

# CH 1A03 – HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY 1

## McMaster Divinity College

Fall Semester 2009

Monday

8:30-10:20am

Instructor: Dr. Gordon L. Heath

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A survey of the Christian religion from apostolic origins through the imperial period and the rise of Medieval Christendom. Special attention will be given to the development of doctrine and institutional evolution.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

#### *Knowing*

- to provide students with an understanding of how the Church has grown and developed over the centuries
- to examine various ways in which the Church has attempted to live in and engage with the wider culture
- to help students understand the process of theological development

#### *Being*

- to explore (and ultimately appreciate) the different expressions of spirituality as practiced by the Church throughout history
- to create an awareness of the breadth and diversity of the Church, and provide a sense of “place” within the many church traditions

#### *Doing*

- to develop in each student an ability to assess documents and situations from an historical perspective

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: Volume 1*, 1984. (Reading G – refers to chapters)
- Henry Bettenson & Chris Maunder, eds., *Documents of the Christian Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. (Reading B – refers to pages) (note: this book will be used for History of Christianity 1 & 2)
- Gordon L. Heath. *Doing Church History: A User-friendly Introduction to Researching the History of Christianity*. Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2008. (note: this book will be used for History of Christianity 1 & 2)
- Eusebius, *The Church History: A New Translation with Commentary*. Paul L. Maier, ed. Kregel, 1999. (Reading E – refers to chapters)
- Saint Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (any publisher, but a recent translation would be helpful).
- Caroline White, ed., *Early Christian Lives*. Penguin, 1998.
- Thomas A’ Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (any publisher, but a recent translation would be helpful) (note: this book will be used for History of Christianity 1 & 2)

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9B 6E2: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail [books@readon.ca](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Final Exam:** There will be a take-home final exam (sixteen pages long).
- **Paper:** Each student will be asked to write a five page paper on an important figure in the church.
- **Off-Campus Visit & Reflection:** Each student will be required to attend an Orthodox Church service, and write a two page reflection.
- **Book Review:** Students will be required to write a three page review of *Confessions*.
- **Recite Apostles Creed:** Each student will be required to memorize and recite the Apostles Creed.

### GRADING:

- Final Exam: 35%
- Paper: 30%
- Off-Campus Visit & Reflection: 15%
- Book Review: 15%
- Participation: 5%
- Recite Apostles Creed: pass/fail (this must be passed in order to pass the class)

### GENERAL COMMENTS:

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ [www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php](http://www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php).
- McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.
- Essays must be handed in at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. All other essays will be considered to be late. Students may be exempted from the late penalty of 3% per day (not including weekends) if they attach to their essay a letter explaining the genuine emergency that delayed them. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive comments and constructive criticism from the professor.
- The essay should be handed directly to the instructor. To avoid any potential problems, students are advised to keep their working notes and a copy of their paper until a final mark has been received.
- Unless noted otherwise, all written work must conform to the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*.

- Please turn off your cell phone and/or pager before the class begins.
- Please do not attend class if you are ill and contagious (e.g. the flu).

## COMMENTS ON ASSIGNMENTS

- **Book Review (Due: 5 October, in class)**

This three-page typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1¼ inch margins, and Chicago-style endnotes review should answer questions such as: What was Augustine’s purpose in writing *The Confessions*? How did he go about achieving his purpose (structure, sources, etc.)? What are the weaknesses and strengths of the book? What is the value of reading *The Confessions* today? See *Doing Church History* for further instructions.

- **Biographical Research Paper (Due: 2 November, in class)**

This five page typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1¼ inch margins, and Chicago-style endnotes paper is concerned with trying to gain an understanding of a person’s life and contribution to the church and society. In order to do this, you must not only study primary sources, but also secondary sources. As you study the relevant secondary sources you will come to realize that different authors may have opposing interpretations of a person’s life. These differences are important to note and understand. See *Doing Church History* for further instructions.

