

CHRISTIAN LIVES IN HISTORY

This course tells the story of Christianity through the life experiences of selected men and women in their historical contexts. Utilizing several varieties of literature, these will be valued both as insightful mentors and as unique persons in need of God's grace and human care in community. Each student will be invited to reflect on their own spiritual journey and vocation.

TEXTBOOKS:

- Christian History, Issue 28: "The 100 Most Important Events..." (1990)
Clebsch, William, et al. Pastoral Care In Historical Perspective (1962)
Order online at bookfinder.com (1975, 1983, 1994 editions ok)
Galli, Mark. 131 Christians Everyone Should Know (2000)
Nystrom, Bradley and David, The History of Christianity (2004)

ASSIGNMENTS (100 points possible):

1. Prepare historical readings from Nystrom for discussion each week, supplemented by Galli where advisable (25 points).
2. Generate a four-page "ministry style" paper. Responding to Clebsch & Jacekle pp. 1-66, locate your practice in the nexus of healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. Then select an historical exhibit, which is meaningful to your personal ministry, for analysis (2 + 2 pages; 25 points). Due April 28.
3. Create a four-page "life link" paper. Read the book-length biography/autobiography of a selected historical figure. Assess them first as a client or friend at a key life stage. Then suggest specific ways in which they may serve as a mentor, speaking into your life (2 + 2 pages; 25 points). Due May 19.
4. Complete a final examination highlighting Christian lives in history (25 points). The life of a mentor who has shaped your own will be included. Due June 9.

DISABILITIES: Any student who because of a disability may require some special arrangements to meet course requirements should contact the instructor or the Access Coordinator for the Bethel Office of Disability Services by the second class period to discuss reasonable accommodations. Please see the *Student Handbook*, p. 22.

NOTE: There will be no extensions in this class except for extenuating family circumstances or medical reasons. An incomplete contract must be drawn up, dated, processed, and then approved by the professor and submitted to the Associate Registrar before the last class period.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Written material submitted must be the original work of the student. Academic dishonesty constitutes a serious violation of scholarship standards at Bethel and can result in denial of credit and possible dismissal from the school. Academic dishonesty includes cheating on assignments or exams, plagiarism, fabrication of research, multiple submissions of work in different courses, misrepresentation of academic records, the facilitation of academic dishonesty, and depriving others of necessary academic resources.

CLASS MEETINGS:

Class sessions will be held on Monday evenings, March 31-June 9, 7:15-10:00 p.m. Ordinarily, time will be divided into two periods, involving lecture materials and class interaction (lives and cases).

CLASS SCHEDULE

MONDAY, MARCH 31

- (1) **THE CHURCH BEFORE NICEA.** In the early Christian centuries, individuals and communities (within the cultural context of the Roman Empire) developed their “Age of Anxiety” values and identities. The creed (rule of faith), bishop (center of fellowship), synod/council (consensus of churches), and canon of Scripture (God’s Word) clarified boundaries—and the threat of persecution refined priorities.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 1-79.

LIFE: Perpetua, “The Passion of St. Perpetua”

CASE: Cyprian of Carthage – On Facing Martyrdom
Letter to the People of Thibaris (Clebsch, 113ff.)

MONDAY, APRIL 7

- (2) **CHRISTIANS IN LATE ANTIQUITY.** Under the Emperor Constantine, Christianity became legal in 313. With this 4th century “establishment” came new developments (e.g. Nicea and “Codex Sinaiticus”) in an aging Empire, with capitols in Rome (West) and Constantinople (East). Developments in asceticism, institutions, sacred time and space, were evidenced in liturgy and literature.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 80-112.

LIFE: Augustine of Hippo, Confessions (see biographical treatments by Henry Chadwick and Peter Brown)

CASE: John Cassian – the Dynamics of Sin
The Conferences (Clebsch, 136 ff.)

MONDAY, APRIL 14

- (3) **EASTERN ORTHODOX BELIEVERS.** Long before a formal breach with Roman Catholics (1054) and the Crusades (1095 ff.), in the East there were different expressions of Christian language, life, and concept. Theology was increasingly seen as contemplation of the Holy Trinity in the context of liturgy...more as prayer than analysis. The rise of Islam (622) led to almost a millennium of Mediterranean conflict and coalescence, with the fall of Constantinople (1453) the end of the Byzantine Empire.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 125-138.

LIFE: Andrew Louth, St. John Damascene

CASE: John Chrysostom - The Gestalt of Grief
Letter to a Young Widow (Clebsch, 122 ff.)

MONDAY, APRIL 21

(4) CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE MEDIEVAL WEST. The “Middle Ages” found this identity chronologically positioned between the Classical legacies (ca. 400s) and their Renaissance rediscovery (ca. 1400s). The centuries of subsistence/feudal lifestyles common before 1000 gave way to a cultural renewal through the monasteries and universities. The “twelfth century renaissance” had implications for theology, which went beyond compilation of sources to the questioning and systematizing of authorities. The Roman Church was the primary institution of reference, sacraments the means of grace, and hagiography the approach to saints’ lives.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 113-124; 139-188.

