

*Erskine Theological Seminary*

## **CH 501: EARLY AND MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY**

January 2008

Required for M.Div. and M.A.T.S. Students: 3 Hours

Due West: Monday-Friday, Jan 28-Feb 1, 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

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**Office Hours:** I will be in the office most of the time during the week prior to the class, and students are welcome to drop in or make an appointment. During the class, students may catch me during breaks to set up times to talk at more length, should they desire to do so. I will be available by email as students complete the assignments in February.

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To view or download lecture notes and other resources for this course, please click on the links below. I modify these files from time to time, so in order to get the most current version, you should download each one only a few days before the class to which it pertains.

[Introduction](#)

[Resource Booklet—PDF File](#)

[Part 1: Church in Pagan Roman Empire](#)

[Writing Theological Papers](#)

[Part 2: Imperial Catholic Church](#)

[Style & Form Standards](#)

[Part 3: Byzantine and Roman Churches](#)

[Part 4: Roman Church after Schism](#)

[Erskine Seminary Virtual Bookstore](#)

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This survey course traces the development of the Christian Church from the end of the Apostolic period to the division between East and West and of the Western Church up to the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Renaissance. Students examine the changing relation between Church and Empire, the development of Christian doctrine, the rise of the papacy, and the variety of patterns of Christian spirituality. *Required for M.Div. and M.A.T.S. students. Three hours.*

### **COURSE PURPOSE:**

*Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning*

The purpose of this course is to enable students both to appreciate the rich heritage of early and Medieval Christianity and to understand the factors that paved the way for the Protestant Reformation. The course also aims to give students the tools necessary for utilizing Church history in their contemporary expressions of Christian teaching and life.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, one goal is that graduates be prepared to **utilize the Church's historical and theological heritage as an important resource** in their personal spiritual development and ministry. In order to begin fulfilling that goal, this course and its successor (CH 502 Reformation and Modern Church History) introduce students to the historical and theological heritage of the Christian Church.

It is the teacher's intention that by the end of the term, students will:

1. **Gain exposure** to the major theological, intellectual, institutional, and spiritual developments of early and Medieval Church history.
2. **Recognize** the historical, cultural, and political factors that influenced the development of Christian thought and practice during the patristic and Medieval periods.
3. **Appreciate** the depth of spirituality and **be challenged** by the concern for godly life characteristic of the best of early and Medieval Christianity.
4. **Become aware** of the role of the historian's perspective in the re-telling and interpretation of historical events.
5. Gain experience in **evaluating** patristic and Medieval thought/practice and **using** that thought to develop their own expressions of Christian doctrine and spirituality.

### **COURSE METHOD:**

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components. The first is the **Content Component**, the student's own mastery of historical, cultural, and philosophical material essential to an understanding of early and Medieval Christianity. This will be accomplished through class lectures, textbook reading (requirement 1 below), and preparation for the two examinations (requirement 2 below). This component addresses objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4 above.

The second component is the **Reflective Component**, the student's reflection on the significance of early and Medieval Christian history for our Christian spiritual formation today. This will be accomplished through the students' own interaction with the material of the course in preparation for the examinations. This component addresses objectives 3, 4, and 5 above.

The third is the **Research Component**. Each student will complete one formal research project (requirement 3 below). This project will give the student the opportunity to examine one aspect of Church history in depth and to value and/or criticize that aspect as appropriate. This component addresses the general purpose of the course to enable the students to develop skills for utilizing Church history, and it touches on all five of the objectives above.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:**

Ferguson, Everett. *Church History. Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK (for extra credit reading):**

Noll, Mark. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. [Students may read the first six chapters (pp. 11-150) of Noll's book and write a brief reaction paper for three points of extra credit on their final grades.]

[To purchase these books at very competitive prices from the Erskine Seminary Virtual Bookstore, please click here.](#)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Requirement One (10 points):** Each student will read the textbook by Ferguson in its entirety, prior to the first class meeting, so as to have a general knowledge of the topics to be addressed in class lectures throughout the term. Students will keep a BRIEF reading log in which they indicate a few important things they have learned from each chapter of the textbook. The reading log is due at the beginning of the class on Monday, Jan. 28.

**Requirement Two (50 points):** Each student will complete mid-term and final examinations that will cover material from class lectures and the textbook. Both of these will be arranged as take-home exams. The mid-term exam is to be turned in by Monday, Feb. 11 and will count 20 points. The final exam is to be turned in by Monday, Feb. 18 and will count 30 points.

