The Church to the Reformation
Hamilton Campus

Dr. Garth M. Rosell, Instructor
Fall Semester, 2011

Course Description: The Church to the Reformation is a basic introduction to the history of the Christian Church from its founding at Pentecost to the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Course Objectives: The Church to the Reformation is designed to provide students with a working knowledge of the major themes, issues and personalities of Church History; to help them make use of the rich resources of Church History in their practice of ministry; and to encourage them to seek for spiritual renewal in their own lives, in the church and in society.


Course Requirements: Students who are taking the course for credit will be asked to attend the lectures regularly, take two examinations, complete 2000 pages of reading (including the two textbooks), and write one 12-15 page research paper.

Examinations: Two take-home examinations will be given during the course:

- **Midterm:** Tuesday, October 18: A closed-book, in-class, essay examination covering lectures and readings from September 13 through October 4.

- **Final:** Thursday, December 6: A closed-book, take-home, essay examination covering lectures and readings from October 25 through December 6. Completed examination must be returned to Dr. Rosell's seminary postbox by no later than 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 13.

Preparation for the examinations: Many students have found that the most effective way of preparing for the examinations is to focus their study around the major themes, issues and personalities raised by the instructor in the lectures. While students are encouraged to draw upon the required and recommended readings, their study in other courses and the research they are doing for their papers, the essay questions in both the midterm and final exams (for the most part) will invite them to engage the themes, issues and personalities they have encountered in the lectures.

Note of the examinations: Students will be asked to write a total of three essays for each of the exams (selecting one question of two possibilities in three categories). No books (other than an unmarked Bible and/or a dictionary) may be used during the exams.
Students may take up to three hours to write the exam. Although bluebooks will be provided, each student has the option of deciding for himself/herself whether they prefer to write their examinations by hand or to type them on either a typewriter or computer.

**Grading of the exams:** Your examinations will be evaluated on the basis of three primary criteria: (1) the depth and accuracy of your historical knowledge; (2) the quality, clarity and organization of the analysis/argument you present; and (3) the level of professional skill, creativity and pastoral sensitivity reflected in the way you apply your historical insights to the practice of ministry.

**Required reading:** Students taking the course for credit are required to read a total of 2000 pages for the course, including a careful reading of Justo Gonzalez, The Story of Christianity, Vol. I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation (a total of 412 pages) and Cyril C. Richardson, *Early Christian Fathers* (a total of 397 pages). The remaining 1191 pages of required reading can include the materials that are used for the research paper and/or additional reading from the "Recommended Reading" sections of the course syllabus. Students will be asked to submit a report of their reading by 4:00 p.m. Monday, December 13, 2010. A form for this purpose is provided.

**Grading of the reading** will be as follows: 100%=A; 95-99%=A-; 90-94%=B+; 85-89%=B; 80-84%=B-; 75-79%=C+; 70-74%=C; 65-69%=C-; 60-64%=D+; 55-59%=D; 50-54%=D-; Below 50%=F. No credit is given for skimming.

**Research Paper:** Each student taking the course for credit is required to write one 12-15 page paper. Completed papers should be typed and in correct form (for example, double-spaced, using twelve-point font, footnoted where appropriate, with bibliography, etc.). Those who have not had as much experience in writing research papers may want to consult a reliable style manual like Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). Students may also find it helpful to consult William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

**Due date:** Research papers are due by no later than 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

**Selection of topic:** Students are free to select, research and present whatever topic they wish to explore provided (1) that their topic is basically historical in nature; (2) that the topic falls within the period from the beginning of the Christian church at Pentecost to approximately 1500 a.d.; and (3) that the written presentation conforms to one of the recognized manuals of style (for example, Turabian). **You do not need the instructor's approval for your choice of topic.**

**The task of research:** Those who need help on their papers should feel free to contact Brendan Payne, our Byington for the course. Remember, however, that an important part of writing a research paper is the sometimes difficult task of locating and selecting the sources you want to use. This will probably involve
several hours of hard work in an archive or library. **Don't expect others to do this work for you -- this is a part of your assignment.** Ideas for paper topics can be found in the textbooks as well as the class lectures. Specific issues of *Christian History & Biography* magazine (available in our library and on the *Christianity Today* website) are also helpful in selecting topics and locating resources.

