrdom as Exultation" (Online)
Primary Acts of Thomas (Online) Martyrs of Lyon (RWCH, 24)
Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity (RWCH, 30)
Map Quiz in class on Tuesday, 2/1

Week 4 -- February 8-10: Christian Diversity and the Idea of Orthodoxy
Secondary HWCM, 115-155
Primary Irenaeus, Against Heresies (RWCH, 58) The Muratorian Fragment (RWCH, 66)
Bardaisan, Book of the Laws of Countries (RWCH, 82) Ephrem the Syrian, Hymn 1 (RWCH, 113)

Week 5 -- February 15-17: Christianity and Empire
Secondary HWCM, 155-184
Primary Life of Constantine (RWCH, 87)
Augustine, City of God (RWCH, 195)
Rufinus, The Christianization of Ethiopia and Georgia (RWCH, 107) Agathangelos, The Christianization of Armenia (RWCH, 122)
Discussion Group A Short Paper Due in class on Tuesday 2/15

Week 6 -- February 22-24: Christianity and the Desert
Secondary S. Griffith, "Asceticism in the Church of Syria" (Online) W. Harmless, "Desert Christians" (Online)
Primary Palladius, Lausiac History (RWCH, 155) Rule of St. Benedict (Online)
FIRST IN-CLASS MIDTERM ON THURSDAY 2/24

Week 7 -- March 1-3: Late Antique Christianity in the West
Secondary HWCM, 220-239
Primary Pelagius, To Demetrius (RWCH, 206) Augustine, On Nature and Grace (RWCH, 210)
Patrick, Confession (RWCH, 221)

Week 8 -- March 8-10: Eastern Christianity before Islam
Secondary HWCM, 184-219, 240-256.
Primary John of Ephesus, The Evangelization of Nubia (RWCH, 188) Cosmas Indicopleustes, Christians in India (RWCH, 192)
Holy Women of the Syrian Orient (Online)
Discussion Group B Short Paper Due in Class on Tuesday 3/8
March 14-18: SPRING BREAK!

**Week 9** -- March 22-24: Islam and the Eastern Spread of Christianity
Secondary  HWCM, 257-289, 305-323
Primary      John of Damascus on Islam (Online)
Inscription  of the Monument of the Church of the East (RWCH, 243)
            Chinese Christian Sutras (RWCH, 247)

**Week 10**-- March 29-31: The Rise of Western Christendom
Secondary  HWCM, 289-305, 323-353
Primary      Acts of the Third Council of Toledo (RWCH, 253)
Bede, Ecclesiastical History (RWCH, 258)
The Heiland (RWCH, 271)
**Discussion Group C Short Paper Due in Class on Tuesday 3/29**

**Week 11** -- April 5-7: Byzantine Christianity and Commonwealth
Secondary  HWCM, 354-383
Primary      Letters of Patriarch Photius and Pope Nicholas (RWCH, 297)
Life of Constantine (RWCH, 302)
Russian Primary Chronicle (RWCH, 310)
**SECOND IN-CLASS MIDTERM ON THURSDAY 4/7**

**Week 12** -- April 12-14: Jews, Christians, and Muslims: The Crusades
Secondary  HWCM, 383-405
Primary      Pope Urban II, Speech at the Council of Clermont (Online)
            Solomon bar Samson, The Crusaders in Mainz (Online)
Guibert of Nogent, The Deeds of God through the Franks (RWCH, 324)
            Ibn al-Athir on the Fall of Jerusalem, 1099 (RWCH, 334)
Nicetas Choniates on the Sack of Constantinople, 1204 (RWCH, 335)
            James I of Aragon on the Fall of Valencia, 1238 (RWCH, 336)

**Week 13** -- April 19-21: Christian Society in the Medieval West
Secondary  HWCM, 406-439, 476-491
Primary      Anselm of Canterbury, Cur Deus Homo (RWCH, 339)
            Bernard of Clairvaux, On Loving God (RWCH, 347)
            Letters and Visions of Hadewijch of Brabant (RWCH, 362)
**Discussion Group D Short Paper Due in Class on Tuesday 4/19**

**Week 14** -- April 26-28: World Christianity at the Dawn of Modernity
Secondary  HWCM, 440-475, 492-506
Primary      Mandeville on Prester John (Online)
The Lives of Mar Yahbh-Allaha and Rabban Sawma (RWCH, 373)
Kebra Nagast (RWCH, 388)
The Council of Constance (RWCH, 414)
The Council of Florence (RWCH, 415)
May 6, 12:30-2:30: FINAL EXAM