

Reformed Theological Seminary
HT504 The History of Christianity II

I. Course information

I. Course information

Times: Monday to Friday, 9:00–5:00pm
Thursday, 7:00–9:00pm

Dates: January 8–12, 2018

Instructor: Dr Chad B. Van Dixhoorn

Phone: 703.448.3393

Email: cvandixhoorn@rts.edu

Office hours: By appointments

Class dinner: Emily and I invite you to join us for dinner at 5:15pm Thursday, January 11, 2018. Two hours of class will follow in the evening, in our home.

II. Course overview

A. Key issues in theology and apologetics in the history of the church

The history of Christianity is, among other things, a history of ideas. These ideas shape the Christian church and contribute to our convictions as believers. This course aims to provide an overview of Church history and theology from the birth of Martin Luther to the early twentieth century in a breathtaking thirty-six hours of class time – with many additional hours of reading time.

The class is designed to increase your knowledge of this period and to guide you in further self-study. I do hope that each one of you will get a feel for the contours of the Christian faith as they were hammered out at the Reformation, codified during the post-Reformation period, and developed in the centuries since that time.

This course aims to acquaint us with our past, and to help us interpret the present. But since Christianity has been shaped as much by its failures as by its triumphs, these lectures will trace both the low and high points in the history of Christian doctrine and experience. Significant emphasis will be placed on key moments and key thinkers in church history. But we will also try to reflect on the lives of normal Christian people and ordinary Christian pastors. It was the collective experience of God's people, often in the ordinary settings of worship, church government, or pastoral counselling that helped clarify the central truths of God's word in the midst of persecution, heresy, and confusion.

B. In class

It is my conviction that reformation in the church today must involve a willingness not only to hear what the Holy Spirit is teaching us today, but to listen to what he has taught our brothers and sisters in the past. In this course we will have the opportunity to read and discuss primary source material as we examine the doctrine of God, the Scriptures and their formation, and the fall of humanity into sin. We will listen to what our forebears had to say about the good news of redemption planned, accomplished, and applied. We will try to deepen our understanding of the church, Christian worship, the sacraments, and the formation and relevance of creeds and confessions, each from an historical and theological perspective.

While first seeking to understand the history of Christian doctrine on its own grounds and for its own sake, certain lectures contain apologetic undertones and will answer questions that are still relevant today. Our heritage is a rich and varied one. I hope this course will equip us all to be better articulate, defend and live out the gospel in our pluralistic society.

C. At home

PLEASE COMPLETE PRIMARY SOURCE READING PRIOR TO THE FIRST CLASS.

Also, in order to avoid crushing ourselves in a thirty-six hour lecture week, students are required to listen to two hours of lecture at home PRIOR to class. This will be available on Canvas for those who have registered for the course.

You will also be assigned extensive take-home reading. You will be well advised to keep up with your class texts. That said, the number of pages read for this course, although significant, will be lower than some other three-hour classes at RTS. The main texts are an easy, even delightful read. Each of the authors has been chosen not only for his astonishing knowledge of the period, but for his ability to write in an engaging manner. Here, reading will hopefully prove to be a pleasure.

Many of the primary texts, on the other hand, are more difficult to penetrate. It is for this reason that the reading load has been adjusted downward. Some of the smaller readings will be distributed in class, usually one week prior to the class in which they will be discussed. Here, reading will be work, but hopefully an investment that will pay long-term dividends.

III. Reading list

A. Secondary sources (circa 930pp.)

Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Chichester, 2010).

Mark A. Noll, *A history of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, 1992).

B. Primary sources (circa 315pp) including, but not limited to:

Martin Luther, *On Christian Liberty*, trans. W. A. Lambert, rev. H. J. Grimm (1520; Minneapolis, 2003), 94 pp.

John Calvin v. Jacopo Sadoleto, *A Reformation Debate*, ed. J. C. Olin (1539; Grand Rapids, 2000) pp. 29-94.

Franciscus Junius, *A treatise on true theology, with the life of Franciscus Junius*, trans. D. Noe (Grand Rapids, 2014), pp. 13-72.

J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923; Grand Rapids, 2009), 152 pp.

