CH501: The Church to the Reformation
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Dr. Don Fairbairn – Fall 2015

Dr. Fairbairn’s Contact Information:
   Email: dfairbairn@gordonconwell.edu
   Phone: (704) 940-5842

Dr. Fairbairn’s assistant is Vyacheslav Lytvynenko (“Dr. Slavik”):
   Email: vlytvynenko@gordonconwell.edu

Schedule: The assignments for this course will extend throughout the fall semester, from Sep. 8 through Dec. 19. The actual class meetings will be on three weekends, Sep 25-26, Oct 23-24, and Nov 20-21 (6:30-9:30 PM each Friday; 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM each Saturday). There will be significant on-line interaction between class meetings.

Office Hours: I will be in the office and available for drop-in meetings on Monday afternoons. I will be in the office all day on Wednesdays, but most Wednesdays will be filled with meetings. I will be available on Friday afternoons prior to weekend classes, and I can also be available by appointment at other times convenient to students. Please email me to make an appointment.

Catalog Course Description: A general survey of the Christian Church from its founding at Pentecost to the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Designed to fulfill one of the two Church History requirements for the Master of Divinity degree program.

Relation to Curriculum: This course is required in all master’s-level programs except MACC.

Course Purpose: This course is designed to give students a working knowledge of the major themes, issues, and personalities of Church history prior to the Reformation, to help them to appreciate and make use of the rich resources of the pre-Reformation Church in their personal spiritual lives and ministries, and to enhance their understanding of the background to the Protestant Reformation.

Course Objectives: In keeping with Gordon-Conwell’s mission statement, I intend that upon completing this course, you will:

1. Critically compare the various Christian traditions to each other and to your own tradition in light of their respective historical developments.
2. Describe key indicators of a historian’s perspective and assess the role that perspective plays in the retelling and interpretation of historical events.
3. Accurately identify key moments, people, and places in the history of God’s church around the world prior to the Protestant Reformation in Western Europe and apply them to contemporary issues of faith.
4. Describe important stages in the development of Christian doctrine, differentiate between helpful and problematic developments, and explain the importance of historical doctrinal formulation in helping us understand the Bible’s core teachings.

5. Summarize the strengths and weaknesses of medieval Roman Catholicism and evaluate the impact of those strengths/weaknesses on the Protestant Reformation.

Course Requirements: Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments. The successful completion of these assignments will require each student to spend at least 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and outside of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments. More specific descriptions of the assignments are given later in this syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Approximate Time Commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading textbooks</td>
<td>50 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class lectures and discussions</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion forums and journal</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper on perspective of historian</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper on non-Western tradition</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper on Roman Catholicism</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
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Required Textbooks and Materials:


PLEASE NOTE that in all assignments, the four books above will be cited by author’s/editor’s last name (Coakley/Sterk, Logan, Swan, Wilken).

Course Assignments:

1. Reading/Viewing (12 points): You must read the four textbooks in their entirety. The schedule for this reading is listed at the end of this syllabus. The total amount of reading is the equivalent of about 1730 single-spaced pages (counting each page of Coakley/Sterk as two pages, since it is double-columned). You must also view the narrated power point presentations indicated in the course schedule, and any other presentations that the professor does not cover in
class.

By Monday, December 14, you must upload a report to the Sakai site indicating what percentage of the reading you have completed.

2. Paper on the Perspective of the Historian (10 points): Prior to the first class meeting, you must use the professor’s lectures and other materials that you gather to write a 4-6 page paper on the perspective of the historian, dealing with the following questions:

- What are some specific examples you have found of varying perspectives that historians take toward the early church?
- How exactly do these different perspectives influence the way historians re-tell the events?
- Which of the perspectives you have encountered do you find to be most in keeping with the Christian faith, and why?
- Why do Christians need to be attuned to the perspective of the historian? Why does it matter whether one views the early church with one perspective instead of another?

This paper will be due on Thursday, Sep. 24.

3. Participation in Discussion Forums (18 points): After each class meeting, you must review your class notes and any power point presentations not covered in class, review the readings for that class, and post to the discussion forum your perception of the most important ideas, people, and events, as well as what we can learn from them. This interaction will provide the basis for your application journal (see description below), and you may want to use the categories suggested for that assignment here as well. You may also use the forum to ask questions about the material. You should respond to other students’ posts as appropriate.