- Choose a person who interests you (and on whom you will be able to find enough research material). Do *NOT* choose Saint Augustine or one of the individuals in *Early Christian Lives*.
- Use enanotes (not footnotes).
- Please include at the very end of the paper (after the bibliography) a one page “personal reaction” to the person you are studying. It does NOT count towards the five page total page count. This reaction can be as personal as you like, and is intended to give you a chance to react to the person outside of your more formal research paper.
- Please follow the format noted below:

Title Page	Page #1	Page #2	Page #3	Page #4	Page #5	End notes	Biblio	Pers Reflec
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- **Off-Campus Visit & Reflection (Due: 30 November, in class)**

This two page typed, double-spaced, 12 point font, 1¼ inch margins, and Chicago-style endnotes assignment requires you to visit an Orthodox Church for a Sunday worship service, and to write a reflection paper. Please keep in mind the following:

1. When you attend, be respectful. Do not “take notes” like a tourist, but participate as much as you are able. Again, do not show up to criticise, but to learn and grow.
2. Attach a bulletin to your reflection.
3. Your reflection should note things like (but not limited to) the following:
  - a. the liturgy, the architecture, the iconography, the sacraments, the music, the theology expressed (verbally but also in other ways)
  - b. how/why did it differ from what you are used to?

- **Recite Apostles Creed**

All students are required to memorize and recite the Apostles Creed. This can be done at any time during the semester, and is to be recited to the professor. This assignment is a “pass/fail” assignment – it must be passed in order to pass the class.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

The following is a brief bibliography of books covering the two thousand year span of church history. These books are more general and survey in nature.

Bainton, Roland, *Christianity*. Boston: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1987.

Baumer, Christoph, *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity*. London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006.

Bokenkotter, Thomas, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church* (revised and expanded version). New York: Doubleday, 1990.

Cairns, Earle E., *Christianity Through the Ages: A History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981.

Dowley, Tim, ed., *Introduction to the History of Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995.

Gonzalez, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation (Vol.1 & Vol.2)*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1985.

Johnson, Paul, *A History of Christianity*. London: Penguin Books, 1988.

Kee, Howard C., Emily Albu, Carter Lindberg, J. William Frost, and Dada L. Robert, eds., *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Latourette, Kenneth, *A History of Christianity (Vol.1 & Vol.2)*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1975.

Peterson, R. Dean, *A Concise History of Christianity*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2000.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

### **PRE-CONSTANTINE (0-300)**

Sept 14 **Introduction to the Class, and to the Study of the History of Christianity**  
*\*Doing Church History Reading Due\**

Sept 21 **The Roots of the Christian “Sect” and Its Early Growth**  
 Readings: G. 1-4; B. 1-7; E. 1-3

Sept 28 **Life & Practice in the Early Church**  
 Readings: G. 9, 11; B. 68-86; E. 4-7

Oct 5 **From Outcasts to Rulers**  
 Readings: G. 5-8; 10, 12; B. 7-25; E. 8-10  
*\*Book Review Due\**

### **POST-CONSTANTINE (300-500)**

Oct 12 *Thanksgiving – No Class*

Oct 19 **Organization and Theology: Councils, Creeds and Canon**  
 Readings: G. 13-25; B. 25-68

Oct 26 **The “Dark Ages” and the Rise of the Papacy**  
 Readings: G. 26; B. 86-95

### **MEDIEVAL (500-1000)**

Nov 2 **The Church of the East**  
 Readings: G. 27; B. 97-106  
*\*Biographical Paper Due\**

Nov 9 **Major Figures**  
*\*Early Christian Lives Reading Due\**

Nov 16 **The Conversion of Northern Europe**  
 Readings: G. 28-29; B. 106-107; 127-146

Nov 23 **Christendom in the West, and Disaster in the East**  
 Readings: G. 30-32; B. 107-127; 146-150; 167-191

Nov 30 **Medieval Spirituality & The Dawn of the Reformation**  
 Readings: G. 33-34; B. 151-166; 191-202  
*\*Off-Campus Visit Paper Due\**

Dec 7 Exam

**Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.**