

Erskine Theological Seminary

CH 501: EARLY AND MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY

Fall 2008

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

Due West: Tuesdays, 8:00-11:00 A.M.

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Office Hours for Fall 2008: Wednesdays: 9:00 – 11:00 A.M., 4:00 – 5:00 P.M.
Thursdays: 4:00 – 5:00 P.M.

I will make every reasonable effort to be in my office during these hours. However, due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, I recommend that you call or email me to schedule an appointment.

To download lecture notes and other resources for this course, please click on the links below.

[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](#)

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 15th-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:

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.

Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

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 semester, 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 theological 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 TEXTBOOKS:

Ferguson, Everett. *Church History. Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. (ISBN: 0310205808)

Fairbairn, Don. Resource Booklet. (Available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus)

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK:

Noll, Mark. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. (ISBN: 080106211x)

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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement One (10 points): Each student will read the textbook by Ferguson in its entirety. Students are expected to complete this reading very early in the semester, 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 on Sep. 30.

Requirement Two (50 points): Each student will complete mid-term and final examinations that will cover material from class lectures and the textbook. The mid-term exam will be on Oct. 21 and will count 20 points. The final exam will be on Dec. 9 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. 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.

The student must turn in a statement of the paper topic by Oct. 7, and the research paper will be due on Nov. 18. Students are strongly encouraged to turn in the research paper electronically as a WORD attachment to an email. If it will create hardship to the student to do this, he/she may turn in the paper in hard copy form.

Seminary Policies Pertaining to Research Papers

Language about God and Humanity: Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

Form of Written Work: The research paper must be typed/processed (twelve point type, double-spaced, with one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the guidelines found in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition). These guidelines are summarized in the Erskine Seminary document “Style and Form Standards” (available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus). Footnotes and a bibliography are required in the research paper. The paper’s cover page and bibliography are not counted toward the page requirement.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. Plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community. 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, *Manual for Writers* (7th 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, 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:

Drop/Add/Withdrawal: 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 prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. 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 lecture notes 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 lecture notes 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.

Conduct in Theological Discussions: Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

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 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, Dec. 15. Any work not received by this deadline will be given a grade of "0," unless the student has made **prior** arrangements to receive an incomplete for the course. (See the policy on incompletes just below.)

Incompletes: The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his final grade report. An "I" in this course must be removed by March 1, 2009. Only the Dean may grant the extension of an incomplete beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grade automatically becomes an "F."

Chapel Attendance Policy: All morning and afternoon on-campus classes (except for Friday and Saturday courses) carry a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the *Catalog* or registration booklet for the specifics of the chapel attendance policy. There is a per chapel fee if one attends fewer chapels than required.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

Sep. 30	READING LOG DUE
Oct. 7	PAPER TOPIC DUE
Oct. 21	MID-TERM EXAMINATION
Nov. 18	RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Nov. 25	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break
Dec. 9	FINAL EXAMINATION
Dec. 15	All Make-Up/Late Work Due

LECTURE SCHEDULE:

Introduction (Sep. 2)

1. Why Church History?
2. Perspectives on Church History
3. Background to Church History: The Greco-Roman World

Part I: The Church in the Pagan Roman Empire (Sep. 9-16)

4. Christian Expansion; Church and World prior to Constantine
5. Early Heresies and Christian Identity
6. Gnosticism and Christian Fault Lines (will have parts A and B)
7. The Canon and the Episcopacy
8. The Novatian Schism and the Nature of the Church
9. Worship in the Early Church

Part II: The Imperial Catholic Church (Sep. 23-Oct. 14)

10. Constantine and the State Church; Expansion of the Church
11. The Donatist Schism and the Nature of the Church
12. The Trinity and the Possibility of Salvation (will have parts A and B)
13. Christ and the Achievement of Salvation (will have parts A and B)
14. Human Nature and the Means of Salvation
15. Worship and Piety in the Imperial Church
16. The Rise of Monasticism

Part III: The Byzantine and Roman Churches (Oct. 21-Nov. 4)

17. The Beginnings of Medieval Roman Catholicism
18. Popular Piety and the Means of Grace
19. Expansion, but Geographical Isolation
20. Theological Isolation of East and West (will have parts A and B)
21. Rivalry between East and West
22. The “Great Schism”

Part IV: The Roman Church after the Schism (Nov. 11-Dec. 2)

23. The Crusading Spirit
24. The Pinnacle of the Papacy
25. The Revolution in Atonement Doctrine
26. Scholasticism: Revolution in Methodology
27. Monasticism, Mysticism, and Spirituality
28. Philosophy, the Church, and the Sacraments
29. The Fall of the Papacy
30. The Push for Reform: Mystics and “Heretics”