***REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – CHARLOTTE***

**History of Christianity I**

 **Fall 2013, Thursday – 1:00-4:00, August 21-Dec, 3**

Professor Dale Walden Johnson Cell: (864) 245-4741 djohnson@erskine.edu Mailing address: ETS, PO Box 338, Due West, SC 29639

**Course Description**  This general introduction to Christianity in the early church and medieval era focuses on the key person, movements and ideas that have made significant contributions to the history of the Church. Special attention will be given to exploring how experiences and insights from the Christian past inform contemporary faith and practice. As an outcome of the course, students should have a general grasp of Christian history during these periods and a basic knowledge of the major personalities and ecclesiastical issues of the first 1500 years of Church History.

**Required Texts** Harry R. Boer, *A Short History of the Early Church*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990. 13: 978-0802813398

Everett Ferguson, *Church History: From Christ to Pre-Reformation,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 13: 978-8455501402

James E. McGoldrick, *Christianity and Its Competitors: New Faces of Old Heresy.* Christian Focus, 2006. 13: 978-03105807

Note: The Professor will distribute numerous handouts, etc., throughout the semester and perhaps make additional (short) reading assignments.

**Recommended Textbooks** James E. Bradley and Richard A. Muller, *Church History: An Introduction to Research, Reference Works, and Methods.* Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1995. 13: 978-0802808264

Michael Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers.* Crossway Books, 2011. 13: 978-1433510434

**Course Objectives** It is the professor’s intention that by the end of the term, students will be able to: 1. **Trace** the major theological, intellectual, institutional and spiritual developments of Early and Medieval Church History. 2. **Identify** the historical, cultural and political factors that influenced the development of Christian thought and practice in the Patristic and Medieval periods. 3. **Articulate** the depth and variety of piety and describe the concern for a Godly Christian Life characteristic of the best of Christian thinkers. 4. **Explain** the role of the historian’s perspective in the re-telling and interpretation of historical events.

**Course Methods**  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. These are promoted through class lectures, class discussion, assigned reading, essay exams and two book critiques.

The second component is the **Reflective Component,** the student’s reflection on the significance of the course content for our Christian lives today. This will be accomplished through the student’s own interaction with the material in preparation and performance on the essay exams. Preparation for exams forces students to synthesize the material, make connections and see patterns with seemingly unrelated information.

The third is the **Research Component.** Each student will complete two, two page critiques with specific detailed requirements. Students will select books approved by the professor and write a short analysis of the book conforming to specific instructions. Students will receive a model or template of the book critique to assist them in this project.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Requirement One:** Each student will read each of the three texts in entirety. Students are expected to complete this reading by the end of the semester in December. Each student will record what percentage of the assigned reading they completed. Failure to complete the reading will result in a reduction of the final grade. As you read, pay careful attention to the differences in the perspectives, emphases, biases and peculiarities of each author.

**Requirement Two:** Each student will complete two essay examinations based on the class lectures and assigned reading. The mid-term is September 26, and the Final Exam TBA. Each exam is worth 25% of the final grade. Make up exams are given only as a result of a legitimate absence from exam day.

**Requirement Three:** Each student will complete two, two-page book critiques on books selected by the student with the approval of the professor. Each book will relate to church history and the period (A.D. 1-1500) studied in this course. Each book critique is worth 25% of the final grade. Late papers are accepted one day/week late, but with a full letter grade penalty.

**Grading Scale:** The Professor will use the official grading scale of RTS as listed in the current catalog.

**Criteria for grading written work: -** grasp of basic information or argument - completion of assignment according to the instructions - proper use of English - use of primary sources (when required) - depth and creativity of argument - conformity to Turabian, 9th edition when writing a formal research paper ( not a book critique)

**Attendance Policies and Etiquette:** It is imperative that each student attend each class. Arrive on time and do not leave early. We will take a 10 minute break each hour of the class. Perfect or near perfect attendance is the expectation of this class. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of the class.

**Notice regarding Office Hours:**  As a Visiting Professor, I do not have a permanent office in Charlotte. Outside of class, you can reach me by phone or email. Office at Erskine Theological Seminary- 864-379-6662; Cell: 864-245-4741; email- djohnson@erskine.edu

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 **Course Outline/Lecture and Reading Schedule**

**August 22 & 29 Lecture topics for the month:**

Distribution of syllabus, course overview, explanations, etc.

 “ Introduction to the Study of History”

 “In the Fullness of time…”

 “Persecution of the Church”

 **Reading assignment-** Boer, chapters 1-2; Ferguson, pp. 27-45; McGoldrick, pp. 9-82.

**September Lecture topics for the month:**

“Assaults on the Faith: Gnosticism, Montanism, etc”

 “Apostolic Fathers – Disciples of the Disciples?”

 “The Life and Legacy of Emperor Constantine”

 “Athanasius, the Council of Nicea and the aftermath”

 “Long Live St. Augustine (and [part of] his theology)”

 “The 2nd Synod of Orange”

 **MID-TERM EXAM- September 26**

 **Reading Assignment-** By the end of the month complete the following reading:

 Boer, chapters 3-9; Ferguson, pp. 46-226; McGoldrick, pp. 83-116.

**October Lecture topics for the month**

 **BOOK CRITIQUE #1 DUE, October 3**

“The Theology of St. Augustine”

 “Byzantine Christianity”

 “The Rise and Development of Monasticism”

 “Rise of the Medieval Papacy”

 “The 4th Lateran Council”

 “Crusading Christianity”

 **Reading Assignment-** By the end of the month complete the following reading:

 Boer, Chapters 10-11; Ferguson, pp, 227-326; McGoldrick, pp. 117-68.

**November Lecture topics for the month**

 **BOOK CRITIQUE #2 DUE, November 14**

“Reforming the Monastic Model”

 “Leading Medieval Churchmen”

 “Thoughts on Universities and Scholasticism”

 “Late Medieval Christianity, Wyclif and Hus” – (time permitting)

  **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING VACATION, November 28**

 **Reading Assignments-** By the end of the month complete the following reading:

Boer, Chapters 12-13; Ferguson, 382-440; McGoldrick, Chapter 6

**December Final Exams are scheduled for the first week of December**

 **Semester ends Dec. 3**

 **Reading Assignments-** By the end of the **semester**, complete the following reading:

 Ferguson, pp. 440-524