The three discussion forums will be worth six points each. You will receive two points for each quality post or response to another student’s post, up to the six points available for that discussion forum. (Of course, you are free to post more than three times, if you wish.) A quality post is one that does not merely repeat or summarize information, but raises substantive issues or helps to address substantive questions raised by other students.

4. Application journal (20 points): Throughout the course, you must keep a journal in which you note and comment on significant people, places, events, teaching, etc. from Christian history. This journal should NOT be a summary of the textbook or lecture content, but instead, it should grow out of your interaction with other students in the discussion forums and your own reflection on the material. The purpose of this journal is to begin building for yourself a ready guide to material that will be useful in your own spiritual life and your ministry. Therefore, the format and specific content of the journal are up to you, but it is suggested that you organize the application journal into categories similar to the following:

- Interesting, helpful, or problematic interpretations of Scripture or uses of Scripture
- Appropriate or inappropriate doctrinal developments
- Helpful or dangerous approaches to Christian spiritual life
Useful or problematic approaches to Christian ministry
Other lessons we can learn from Christian history

It is expected that you will draw much of the material for this application journal from the primary-source reading (in Coakley/Sterk and Swan), but you may also find the professor’s lectures, Wilken, and Logan to be good sources of material.

Since the format and specific content are up to you, there is no set number of pages expected in the journal. But since you will be adding information to the journal throughout the semester, it will probably become fairly lengthy (perhaps 20 pages or maybe much longer). Thus, a very short journal may indicate that you have not been working on it throughout the semester and thus have not fulfilled the assignment adequately.

You should work on the application journal throughout the semester (especially after you participate in each of the three discussion forums), and you must upload it to the Sakai site by Friday, Dec. 4.

5. Paper on a Non-Western Christian Tradition (20 points): After the second class weekend, you must choose a non-Western ancient Christian tradition (Chalcedonian Eastern Orthodox, Oriental [non-Chalcedonian] Orthodox, Church of the East, Church of the Thomas Christians, etc.) and begin learning about that tradition. (This will involve some research in addition to the textbooks for the course.) You must write an 8-10 page paper on that tradition, dealing with the following questions:

- What are the historical and geographical origins of this tradition? When and how did Christianity come to this region?
- What are the historical reasons for this tradition’s separation from the main body of Christendom?
- What are the major theological differences between this tradition and the main body of Christendom?
- How has this tradition fared in light of the changing political and religious realities of the region where it is found?
- Are there lessons we can learn from this tradition?

This paper will be due on Thursday, Nov. 19.

6. Paper on Roman Catholicism (20 points): Between the first and second class weekends, you must attend a service in a Roman Catholic church. Make notes afterwards of your impressions of the service—what you appreciate, what alarms you, etc. Keep these notes for use in writing the paper the last week of the course.

After the third class weekend, attend another service at the same church you attended at the beginning. Note the changes (if any) in your perspective on the service. Use your notes from these two visits and material from the course to write an 8-10 page paper on Medieval Roman Catholicism, dealing with the following questions:
• What are the most important features of Roman Catholic doctrine that differ from Protestantism? How has your study of the development of these doctrinal features changed your understanding of and/or attitude toward them?
• What are the most important features of Roman Catholic worship that differ from Protestantism? How has your study of the development of these worship features changed your understanding of and/or attitude toward them?
• What are the most appealing aspects of Roman Catholic worship, if any? Can any of these aspects be incorporated into worship in your tradition?
• What are the aspects of Roman Catholicism that are most likely to influence people in your churches from Roman Catholic backgrounds? In light of what you have learned this semester, how will you minister to these people and/or teach regarding these issues?

This paper will be due on Wednesday, Dec. 16.

Grading: The point values listed above mean that the total number of points available for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be applied with cutoffs as follows: A 95, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 63, D- 60, F below 60. A grade of A+ will be given very rarely, when the student’s work is truly exceptional. (At Gordon-Conwell, a grade of A+ and a grade of A are both counted the same way in calculating the student’s GPA. Thus, a GPA above 4.0 is not possible.)