**Grading of the papers:** Your research papers will be evaluated on the basis of three primary criteria: (1) the depth of the research in both primary and secondary materials; (2) the quality of the analysis/argument you present; and (3) the clarity, accuracy and beauty of the writing. Attention to these matters will not only help you on this paper assignment but it will also aid you in developing the kinds of skills you will be using in those various ministries to which God has called each one of you.

**Cheating and plagiarism:** Please exercise special care in the use of sources. Institutional guidelines can be found in your *Student Handbook* under "Violations of Academic Integrity." As followers of Christ, we need to maintain the very highest standards of professional conduct.

**Late work and extensions:** Late work (unless it has been permitted by the Registration Office through an official written extension form) will be **penalized one full letter grade for each week (or any portion of a week) that the work is late.** Normally, the Registration Office only grants an extension in cases of serious illness and/or a death in the immediate family. Since most students have very busy schedules, **it would not be fair for any instructor to grant one individual student a benefit that was not extended to all.** In practical terms, this means that you will need to plan your semester carefully so as to complete all required work in a timely manner. **Do not ask the instructor for an extension.**

**Course Grading:** Your final grade for the course will be computed on the following basis:

- Midterm Examination: 30%
- Final Examination: 30%
- Research Paper: 30%
- Reading Report: 10%

**Grading scale:** The seminary has adopted an official numerical equivalence for the letter grades that students are assigned. Published annually, these are as follows: A+=4.0; A=4.0; A-=3.7; B+=3.3; B=3.0; B-=2.7; C+=2.3; C=2.0; C-=1.7; D+=1.3; D=1.0; D-=0.7; F=0.0. "A" means "conspicuous excellence;" "B" means "exceeding the minimum;" "C" means "satisfactory" work; "D" means "passing" but "unsatisfactory;" and "F" means "course has been failed."

**Computation of course grade:** Based on the above percentages and numerical equivalences, your grade for this course will be computed on the following scale:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Point Total</th>
<th>Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.85 to 4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.65 to 3.84</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 to 3.64</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 to 3.29</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 to 2.99</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 to 2.69</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 to 2.29</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 to 1.99</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 to 1.69</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 to 1.29</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.7 to 0.99</td>
<td>D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0 to 0.69</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to achieve a particular grade, the student must fall exactly within the above scale. No rounding-off is allowed.

**Personal consultations:** The instructor is usually available in the classroom before and after each class session. Regular office hours are posted outside his seminary office (AC345). He can also be reached by phone (978-646-4139) or by e-mail <grosell@gcts.edu>

**Readings and Prayer:** For some years now it has been my practice to open each class session with a brief reading and prayer. The readings for this term are taken from the parables of William E. Barton, who was before his death a Congregational minister in the Chicago area. The stories are available in Garth M. Rosell and Stan Flewelling, eds., *Parables of a Country Parson* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998).

**General Surveys of Church History:** We are fortunate to have a number of fine surveys of Church History available to us, both ancient and modern. Some of these are listed below for those students who may want to supplement their basic reading.


**Collections of Primary Documents:**


**Reference Materials in Church History:**


**Popular Presentations of Church History:**


Christian History Magazine (issues on selected individuals and themes in Church History published under the auspices of Christianity Today)

Helps in Research and Writing:

Schedule of Classes:
September 13: The Birth of the Christian Church

Session I: Introduction to the Course
Session II: The Birth of the Christian Church


M. A. Smith, *From Christ to Constantine* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1971).


### September 20: First Christian Communities

**Session I: Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus**

During this session I want to give special attention to the Jewish and Roman contexts within which the earliest Christian communities developed.

**Recommended reading:**


**Session II: The Spreading Flame**

During this session we will explore the tremendous growth of the Christian Church as it moved out of its strictly Jewish context and into the Gentile world.