**Requirement Three (40 points):** Each student will complete a research project on a topic of his/her own choice. The topic must deal with one aspect of Christian history between the years of A.D. 100 and A.D. 1500. For this project, the student will do significant reading of primary sources and will consult secondary sources as appropriate. The length of the paper will be 8-10 pages (double spaced, with type size and margins similar to those used in this syllabus). The student must turn in a statement of the paper topic by the end of class on Friday, Feb. 1, and the research paper will be due on Monday, March 3.

This project will provide an opportunity for the student to develop skill in choosing and narrowing a topic appropriately, conducting theological and historical research, and reporting the results of his/her research through clear academic writing. In carrying out the project, the student will be expected to make use of the Erskine Seminary document "Writing Theological Papers" (available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus). The student is encouraged to get in touch with the professor at any time to talk about his/her research project.

**Seminary Policies Pertaining to Research Papers**

**Inclusive Language:** The Seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is a mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary Catalog stands as an example of recommended usage.

**Form of Written Work:** For the research paper, students are required to follow the form and style guidelines found in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition). These guidelines are summarized in the Erskine Seminary document “Style and Form Standards for all Master’s-Level Programs,” available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus.

**Plagiarism:** Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. See the academic section of the Catalog for complete information.

#### Criteria for Grading the Research Paper:

Writing that is grammatically correct and stylistically clear  
 A form that adheres to the guidelines in Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition)  
 Adherence to the parameters of the assignment (length, scope)  
 Choice of a topic that is suitable for this course and for the length of the paper  
 Clear organization of material  
 In the introduction, a clear statement of the topic, the specific question to be addressed, and the way the paper will address it  
 In the body, evidence that the student has used relevant primary and secondary sources  
 In the body, evidence that the student grasps historical and philosophical information  
 In the body, evidence that the student understands theological and spiritual concepts  
 In the body and the conclusion, attention to ways in which this subject teaches or challenges the Church today  
 Depth and creativity in handling the topic and question

#### OVERALL GRADING SCALE:

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

#### COURSE EXPECTATIONS and SEMINARY POLICIES:

**Registration:** Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a “drop/add” form and secure the appropriate signatures. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student’s receiving a grade of “F” for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

**Attendance:** There is no attendance policy for this course. However, students are responsible for ALL material covered. Class attendance is very important for students’ success on the examinations. Students should recognize that reading the professor’s Power Point presentations alone will not substitute for hearing the lectures. If a student does have to miss a class, he/she should learn the material missed by consulting the professor’s Power Point presentations AND other students’ notes. Students who know in advance that they will have to miss a class may arrange for another student to tape the missed sessions. The professor will NOT assist in taping class, except that he will be happy to sign the Seminary’s consent form to allow such taping.

**Return of Written Work:** Federal privacy guidelines do not allow the return of student documents to an unsecured mail box *unless* the student grants permission in writing. Students who wish to have their work returned as early as possible to their student mail boxes will place their student box number on the front page of their work. This will be viewed as written permission to return documents in this manner. Students who decline to give such permission (that is, students who do not write their box numbers on the work) will get their work back in person at a later time.

**Late or Incomplete Work:** Any work not submitted by the due date will be assessed a late penalty. The final deadline for submitting all late work is noon on Monday, March 3. Any work not received by this deadline will be given a grade of “0,” unless the student has made **prior** arrangements to take an incomplete for the course. Incomplete (I) marks will be handled in accordance with policy statements in the Catalog. In particular, one should note that the student does not automatically have the privilege of taking an incomplete. Rather, it is the professor’s prerogative to give an incomplete, and only when the student has completed most of the work for the course and has been providentially hindered from completing the remainder. Note that there is a processing fee associated with “Incompletes,” and that “Incompletes” must be completed by the stated deadline or they automatically become an “F.” Only the Dean may approve extensions of deadlines for “Incompletes.”

**COURSE OUTLINE—LECTURE SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Lecture Topics</b>
Prior to Jan. 28	Read textbook and prepare reading log.	
Mon., Jan. 28	Reading Log Due	Orientation; The Church in the Pagan Roman Empire (ca. A.D. 100 – ca. 313)
Tues., Jan. 29		Church in Pagan Roman Empire (cont.); The Imperial Catholic Church (ca. 313 – ca. 604)
Wed., Jan. 30		The Imperial Catholic Church (cont.)
Thurs., Jan. 31		The Byzantine and Roman Catholic Churches (ca. 604 – ca. 1050)
Fri., Feb. 1	Research Paper Topic Due	The Roman Church after the Schism (ca. 1050 – ca. 1400)
Mon., Feb. 11	Mid-Term Examination Due	
Mon., Feb. 18	Final Examination Due	
Mon., March 3	Research Paper Due	
Mon., March 3	Make-Up/Late Work Due	