

**History of Christianity I**  
*Fall Semester 2021—Reformed Theological Seminary Atlanta*

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*Professor Aaron Menikoff*

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*Course Number: 04HT502/A1*

*Meeting Times* Friday (6–9); Saturday (8:30–12; 1–4:30) [40 hours]

September 24 & 25

October 29 & 30

November 5 & 6

December 3 & 4

“It is especially in the local church under the means of grace appointed by God for the edification of the church in corporate worship—that is through the Word (reading, preaching, singing the Bible), prayer (pleading the promises of the Bible, adoring and thanking the God of the Bible, confessing sin, interceding for the saints), and the sacraments (the divinely appointed tangible confirmatory signs of Bible promises)—that we come to know God.”

--J. Ligon Duncan III

“What the church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches, and confesses on the basis of the word of God: this is Christian doctrine.”

--Jaroslav Pelikan

“Study of the Fathers, like any historical study, liberates us from the present. Every age has its own distinct outlook, presuppositions that remain unquestioned even by opponents. The examination of another period of thought forces us to confront our innate prejudices, which would go unnoticed otherwise.”

--Michael A. G. Haykin

“Thus it seems to me that studious and intelligent youths who fear God and seek the blessed life might be helpfully admonished that they should not pursue those studies which are taught outside the Church of Christ as though they might lead to the blessed life.”

--Augustine

## Course Description

This course of study is an introduction to Christian life and thought from the era of the apostles to the Reformation's dawn, focusing upon the movements, teachings, controversies, and persons who defined Christian faith and practice.

## Course Objectives

- 1) To help each student gain a comprehensive understanding of the outline of church history from the first century to the Renaissance.
- 2) To help each student evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the church's faith and practice during this time period.
- 3) To help each student appreciate the importance of doctrine for ministry by examining early Christian thought especially with regard to the doctrines of the Trinity, humanity, salvation, and the church.

## Course Texts

- 1) Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- 2) Tim Dowley, ed., *Introduction to the History of Christianity* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).
- 3) Michael A. G. Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011).
- 4) Various primary sources

## Course Requirements

- 1) **Participation (25%)** – The course will meet on four weekends; Fridays, from 6–9 and Saturdays, from 9–4. Students are expected to attend class, keep up with reading, participate in classroom discussions, and deliver a presentation based upon a primary source.
- 2) **Research Paper & Presentations (25%)**
  - a. Final paper due December 13, this argumentative essay must be between 2500 and 3000 words. The paper must draw from 2–3 primary sources and at least 2–3 secondary sources. Papers that have a clear thesis and outline and one main point will generally receive a higher grade. Papers will be expected to follow the Turabian guidelines per RTS policy. See this [quick guide](#).
  - b. Students will present a summary of their paper on December 4.
  - c. For details on how to prepare a research paper please see Research Paper Overview on Canvas.
- 3) **Midterm (25%)** – To be taken online based upon the previously assigned reading and lectures.
- 4) **Final (25%)** – To be online based upon the previously assigned reading and lectures.

## Calendar (this calendar is subject to change)

September 24

6–7 Introductions, Lecture 1

7–8 Lecture 2

8–9 Lecture 3  
September 25  
9–10 Lecture 4  
10–11 Lecture 5  
11–12 Lecture 6  
1–2 Lecture 7  
2–3 Lecture 8  
3–4 Lecture 9  
4–5 Discussion

October 29  
6–7 Lecture 10  
7–8 Lecture 11  
8–9 Lecture 12

October 30  
9–10 Lecture 13  
10–11 Lecture 14  
11–12 Lecture 15  
1–2 Lecture 16  
2–3 Lecture 17  
3–4 Lecture 18  
4–5 Discussion

November 5  
6–7 Lecture 19  
7–8 Lecture 20  
8–9 Lecture 21

November 6  
9–10 Lecture 22  
10–11 Lecture 23  
11–12 Lecture 24  
1–2 Lecture 25  
2–3 Lecture 26  
3–4 Lecture 27  
4–5 Discussion

December 3  
6–7 Lecture 28  
7–8 Lecture 29  
8–9 Lecture 30

December 4  
9–10 Lecture 31  
10–11 Class Presentations  
11–12 Class Presentations  
1–2 Class Presentations  
2–3 Class Presentations  
3–4 Class Presentations  
4–5 Discussion

## Lecture Overview

1. The Importance of Church History
2. Judaism & the Roman Empire
3. Persecution I: The First Century
4. Persecution II: The Second & Third Centuries
5. Cyprian and the Lapsed
6. The Early Apologists
7. Church Government & Discipline
8. Early Church Corporate Worship
9. Early Heresy I
10. Early Heresy II: The Trinity
11. Teachers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries
12. Clement of Alexandria on Wealth
13. John Chrysostom on Wealth
14. Formation of the Canon I
15. Formation of the Canon II
16. Constantine I
17. Constantine II
18. Monasticism
19. Donatist Controversy
20. Arius & Alexander
21. Nicaea
22. Athanasius
23. Christological Controversy
24. Augustine
25. Pelagius
26. Medievalism
27. The Rise of the Papacy
28. Reform & Schism
29. Anselm & Aquinas
30. Crusades
31. Precursors to the Reformation

## **Standard RTS Extension Policy**

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14).

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: History of Christianity I  
 Professor: Aaron Menikoff  
 Campus: Atlanta  
 Date: Fall 2021

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	1. Essay on the importance of the Fathers 2. Class participation 3. Class presentation
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	1. Emphasis on history of doctrine in class discussion 2. Testing the teaching of the early church against the canon of Scripture
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Study of the soteriology of the early church 2. Study of the worship & practice of the early church
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Emphasis that the study of history is ultimately a study of God's work preserving his saints
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Study of the attempt of the earliest Christians to develop and live out a Christian worldview
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Minimal	Focus on lessons to be learned from the manner in which early Christians disagreed with each other and false teachers
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	1. Readings of the sermons of some church fathers to inform preaching 2. Classroom discussion on how church history informs sermon preparation
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	1. Discussion of the worship practice of the early church

<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognition that many of the fathers were shepherds of souls</li> <li>2. Study of life and doctrine</li> </ol>
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gain a better understanding of historical roots of denominations</li> <li>2. Danger of church/state confusio</li> </ol>