**Recommended reading:**


**September 27: Early Christian Faith and Life**

During this class we want to examine the lifestyle of the early Christians both as they gathered for fellowship, training and worship and as they scattered for service.


**October 4: The Cost of Discipleship**

**Session I: The Martyr Faith**
Over the first three centuries, the Christian communities experienced periods of intense persecution. Using four early martyrs as our points of reference, we will seek to understand the nature of discipleship as it developed in the early Church.


**Session II: The Formation of the Biblical Canon**

During this class session we will be exploring the formation of the Christian Scriptures.

**Optional class session:** Following class today, students who would like to do so are invited to remain for an informal "question/answer" session with the instructor. The focus of the discussions will be on either the midterm examination or the research papers. This session, of course, is completely optional.

**Recommended reading:** F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988).


**October 10 to 14, 2011:** Reading Week (no class session but students are expected to use this time for reading and research)

**October 18:** MIDTERM EXAMINATION

**October 25:** The Age of Constantine

**Session I: Constantine the Great**
This class will focus upon some of the positive and negative changes which were brought about by Emperor Constantine's official recognition of Christianity during the early 4th century.


**Session II: Augustine of Hippo**
This session will focus upon the life and work of the most influential of all the early Christian theologians.

**Recommended reading:** Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1985).


**November 1: The Development of Christian Doctrine**

**Session I: The Ecumenical Councils**

During this session we will examine the development of Christian doctrine during the early years of the Church. Special attention will be given to the first four ecumenical councils.


**Session II: The Monastic Movement**
During this session we will explore the rise and development of monasticism. Special attention will be given to the rule of St. Benedict.


**November 7 to 11, 2011: Reading Week (No class but students are expected to use this time for research and reading)**

**November 15: Medieval Missions and Evangelism**
Session I: Missionary Outreach in the Middle Ages
During this class we will examine the missionary expansion of the Church during the Middle Ages.


Session II: The Iconoclastic Controversy
The Seventh Ecumenical Council, held in 787 a.d. at Nicaea, was primarily concerned with the question of whether or not icons could be used in the Church's worship. During this class I want us to focus on that event as a means of better understanding the role of art within the Christian community.

November 22: The Crusades

Session I: The Christian Understanding of War
During this class we want to examine the history of the Crusades and their implications for our understanding of war and peace today.

George Every, Misunderstandings Between East and West (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1960).

Session II: The Crusades (Continued)

November 29: The Medieval Heritage

Session I: Heretics and Inquisitors
During this session we will be examining the so-called "heretical" tradition of the Middle Ages--what might better be titled the great Free Church Tradition. Special attention will be given to the Waldensians.


**Session II: Mystics and Scholastics**

During this class we will explore some of the contributions of Medieval Christianity—including the Mystic Tradition, the Scholastic Tradition and the development of Christian art.


**December 6: Roots of Reformation**

The final take-home examination will be distributed. Due by no later than 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 13. The final exam will cover the reading and materials from the class lectures from October 25 through December 6.

**Optional class session:** Following class today, students are invited to remain for an informal discussion with the instructor on any questions they might have relating to the final examination. This session, of course, is completely optional.

**Session I: Medieval Spirituality**

During this session we will be exploring the development of spiritual life and practice during the Middle Ages.


**Session II: John Wycliffe: Morning Star of the Reformation**

During this final session we will examine the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation--giving special attention to John Wycliffe and John Hus.


---

**Reading Report**

Due no later than Tuesday, December 13, at 4:00 p.m.
Everett Ferguson

Number of Pages Read: ________________________________
(of 524 total pages)

Percentage of Ferguson Read: __________%

Cyril Richardson

Number of Pages Read: ________________________________
(of 397 total pages)

Percentage of Richardson Read: __________%

Total Pages Read in Both Textbooks: ________________

Percentage of Both Books Read: __________%

Name: ______________________________________________

Date: ______________________________________

Be sure to attach a full listing (with complete citations) of the additional reading you completed for the course.

Number of pages of additional reading completed: ________________

Percentage of 2000 pages of required reading completed: _________