LIFE: R. A. Markus, Gregory the Great and His World

CASE: Francis/Clare of Assisi – A Healing Miracle

The Little Flowers of St. Francis (Clebsch, 174 ff.)

MONDAY, APRIL 28

*MINISTRY STYLE PAPER

(5) THE LATE MEDIEVAL QUEST. If the pontificate of Innocent III (d. 1216) marked the high tide of medieval papal power, the exile of the pope from Rome (after 1309) evidenced a Western Church searching for its soul. Wycliffe and Hus were two notable advocates of reform. The age of exploration and science, advent of printing and blossoming of [Christian] humanism raised popular consciousness and expectations.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 189-224..

LIFE: Raymond of Capua, Catherine of Siena (cf. Joseph Perrin’s bio)

CASE: Selected readings

GUEST LECTURER: Kimberly Dawsey-Richardson

MONDAY, MAY 5

(6) NO CLASS MEETING: SPRING READING/INTENSIVES WEEK

MONDAY, MAY 12

(7) THE PROTESTANTS AND THEIR REFORM. A revolution of 16th century thought and society took place as “Protestants” made their stand. Sparked by Martin Luther (1517), four major streams emerged: Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist), Anglican, and Radical (including Anabaptist). Their varied views of Christian community (ecclesiology) and creed reflected felt needs.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 225-278.

LIFE: Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther; Heiko Oberman, Luther: Man Between God and the Devil

CASE: Jeremy Taylor – Making the Most of Sickness

The Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying (Clebsch, 262 ff.)

MONDAY, MAY 19

*LIFE LINK PAPER

(8) THE ROMAN CATHOLIC INITIATIVES. Roman Catholic response and renewal found formal and definitive expression in the Council of Trent (1545-63), overseas mission extension with Ignatius of Loyola and his Jesuits, and spiritual inspiration from thinkers like Teresa of Avila. The standards of this era would be a touchstone for Catholics over four centuries.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 279-287.

LIFE: Teresa of Avila, The Life of Teresa of Jesus

CASE: Ignatius of Loyola – Disciplines of the Spirit
The Spiritual Exercises (Clebsch, 233 ff.)

MONDAY, MAY 26

(9) NO CLASS MEETING: MEMORIAL DAY

MONDAY, JUNE 2

(10) CHRISTIAN LIFE IN MODERN EXPRESSIONS. In surveying the Protestant tradition, one may note the 17th century concern with establishing orthodoxy and confessional/denominational identities, the 18th century initiation of world mission even as intellectual challenges were raised against claim of authority and tradition, and the 19th century revolutions as science, industrialization, and redefinitions of Christianity itself swept Western culture. The implications were worldwide, and movements of revival and renewal planted seeds of spiritual life which still blossom today.

SURVEY: Nystrom, 288-355.

LIFE: James Beck, Dorothy Carey: The Tragic and Untold Story of Mrs. William Carey

CASE: John Walsh – Therapeutics of Conversion
Journal of John Wesley (Clebsch, 282 ff.)

MONDAY, JUNE 9

*FINAL EXAMINATION

(9) “LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE YOU.” Since the dawn of the 20th century, an increasingly global community of networking and tribalism, economic refugees and billionaires, culture wars and Third World Christian vitality has been our context. “Faith, hope and love” abide – and we are ambassadors for Jesus Christ!

SURVEY: Nystrom, 356-382..

LIVES: Black Elk, Lin Yutang, Gutierrez’ Las Casas, Sojourner Truth, Sadhu Sundar Singh, et al

CASE: William James – Spiritual Diagnosis
Varieties of Religious Experience (Clebsch, 321 ff.)

CHRISTIAN LIVES: ANTHOLOGY & REFERENCE

- Anderson, Gerald H. ed. Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions (1998)
- Barclay, William. Jesus as They Saw Him (1982)
- Buechner, Frederick. The Sacred Journey (1982)
- Carey, Patrick & Joseph Lienhard, eds. Biographical Dictionary of Christian Theologians (2000)
- Clebsch, William & Charles Jaekle. Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (1964)
- Cross, F.L. & E.A. Livingstone, eds. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church 3rd ed. (1997)
- Deen, Edith. Great Women of the Christian Faith (1959)
- Delaney, John. A Dictionary of Saints (1980)
- Kerr, Hugh & John Mulder. Famous Conversions (1983)
- Lane, Tony. Exploring Christian Thought (1993)
- Lewis, Donald M. ed. Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, 1730-1860 (2005)
- Mandelker, Amy and Elizabeth Powers, Pilgrim Souls: A Collection of Spiritual Autobiographies (1999)
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. Jesus Through the Centuries (1985)
Mary Through the Centuries (1996)
- Petersen, William. 25 Surprising Marriages (1997)
- Smith, William & Henry Wace, Dictionary of Christian Biography. 4 vol (1877 ff.)
- Temple, Todd & Kim Twitchell. 20th Century People who Shaped the Church (2000)
- Tucker, Ruth. First Ladies of the Parish (1988)
From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya (1983)
- Wakefield, Dan. The Story of Your Life: Writing a Spiritual Autobiography (1990)
- Walsh, Michael, ed. Dictionary of Christian Biography (2001)

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