C. Recommended reading

Reformation

Matthew Barrett, ed., *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary* (Wheaton, 2017).

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York, 2004).

Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700)* (Chicago, 1984).

Post-Reformation

Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A religious history of the American people* (New Haven, 1972).

E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian thought from the age of the Puritans to the civil war* (New Haven, 2003).

Mark A. Noll, *America's God: from Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford, 2002).

D. Purchase list

Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Chichester, 2010).

Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, 1992).

Martin Luther, *On Christian Liberty*, trans. W. A. Lambert, rev. H. J. Grimm (1520; Minneapolis, 2003). (Amazon, published by Facets).

John Calvin v. Jacopo Sadoletto, *A Reformation Debate*, ed. J. C. Olin (1539; Grand Rapids, 2000).

*Franciscus Junius, *A treatise on true theology, with the life of Franciscus Junius*, trans. D. Noe (Grand Rapids, 2014) .

J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923; Grand Rapids, 2009).

* recommended purchase – note that I do not assign the whole book

IV. Assignment due dates:

- 2 February: Submit a 10 page digest of Luther, *On Christian Liberty*. Summarize AND assess his argument.

- 2 February: Submit a 10 page digest of Calvin v. Sadoletto, *A Reformation Debate*. Summarize AND assess their arguments.

- 2 March: Submit a 5 page digest of *The Life of Franciscus Junius*. Note that which seems most important and that which was most interesting or striking in your opinion.

- 2 March: Submit a 10 page digest of Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*. Summarize AND assess his argument.

V. Assessment

A. Digests (40% of grade)

You will be required to submit reading reports on each of the primary sources for the course. These reports will later serve as aids to study and review. Imagine each as a perfect-prose version of an

Amazon review, complete with a summary of the book and a rationale as to why – or why not! – someone should read it.

It is assumed that IF you submit a digest that you have in fact completed the reading for that digest. If this is not the case, please indicate what percentage of the book you have completed.

B. Examinations (60% of grade)

Each person's understanding of the material will be assessed, in part, by examination. Both the "midterm" and the "final" examination will be take-home exams **DUE 2 February and 2 March respectively**. Each exam is to be proctored by a pastor or church secretary or by someone who is not a peer, family member, or fellow student. Please arrange your own proctor well in advance of the exam. (1) The first examination, covering the history of the early church first part of the course, will be worth 30% of the course grade. (2) The final exam covers all material after the mid-term and is worth 30% of the course grade.

Typical examination questions include the following elements:

