CH501: The Church to the Reformation
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
Fall 2014
September 8 – December 15, 2014

Course Designer/Lecturer: Dr. Don Fairbairn

Course Instructor: Dr. Vyacheslav Lytvynenko

Instructor Contact Information: vlytvynenko@gordonconwell.edu

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.

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. 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 their respective roles in the Protestant Reformation.

Lesson Topics
The 14 weekly lessons of this course are arranged into six modules, as follows:
Module A: Introduction to Church History (1 week)
   Lesson 1: The Significance of One’s Perspective on Christian History
Module B: The Church in the Pagan World (3 weeks)
   Lesson 2: Church History and World History
   Lesson 3: Orthodoxy and Heresy (part 1)
Lesson 4: Early Church Worship and Practice
Module C: The Christian Kingdoms before the Rise of Islam (3 weeks)
Lesson 5: The Rise of the Christian Kingdoms
Lesson 6: Orthodoxy and Heresy (part 2)
Lesson 7: The Transformation of the Latin Church
Module D: Islam and the Fracturing of Christianity (3 weeks)
Lesson 8: Islam’s Impact on the Church
Lesson 9: Orthodoxy and Heresy (part 3)
Lesson 10: Contraction, Isolation, and Rivalry
Module E: The Church in Medieval Europe (3 weeks)
Lesson 11: High Medieval Christianity
Lesson 12: Medieval Doctrinal Developments
Lesson 13: Toward the Reformation
Module F: The Pre-Reformation Church and You
Lesson 14: Personal Reflections

Required 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 Requirements

Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of activities as described below. The successful completion of these activities will require each student to spend at least 135 hours devoted to coursework. The following chart indicates approximate time commitments for the various learning activities. Descriptions of the assignments are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Approximate Time Commitment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading the textbooks</td>
<td>55 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing module intros. and lectures</td>
<td>30 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion forums and journal</td>
<td>20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on perspective of historian</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on non-Western tradition</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on Roman Catholicism</td>
<td>10 hours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Learning Activities

Readings
You must read the four textbooks in their entirety. The schedule for this reading is listed in the individual lessons. 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).

Please note that the reading load varies considerably from week to week. You may want to use light reading weeks to get ahead on future reading. The three papers are all due during weeks with very light (or no) reading. Please see the chart on the course workload to aid in your planning.

Video Presentations
You must view/listen to the video module introductions and the lectures in narrative power point form, as listed in the individual lessons.

You will be asked to turn in a report at the end of the course, indicating approximately what percentage of the reading you have read and of the lectures you have viewed.

Discussion/Interaction
As you read, view/listen, and learn, you must interact with the other students through three distinct discussion forums.

1. The first is the Course Introduction Forum, in which you will introduce yourself to the professor and the other students.

2. The second is the Perspective Forum (in lesson 1 only), in which you will discuss with the other students examples of different perspectives on the early church and how those perspectives affect the re-telling of Christian history. This interaction will be the basis for your paper on the perspective of the historian.

3. The third is the Application Forum (in lessons 2-13). As you read and view the lectures, you must interact with the other students through a weekly forum. This forum will provide an opportunity for you to comment on people, events, teaching, etc., that you find to be significant. This interaction will provide the basis for your application journal.

Your participation in these forums will be graded on the basis of criteria described in the appropriate rubrics available in the course outline.

Paper on the Perspective of the Historian
During lesson 1, you must use the professor’s lectures and your interaction with other students to write a 4-6 page paper on 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 at the end of lesson 1. It will be graded according to the rubric available in the course outline.

Application Journal
During lessons 2-13, you must keep a journal in which you note and comment on significant people, places, events, teaching, etc. from Christian history. This journal should grow out of the application forum, and thus you should cut and paste important posts from that forum into your journal throughout the course. The journal should also demonstrate your own independent reflection on the material, in addition to the forum discussions.

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: 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.

• 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

This journal will be due at the end of lesson 14. It will be graded according to the rubric available in the course outline.

Paper on a Non-Western Christian Tradition
During lesson 8, 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?

You should work on this paper through lessons 8-12. The paper will be due at the end of lesson 12. It will be graded according to the rubric available in the course outline.
Paper on Roman Catholicism
Sometime during the first two weeks of the course, you must attend a service in a Roman Catholic church. Make notes afterwards of your impressions of the service—what do you appreciate, what alarms you, etc. Keep these notes for use in writing the paper the last week of the course.

Sometime during the last two weeks of the course, attend another service at the same church you attended at the beginning. Note the changes (if any) in your perspective on the service. During lesson 14, 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 at the end of lesson 14. It will be graded according to the rubric available in the course outline.

Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Maximum Points Possible Per Assignment</th>
<th>Total Points Possible</th>
<th>% of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Introduction Forum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Report</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Forum</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Forums (12)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on Perspective</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application Journal</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on non-Western Tradition</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper on Roman Catholicism</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale
The number of points available for the course is 500, and then the total will be divided by five. Final letter grades will then 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.)

**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 and post grades on
Sakai within one week of submission.

**Document Formatting and Submission**
Assignments must be submitted electronically by posting on the Sakai site. Hard-copies
will not be accepted. If you use a different word processor than MS-Word, please
convert the files to PDF before submitting them. Otherwise please submit Word files.
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.

**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 week 14, 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

**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.

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.