CH 501: The Church to the Reformation (A)

Instructor
Ryan Reeves, M.Div., Ph.D.
Assistant Dean, Jacksonville Campus
Assistant Professor of Historical Theology

Course Description
The Church to the Reformation is a basic introduction to the development of the Christian Church from the early church to the sixteenth century. In this course I want you to appreciate the church’s heritage and incorporate it into your ministries. Most of us are unaware how much the past shapes the present, not only in terms of human history but in terms of issues in ministry. Most of us just need a guide to understand this story, and my hope is that this class can help new students enjoy their first walk through church history and advanced students can gain a deeper appreciation for familiar territory.

Gordon-Conwell Mission
This course satisfies the following institutional learning objectives
- To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines. (Article 2)

Course Learning Objectives
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. I intend that upon completing this course, you will:

1. Acquire a basic knowledge of the history of the church from the first century to the dawn of the Protestant Reformation;
2. Identify key historical players in the early and medieval church and explain their basic motivations in light of their surrounding cultures;
3. Summarize key theological and devotional developments in the early and medieval church and relate them to contemporary issues of faith;
4. Drawing on an encounter with ancient creeds and medieval theologians, analyze and defend the role of theological inquiry in the life of the church.
Lesson Topics
This course is 14 weeks long, with 13 lecture weeks and the final week set aside for writing the final paper. The 14 weeks are grouped together under five modules, as follows:

1. **Module A: The Church until Constantine (3 weeks)**
   - Lesson 1: The Context of the Early Church
   - Lesson 2: Christians under Pressure
   - Lesson 3: Understanding the Apostolic Church

2. **Module B: Creeds, Councils, and Theologians (3 weeks)**
   - Lesson 4: God the Father and the Son
   - Lesson 5: Creedal Orthodoxy
   - Lesson 6: The Creeds Today

3. **Module C: Church and Society in an Age of Transition (2 weeks)**
   - Lesson 7: The Dawn of the Middle Ages
   - Lesson 8: How the West was Changed

4. **Module D: The Medieval West (3 weeks)**
   - Lesson 9: Violence and War
   - Lesson 10: Popes and Kings
   - Lesson 11: Understanding Medieval Life

5. **Module E: The Medieval Theologians (3 weeks)**
   - Lesson 12: Faith and Reason
   - Lesson 13: High Scholasticism
   - Lesson 14: Sources of History Paper

Required Materials
- **Church History in Plain Language**, 4th edition, by Bruce Shelley
  This book forms the foundation of the course since it is a survey of the relevant material. Students will only be reading the first half of the book up until the section that begins discussion of the Reformation.

- **The Lost History of Christianity**, by Philip Jenkins
  This book and its author have substantial axes to grind about the development of the church in the earliest centuries. Jenkins is not attempting to give a faithful account of orthodox historic teachings but a survey account of evidence of the church’s global explosion in the ancient and medieval world. It is due to this last point that I assigned it. In this course we are unable to account for the entire expansion of the church throughout 1500 years, but Jenkins gives a readable sweep through this history. Moreover, even if we find certain forms of Christian expression problematic in Jenkins’ account, it stands to reason that aberrant forms of Christian teachings speak to the presence of Christians in the area. This book will help us gain a global perspective on the church up to the Reformation, though it should not be taken as the final word on the subjects presented.

- **The Book of Pastoral Rule**, by St. Gregory the Great (Popular Patristics Series)
  For my money, this is the best book on pastoral ministry written in the first 1500 years of the church, and it stands today tall amongst even the best pastoral works since the Reformation. Reading this book will edify you but it will also give you an awareness that pastoral ministry is not something we’ve discovered since the Reformation or since the rise of evangelicalism.

- **On the Incarnation**, by St. Athanasius (Popular Patristics Series)
  A classic defense of orthodox views of Christ and his work. It needs little explanation though too few Christians read it today.

- **The World of Late Antiquity**, by Peter Brown
  If academia is a playground, Peter Brown is the big kid on the swings that everyone respects and no one questions. Brown’s work not only legitimized the study of late antiquity (4th-8th centuries) but it also was the finest work done in the field. This book is a quick survey of the transition from the classical world to the medieval world and it deals especially with the rise and impact of Islam (an important subject today especially).