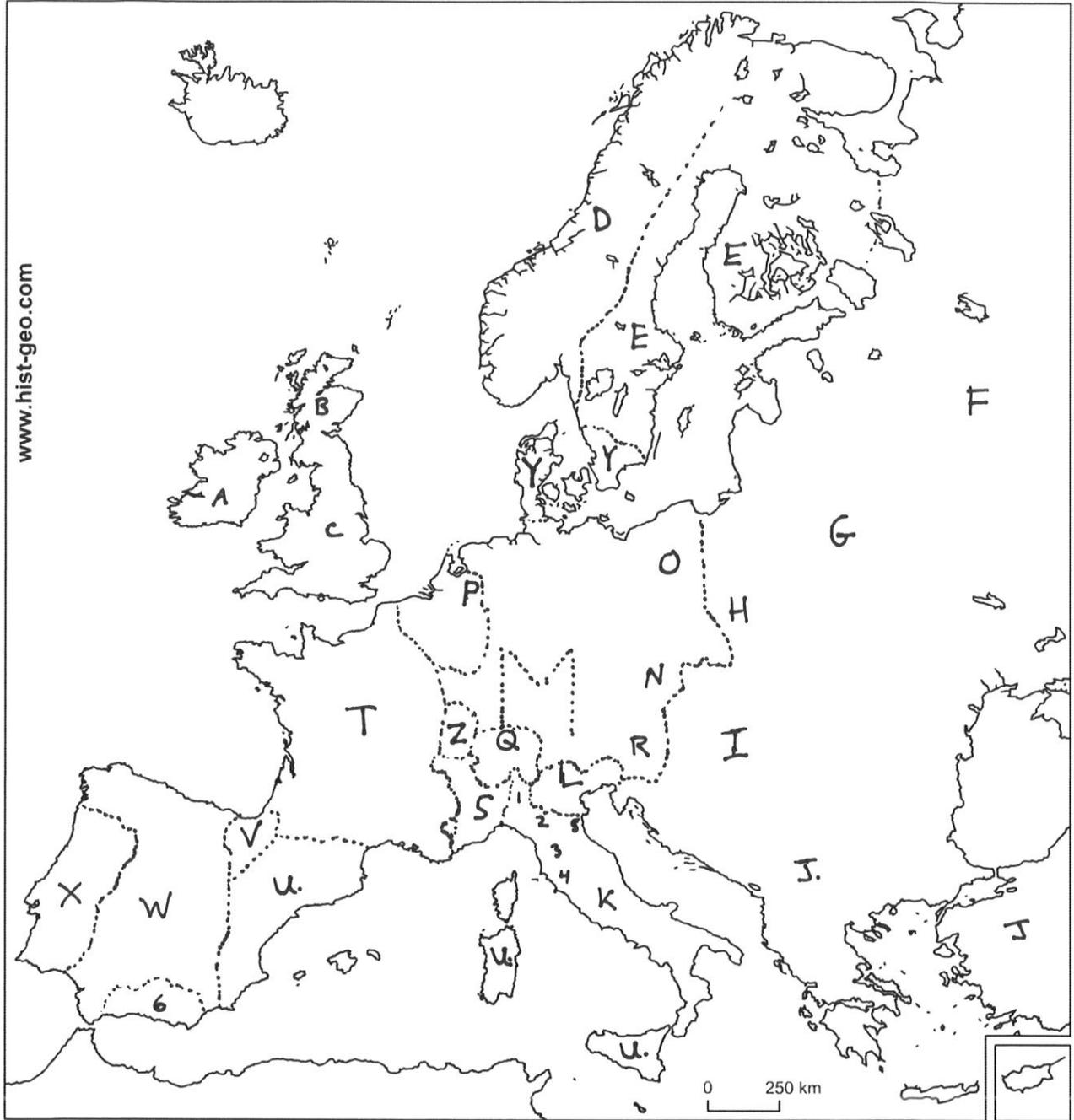
- **Essays**
 - Usually there will be three or four major themes to discuss.
 - You will discuss the history and theology of the relevant theme and, where appropriate, the differing perspectives presented in assigned texts and class lectures.
- **Chronological arrangements**
 - You may be asked to recall the names of fifteen to twenty theologians or heretics
 - If so, you'll be asked to list them in order of the year of their birth.
- **Recall identifications** You may be asked to
 - recall the names of ten to twelve theologians
 - recall the titles of one or two books by each theologian (but no less than 15 total)
 - provide two-sentence descriptions of each title
- **Recognition identifications:**
 - In one line or sentence, you'll be asked to identify or explain the significance of persons, places, or events
 - This will usually involve a choice of a subset of questions from a larger set of questions (say, 15 of 20)
 - Note: All persons, councils and places mentioned in your answers must be those within the chronological frame of the course. The same persons can be mentioned in chronological arrangements, identifications and map placements, etc.
- **Fill in the blank**
- **Multiple choice**
- **Map identifications (midterm only):** The following are thirty-two map locations keyed to the map in this syllabus (below). The identification of these locations can be found in "Europe about 1500" (near the close of Lindberg, *The European Reformations*.) Your midterm exam will select 25 of these 32 locations; you will be required to successfully identify 20 of them. Note that like the game of Risk, this map is simplified for more effective play.

_____. Muscovy
_____. Duchy of Milan

_____. Portugal
_____. Norway

_____. Poland
_____. Republic of Florence
_____. Scotland
_____. Hungary
_____. Navarre
_____. Ottoman Empire
_____. Netherlands
_____. Grenada
_____. Franche Comte
_____. Ireland
_____. Brandenburg
_____. Aragon
_____. Denmark
_____. Papal States

_____. Lithuania
_____. Swiss Confederation
_____. Sweden
_____. Duchy of Savoy
_____. Venice
_____. France
_____. Republic of Genoa
_____. Bohemia
_____. Republic of Siena
_____. England
_____. Austria
_____. The (Holy Roman) Empire
_____. Duchy of Ferrara
_____. Castile



VI. Grading

A. RTS Grading Scale

The seminary uses the following attenuated grading system:

A	(97-100)	4.00 quality points
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	0.00
W,WP	(withdraw, withdraw passing)	0.00
S	(satisfactory)	0.00

The grade "I" indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an "I" grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to "F."