Late work: All late work will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade per week beyond the due date, unless arrangements are made ahead of time. Extenuating circumstances will be considered as appropriate. Work turned in later than Saturday, December 19 (the end of the fall semester) will normally require that an extension be approved by the Registrar’s Office. If you anticipate a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

Attendance Policy: Class attendance and participation are a central part of this course. If you must miss a class period, you should notify me in advance to justify your absence. If you have more than one unexcused absence from class, you will receive a penalty of three points per additional unexcused absence on your final grade.

Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements: All written assignments should be submitted in either MS-Word or PDF format. (If you use a different word processor than MS-Word, please convert the file to PDF before submitting it.) Assignments should be double spaced with 1” margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type or another font of similar size and appearance. Citations should preferably follow Turabian style, although APA style is also acceptable. Assignments must be submitted electronically by posting on the Sakai site. Hard-copies will not be accepted.

Syllabus Addendum: For other Seminary policies, refer to the attached Syllabus Addendum.

Course Schedule and Assignment Due Dates:
Sep. 8-24:
- Read Lederer’s “History of the World” and remember that you can do better as a historian.
- View lectures:
  - Why Church History? (lecture 1)
  - Perspectives on Church History (lecture 2)
- Read:
  - Wilken, introduction, chaps. 1-8
  - Coakley/Sterk, part 1
  - Swan, entire
- Collect five artifacts (recent newspaper, magazine, or web articles) demonstrating different perspectives on the early church.
- Reflect on this material and write your paper on the perspective of the historian.

Paper on the perspective of the historian is due on Thursday, Sep. 24.

Sep. 25-6: First Class Weekend

Part A: Introduction
   Discussion of Perspectives on Church History

Part B: The Church in the Pagan World (ca. 30 – ca. 350)
   Church History and World History
   Orthodoxy and Heresy, Part 1
   Early Christian Worship and Practice
   Discussion of Swan

Sep. 28-Oct. 2: Review material from first class meeting and work on your application journal.

By Oct. 5: Post to the first discussion forum. Interact with other students’ posts by Oct. 10.

Oct. 12-23:
- Attend a Roman Catholic service and take notes on your impressions.
- View Lectures:
  - The Rise of the Christian Kingdoms (lectures 11-14)
  - Islam’s Impact on the Church (lectures 20-21)
- Read:
  - Wilken, chaps. 9-36, afterword
  - Coakley/Sterk: parts 2-3
  - Logan, introduction, chaps. 1-6
Oct. 23-4: Second Class Weekend

Part C: The Christian Kingdoms before the Rise of Islam (ca. 350 – ca. 650)
  Orthodoxy and Heresy, Part 2
  The Transformation of the Latin Church

Part D: Islam and the Fracturing of Christianity
  Discussion of Christianity’s Interaction with Islam
  Orthodoxy and Heresy, Part 3
  Contraction, Isolation, and Rivalry

Oct. 26-31: Review material from second class meeting and work on your reading journal.

By Nov. 2: Post to the second discussion forum. Interact with other students’ posts by Nov. 7.

Nov. 9-19:
- Select a non-Western tradition to study.
- Research this tradition for your paper.
- Read:
  - Coakley/Sterk, part 4
  - Logan, chaps. 7-17, epilogue

Paper on a non-western tradition is due on Thursday, Nov. 19.

Nov. 20-1: Third Class Weekend

Discussion of non-Western traditions

Part E: The Church in Medieval Europe
  High Medieval Christianity
  Medieval Doctrinal Developments
  Toward the Reformation

Discussion of Roman Catholicism

Nov. 23-8: Review material from third class meeting and work on your application journal.

By Nov. 30: Post to the third discussion forum. Interact with other students’ posts by Dec. 5.

Application journal is due on Friday, Dec. 4.

Reading/Viewing Report is due on Monday, Dec. 14.
**Paper on Roman Catholicism is due on Wednesday, Dec. 16.**

**All late work is due by Saturday, Dec. 19.**

**Syllabus Addendum**

**Academic Standards**
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

**ADA Policy**
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class**
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy**
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the end date for the semester as noted on the seminary’s *Academic Calendar*, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required in this case. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized end date for the semester must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the stated date. Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.
Grades
Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Grades are posted on-line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades (unless instructed otherwise). Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party should put their request in writing to the Registration Office.

Returned Work
Submitted hard-copy course work will be returned to the students if they provide a self-addressed and postage-paid envelope with their final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed after the grade has been assessed and issued.

Virtual Writing Center
Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.