Course Requirements
Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments and activities as described below. The following chart indicates how various course elements proportionately relate to the overall course grade. Students will be required to watch all the lectures and read each of the assigned books. There will also be a major paper. The grade breakdown is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Video Lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>15 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Forums</td>
<td>10 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Cumulative Essay</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Cumulative Essay</td>
<td>20 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sources of History Paper</td>
<td>30 %</td>
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https://sakai.gcts.edu/portal/tool/fbc1e33f-5bdd-4605-8244-2f070a2d236d/printFriendly
Reading and Video Lectures
You will have lectures and readings assigned weekly. **You must view the lectures first before doing the reading**, as they will provide crucial context for you and alert you to things to be watchful for as you read. As the reading for this course is very heavy, you are strongly encouraged to view the lectures as early in the week as possible.

To receive credit for the reading and video lectures it is mandatory that students read all of the assigned books and watch all of the lectures for the course. The grade will be assessed on an ‘all or nothing’ basis: to get credit, students must complete the reading and lecture videos entirely.

A reading report and video lectures report must be uploaded to the Assignments tool in Sakai by the last day of the course at 11:55 pm EST. The proper forms for the reports may be downloaded from respective assignment in the Assignments tool or by navigating to the “Reports” folder inside the Resources tool. Microsoft Word and PDF formats are both available.

Discussion Forums
As you read, view/listen, and learn, you must interact with other students through the discussion forum in each module (five total in the course). Your participation in these forums will be graded on the basis of criteria described in the Discussion Forum Rubric available in the Resources tool.

Midterm and Final Cumulative Essays
There will be two cumulative essays (midterm and final) that will both **be open note and book**. You will be asked to answer one synthesis question using the available materials from the course (lectures, books, etc). You will write your essay in a word processor and will submit the final document in Sakai. The Midterm will occur during Lesson 6 of the course, and the Final will occur during Lesson 14 and must be uploaded to the Assignments tool in Sakai by 11:55 pm EST of the last day of those lessons. The essay question will only be available in the Assignments tool only during the weeks of those lessons and not before.

For more information on what will be expected of you, see the Midterm and Final Rubric.

Sources of History Paper
The paper will be an analysis paper in which you will explore a theme (or themes) in the writings of a figure from either ancient or medieval history. You will choose from one of the texts listed under “Primary Sources” in the course materials on Sakai. These are classic works and so all worth reading, but you will choose one and read 275+ pages of the work for your paper. If one work is not 275+ pages you will need to choose as many sources as will be needed to read that amount. (Note that sources grouped together under the “Church until Constantine” heading are already grouped by theme to amount to the required number of pages.)

The paper will be 14+ pages (not including title page, works cited or other nonessential elements of the paper). The paper will be required to be a fair analysis of author and a careful comparison of their ideas with supporting evidence from the primary source reading. This will be graded according to the Sources of History Paper Rubric.

The paper must be uploaded to the Assignments tool in Sakai by last day of the course at 11:55 pm EST.

Grading Policy
The reading and lecture report will be graded on an ‘all or nothing’ basis. As these components of the course together make up a fifth of the overall course grade (20%, see chart above), you are highly encouraged to finish them in their entirety. The Forums, Midterm, Final, and Sources of History Paper assignments will be graded according to the criteria set forth in their respective grading rubrics. All grading rubrics can be found in the Grading Rubrics folder inside the Resources tool in Sakai.

Grading Scale
Grading Scale (point values and definitions of letter grades can be found in the "Grading Scale" section of the Gordon-Conwell Student Handbook):

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."

Course Policies

Instructor Feedback
I will attempt to respond to questions or messages within 24-48 hours, excluding Sundays. I will also do my best to provide feedback on assignments within one week of submission and post grades on Sakai within 1 week of submission. The exception to this will be the paper, which I will provide more extensive feedback on, and which may take up to 6 weeks to grade entirely for the course.

Document Formatting and Submission
Assignments must be submitted electronically by posting on the Sakai site. Hard-copies will not be accepted. The Journal Analysis and Final Paper must be in MS-Word format (.doc or .docx). 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. Citations must be in Turabian format. Any failure to use these formatting or citation rules will result in grade reduction of half a letter grade for minor errors (e.g. wrong margins) or a full grade for major errors (e.g. wrong citations).
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 the last day of the course will normally require that an extension be approved by the Seminary. If you anticipate a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

Netiquette
Gordon-Conwell does not tolerate disruptive or disrespectful behavior in the online communications in any course. Students should review the netiquette policy in the Student Handbook and this website: http://www.albion.com/netiquette.

Additional Seminary Policies

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.

Extension Policy
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” 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
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. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade. Note that the final grade posted in Sakai is not official; the official final grade will be posted in the CAMS student portal.

Contacting the Semlink Office
email: semlink@gordonconwell.edu
phone: 978-646-4144 (office hours only)
Office hours: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday
Office is closed during Chapel: Wednesdays from 11:00 am - 12:00 pm