Late work:

Late work is not accepted. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Only serious personal issues, with excuses almost always cleared in advance of the class, are given consideration. If you are traveling for work and cannot attend class, please arrange to have your work delivered on time.

Incomplete work:

Given that **late work is not accepted**, students should consider submitting incomplete work rather than nothing at all. This applies to assignments where you have completed the reading component, but not the writing. If the pledge, found at the end of the syllabus, is signed, one can earn up to 50% of the possible credit allotted to a given assignment (see pledge).

VI. Grading symbols, abbreviations, etc.

Caret ^ – something needs to be inserted

Check ✓ – correct, or a good point, or nicely put
Circled text – error
Exclamation point – something surprised me
H – humour; something amused me
Line in margin – something interested me
Question mark – no idea what you are trying to say, or what you did say sounds dodgy
Squiggle – more nuance needed; rewrite in such a way that you cannot be misunderstood
X – incorrect, or so lacking nuance that it could be right or wrong

Awk. – grammatically awkward; awkward word choice
Cheat. – evidence of cheating. You just failed the exam or the course. Pray. See me and the dean.
Cont. – contraction (don't do it in academic writing)
Grammar – grammatically incorrect
Late – the paper/exam will not be graded because late work is not accepted
Name? – the paper/exam will not be graded until it has been owned by its author
NS – not a sentence
Paginate – please paginate!
Plag. – plagiarism. You just failed the paper or the course. Pray. See me and the dean.
Red. – Redundant
RO – run-on sentence. Please draw liberally from the treasury of punctuation – it knows no limits.
Slang – Stinks as a literary device. Please eschew it in academic papers.
ST – story telling; personal touches are fine, but stories are for the pub, not your paper
Tense – inconsistency in tense
WC – incorrect or awkward word choice

VII. Class advice

1. I recognize that many of you work long days and have awkward commutes. Please leave sufficient time to battle adverse traffic so that you can arrive on time.
2. Please come to each class prepared, with the week's readings and reading reports completed. From the first class, I will call on you to discuss assigned material. It is a courtesy to teacher and peers alike if your class contributions are informed by prior study. There are no reading reports due for the first class.
3. Take notes of these discussions. These exchanges are a vehicle for learning and you will be expected to retain (and be tested on) the material that we discuss.
4. Please ask questions in class. When necessary, I will establish the boundaries and let you know when I need to press on in delivering information and when we should to stop to enjoy a discussion. But a certain amount of class time is set aside each week for discussion and I would be disappointed if we did not pack it with useful comments and queries.
5. Give some thought to your questions. There is no question too simple to ask (although there are many that are too difficult to answer). But please do not stop the class to regale it with stories, ride hobby-horses, play teacher to your peers, or ask to have a word spelled.
6. Please turn off your cell phones. Checking your mobile phone in a class discussion or lecture is as thoughtless as checking it while holding a conversation with another person.
7. Please avoid emailing, surfing, or chatting in class.
8. You may quietly snack and drink and stretch in class, or pace about the back of the room if it helps you stay alert.

9. Feel free to email me with questions.

READING CREDIT PLEDGE

The most that you can earn for reading 100% of an assigned reading without submitting the writing assignment is 50% of an assignment grade. (For example, if you read 80% of an assigned text, you will receive a grade of 40% for the assignment. This is a failing grade for that assignment, but it is MUCH better than a grade of zero).

To earn this credit, you must not only do the reading, but also sign the following pledge for each of your assigned readings. I hardly need to remind you how serious such a pledge is. It is to be handed in on the date of the final exam, or sooner.

PLEDGE

Please sign the following pledge, if true: *I pledge my honor that I have read _____ percent of Assignment _____ prior to the date of the final exam.*

Name:

Signature:

Date: