SYLLABUS

1HT502: History of Christianity I

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Course description:
The general introduction to Christianity in the early and medieval periods focuses on Christian doctrines and great leaders from Justin Martyr to Martin Luther who made contributions of lasting significance to the Christian church.

Goals:
1. The student will be introduced to the history of the Christian church in its first fifteen centuries, particularly emphasizing the way certain beliefs and practices have shaped Christian identity.
2. Through the lectures, the student will be exposed to the cultural and political contexts of Christian thought and develop a greater critical appreciation for the Christian tradition.
3. Through the reading and discussions, the student will be oriented to key figures, beliefs, practices, and stories in the life of the Christian church and will explore how they relate to contemporary Christian life and ministry.
4. Through the final exam, the student will reflect on how Christian identity, as represented in the first fifteen centuries of the church, continues to have relevance for contemporary Christian life and ministry.

Required texts:

Requirements and Grading:
1. Regular attendance and class participation (10%). You will only be allowed to miss two classes without it adversely affecting your grade. I will take attendance at each class meeting.
2. Reading (40%). The reading grade is broken into two parts:
   a. 2 one-page reaction papers (each worth 5%).
b. 1 five-page response paper for *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind* (10%)
c. Final reading summary (20%)

3. *Gonzalez tests* (30%). You will have three (3) 50-question examinations on the assigned Gonzalez readings; the questions will be drawn from provided study sheets.

4. *Final exam* (20%). You will have a final exam during the exam week. More information on this will given later in the semester.

5. *Grading scale* (standard RTS scale):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>94-96</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>91-93</td>
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<td>70-71</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<td>Below 70</td>
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As part of our purpose to train servants of the triune God to walk with God in all of life, we expect godly integrity in the academic work done at RTS. God’s covenant with His people calls for honesty and a commitment to truth (as in the 9th commandment). As we live in that covenant and in community with one another, upholding truth is an essential duty. Specifically applied to academic labors, this means that we accurately represent our work to others. In other words, neither cheating nor plagiarism is tolerated.

**Instructions on particular assignments:**

1. *One-page reading reaction papers*
   a. There will be two separate reaction papers, in which you will answer a specific question on the reading. You will find the appropriate question listed in the syllabus.
   b. The reaction paper will be written with one inch margins, double-spaced, 12 point Times Roman font.
   c. The reaction paper will be due by the beginning of class time; **no late papers will be accepted**. If you will not be at the particular class time, you will need to submit your paper in advance.
   d. Please do not email your paper; it is your responsibility to get a hard-copy of the paper to the instructor.
   e. The grade is pass/fail; if you follow instructions completely (including form requirements stated in line b), you will receive the full amount of points (signified by a check mark). If you fail to follow instructions, then the instructor will determine how many points are appropriate.
   - In section one, answer the following question (2-3 pages): reread the seven ways Africa shaped the Christian mind (chap. 2); *which one or two “ways” seemed truly significant to you?* Think about significance in terms of the historical story you’ve considered to this point of the class as well as your own experience of the Christian tradition.
   - In section two, answer the following question (2-3 pages): *how did Oden’s book inform, instruct, correct, or challenge your understanding of the development of the Christian tradition?*
     a. The response will be written with one inch margins, double-spaced, 12 point Times Roman font. Please write in complete sentences, paragraphs, etc.
     b. The response will be due by the beginning of class time on **Monday, October 14, 2013**; **no late papers will be accepted.** If you will not be at the particular class time, you will need to submit your paper in advance.
     c. Please do not email your paper; it is your responsibility to get a hard-copy of the paper to the instructor.

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**SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PROBABLE LECTURE SCHEDULE**

**26 August 2013**
*Lecture 1: Why Bother with Church History?*
   - Handout syllabus
   - Handout Gonzalez study questions

**9 September 2013**
*Lecture 2: “Let all mortal flesh keep silence”: The worship of the church in its first five hundred years*
*Assignments:*
   - Gonzalez, 1-48
   - Hill, 9-32

*Lecture 3: Go into all the world: the expansion of the early church in the period before Constantine*
*Assignment:*
   - Gonzalez, 49-90
   - Hill, 32-60

**16 September 2013**
**Extra credit opportunity:** write the Apostles’ Creed, word-perfect (Kerr, 75), at the beginning of class

**Discussion #1**
*Assignments:*
   - **Response paper #1:**
     *Read Kerr, 17-43. Answer one of the following questions:*
     1. How does Justin Martyr present his apologetic? In particular, what role does “Reason” play for presenting the faith to others? Do you think his is a good approach to gaining credibility for the Christian Faith?
     2. Discuss Ireanaeus’ appeal to the apostolic faith/tradition? How does that appeal function in his apologetic method?
     3. How does Tertullian deal with the problem of heresy? Why do heresies arise? What role does philosophy play in this? What is Tertullian’s solution?
Lecture 4: Credo: Beliefs of the Church in its first five centuries, part one
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 91-167
Kerr, 43-51, 74-77
Hill, 60-69

23 September 2013
Lecture 5: The Christian Doctrine of God: The Beliefs of the Church in the first five centuries, part three
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 168-88
Kerr, 68-73
Hill, 69-77, 92-9

30 September 2013
Gonzalez test #1 (pp. 1-188)

Lecture 6: Sin and Grace: The Beliefs of the Church in its first five centuries, part three
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 189-219
Kerr, 51-68
Hill, 78-91

7 October 2013: Reading Week

14 October 2013:
Discussion #2
Response paper on How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind

Lecture 7: The Twin Realities of the Middle Ages: Monasticism and Papacy
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 222-76

21 October 2013:
Gonzalez test #2 (pp. 189-276)

Christianity at the edge of Civilization: Evangelizing the “Barbarians”
Assignments:
Hill, 100-31

28 October 2013
Lecture 8: What reason can teach us: The church’s beliefs in the Middle Ages
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 277-91, 301-23
Kerr, 82-100
Hill, 131-47
4 November 2013:
Lecture 9: What reason can teach us: The church’s beliefs in the Middle Ages, part three
Assignments:
Kerr, 102-24
Hill, 147-60

Discussion #3
Response paper #3:
Read Kerr, 102-20. Answer the following question:
1. Assess Aquinas’ theology of sin and grace. Is it accurate to call him “Pelagian” (why or why not)? If this was the dominant theology on the eve of the Reformation, in what areas do you think the Reformers objected to Thomism?

11 November 2013
Lecture 10: The Crusading Spirit: The Mission of the Medieval Church
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 292-300, 324-74

18 November 2008:
Lecture 11: The Shape of Religious Life: The Mission of the Medieval Church
Assignments:
Gonzalez, 378-412
Kerr, 100-2, 124-32

25 November 2013
Gonzalez test #3 (pp. 277-412)

Lecture 12: On the Eve of the Reformation: theological schools, streams, movements

2 December 2013:
Lecture 13: On the Eve of the Reformation: advocates for reform
Assignments:
Hill, 161-77

10-12 December 2013
- FINAL EXAM