Historiography
Hamilton Campus

CH812 Gordon-Conwell Seminary Spring Semester 2013
Dr. Garth M. Rosell, Instructor Monday Mornings

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce the student to Church History as a field of study. Special attention will be given to the writing of history (historiography proper), to the methodology and practice of historical research and to an understanding of the various schools of historical interpretation. Since many students who take historiography plan to pursue doctoral studies after completing their work at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, special attention will also be given to the practical issues of selecting a graduate program, getting accepted into that program, publishing what you have written, joining a professional society, finding a place in the guild and getting a job.

Textbooks:


Course Requirements: Students who are taking the course for credit will be asked to participate actively in the class sessions, complete the assigned reading, write a five page paper describing your own view of history; write a 20-25 page research paper analyzing the life and work of a major historian and make several oral presentations in class. There will be no examinations.

Research paper: Each student will be asked to select one major historian and write a 15-20 page paper analyzing his/her approach to historical research and writing. Students are asked to declare their choice by the time of the second class meeting on February 4th (a sign-up sheet will be circulated during that class session). The final papers, typed and in correct form, are due on or before the final class session on April 15th. Consult Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th edition (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996) if you have questions about form and/or style.

Class presentations: Each student will be assigned several 10-15 minute oral presentations on selected books, articles, themes and/or issues. In addition to their oral presentations, students are asked to prepare a two to three page summary
of their presentation for distribution to the rest of the class. Sufficient copies for this purpose should be brought class on the day of the presentation. Students are encouraged to be engaging, interesting and creative in their presentations. In preparing their presentations, they are also strongly urged to consider how their specific presentation can contribute to the overall understanding of other students in the class and to the larger purposes which the course is seeking to achieve. In short, the presenters are encouraged to become the "instructor" of the class during the time they have the floor.

**Format for the presentations and handouts:** Although both the oral presentations and the written summaries will vary depending upon the kind of material that is being reviewed, they should normally include a brief biographical sketch of the author(s); a summary of the major points that the article or book is seeking to make; and a critical analysis of the following questions (known affectionately as "The Big Ten."

1. What **assumptions** do they bring?
2. What **evidence** do they use?
3. What **writers** do they quote?
4. What **focus** have they selected?
5. What **purpose** do they have?
6. What **biases** do they betray?
7. What **virtues and vices** do they identify?
8. What **writing method** have they used?
9. What **research methodology** do they apply?
10. What **historical school** do they represent?

Other ways of approaching the presentations might be the following:

1. Test all **assertions** against the **evidence** of:
   - Scripture
   - Tradition
   - Reason
   - Experience

2. Look for **patterns of change and continuity** in:
   - Political Life
   - Economic Structures
   - Religious/Theological Systems
   - Social Organization
   - Intellectual Interests
   - Artistic/aesthetic Expression

However you choose to approach the assignments let me encourage you throughout the preparation and presentation to diligently and prayerfully seek for **truth** since this exercise is properly seen as an **act of worship** of the One Who is **TRUTH**.
Furthermore, let me encourage you to do everything in a **spirit of love** and **humility** remembering that "the larger the island of wisdom, the greater the shoreline of ignorance."

**Reading**: Each student is expected to read a total of 2500 pages (including the textbooks) by the end of the course. An annotated bibliography of materials read must be submitted by the time of the final class meeting on Monday, April 15th. While the annotations need not be lengthy, they should make it apparent that you have read the material critically and carefully.

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

- Research paper: 30%
- Class presentations: 30%
- Philosophy of History: 20%
- *Annotated reading list: 20%*

*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.*

**Class Schedule**:

**Monday, January 28: Introduction to Historiography**
During this first class session, a basic orientation to the course will be provided and presentation assignments will be made.

**Monday, February 4: Schools of Historical Interpretation**


- **Student Presentations**: (1) Cyclical history; (2) "Christian" history; (3) the idea of progress; (4) historicism; and (5) Marxist history.

**Monday, February 11: The Classical Greek and Roman Historians**

- **Student Presentations on the Greek Historians**: (1) Herodotus (ca 480 to 425 BCE); (2) Thucydides (ca 460 to 401 BCE); (3) Xenophon (ca 431 to 352 BCE); and (4) Polybius (ca 200 to 118 BCE).

- **Student Presentations on the Roman Historians**: (1) Livy (59 BCE to 17 CE); (2) Tacitus (ca 56 to 120 CE).

**READING WEEK (February 18-22, 2013)**: No class sessions but students are expected to use this time for reading and research.
Monday, February 25: Early Jewish and Christian Historians

**Student Presentations on the Jewish and Christian Historians:**
(1) **Josephus** (ca 37 to 100 CE); (2) **Saint Luke** (first century CE);
(3) **Eusebius** (ca 260 to 339 CE); (4) **Augustine of Hippo** (354 to 430 CE); (5) **Venerable Bede** (ca 672-735 CE).

Monday, March 4: Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, Modern and Postmodern Historiography


Monday, March 11: The Historian at Work: Observing Some of the Masters

**Student Presentations:** (1) Kenneth Scott Latourette; (2) Roland Bainton; (3) Jaroslav Pelikan; (4) Philip Schaff; (5) George Marsden; (6) Leopold von Ranke; (7) Dana Robert; (8) F. F. Bruce; (9) Herbert Butterfield; (10) Adolf von Harnack; (11) Mark A. Noll; (12) Martin E. Marty; (13) Heiko Oberman; and (14) Justo Gonzalez.

**Instructions:** These presentations must be no longer than ten minutes and they must include (1) a brief biographical sketch of the person you are studying; (2) an annotated bibliography of their major works; and (3) an analysis of their approach to history using "the big ten" as your outline. Be sure to bring a written summary of your presentation for distribution to the class.

Monday, 18: Tackling Some Historiographical Problems

**Common Reading:** George M. Marsden, *The Outrageous Idea of*

Student Review of Marsden


READING WEEK (March 25-29, 2013): No class session but students are expected to use this time for reading and research

Monday, April 1: The Historian at Work: Lecture by Instructor
Exploration of history as a vocation and discussion of the three primary arenas in which the historian is expected to work -- namely, (1) teaching; (2) research and writing; and (3) service.

Monday, April 8: The Historian at Work: Research and Writing

Monday, April 15: Critical Reflections on your Chosen Scholar
Instructions: During this class we will have the delightful experience
of hearing your reflections on the particular scholar you have chosen

to study. For these presentations, you should be sure to include a brief

biographical sketch of the individual, a digital picture if one is available, an

annotated bibliography of their major publications and some critical

reflections on how they understand the task of research and writing. You can use

"the big ten" as you guide if you wish -- but you should not feel bound to any

particular format. Be sure to bring along enough copies of your written 1-2 page

summary to distribute to the whole class.

Students will also be asked to present a brief version of their own view of history
drawing on the five page papers they have prepared (see the "Course

Requirements" section at the beginning of the syllabus). Please bring along sufficient

copies of your papers to distribute to the rest of the class.

A Final Reminder: Please don't forget that your final research papers and
annotated bibliographies (and all other written work for the course) are due by the time of
the final class meeting on Monday, April 15th.