

History of Christianity I (to AD 843)

DESCRIPTION

This five-week intensive course provides students with an introduction to Christian history through a chronological study of key periods and movements: from the sub-apostolic age to the “Triumph of Orthodoxy” in the East, and the Carolingian revival and Treaty of Verdun in the West. Topics include early conceptions of Apostolic Succession and heresy; the geographical expansion of the Church; early Christian worship; the importance of martyrdom; the challenge of Gnosticism; Constantine and “Christianization” of the Roman Empire; development of the Church outside of the Empire (Ethiopia, Armenia, Persia, India); the elaboration of doctrinal and ethical positions in the writings of the Fathers of the Church; the role of Church councils; asceticism and the rise of monasticism; Church-State relations in Byzantium; the advent of Islam and the iconoclastic controversy. Given the breadth of Church history, the course will not attempt to be exhaustive but rather will focus on key themes, ideas, and debates that shaped the first millennium of Christianity.

OUTCOMES

Students successfully completing this course will communicate clearly and effectively, and be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of this period in the history of Christianity by identifying and contextualizing key leaders, places, events and theological positions.
- Identify and sympathetically portray culturally diverse historical expressions of Christian commitment that are different from their own
- Show a critical awareness of the interplay of faith and culture by recognizing influences that shaped Christian theology and practices.
- Understand the historiographical distinction between primary and secondary sources.
- Apply some appropriate questions to be asked of a primary source according to its genre, purpose, assumptions or bias, intended audience, etc.
- Write an essay that gathers sources appropriate to the assignment and presents findings and/or thesis in the suggested format.
- Develop habits of mind that cannot be easily measured, such as curiosity, delight in learning, intellectual humility, and awareness of connections with other courses and experiences outside class.

TEXTS

- Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity, Volume 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, 2/E (New York: HarperCollins, 2010)
- Excerpts from David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: A History of 2000 Years of the Christian Faith* (London: Quercus, 2013)
- Primary Source Readings: texts, or links to them, will be posted on *Blackboard*

WEBSITE

This course uses *Blackboard* for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the My Courses module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your *Blackboard*-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at *Blackboard*.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing *Blackboard* should ask for further help from U of T's Information Commons: <http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/>.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Reading**
Besides the survey offered by González (chapters 1-29, approx. 325 pages in total), we will examine several primary source documents. Each week, we will focus on a few original pieces of Christian writing (approx. 200 pages in total).
- **Quizzes**
Open-book quizzes on each week's *secondary source* readings will help students review the persons, places, events, ideas, etc., of signal importance, as well as enable them to demonstrate their participation in the course.
- **Discussion Board**
Students will be expected to make bi-weekly contributions to the course's on-line Discussion Board. The topics for each week will be the respective *primary source* documents listed in the course schedule. By interacting with the assigned primary sources—as well as with each

other—students will gain a deeper appreciation of the documents, and how they may be interpreted.

- **Short Research Essay** (6-8 pages – 1500-2000 words)

A list of suggested topics will be provided at the beginning of the session. Alternate topics proposed by the students will also be considered.

- **Field Trip and Reflection Paper** (3 pages – 750 words)

Students are asked to organize an individual field trip to one of the *Eastern* (i.e., Orthodox or Eastern-Rite Catholic) Christian churches, to participate in the Divine Liturgy (Eucharist) or another service. Toronto offers myriad opportunities for such a field trip: indeed, every Eastern Christian tradition is represented by one or more parishes (e.g., Byzantine, Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, etc.). Those students located elsewhere—or who may otherwise have difficulties arranging such a trip—may, in consultation with the instructor, develop an alternative, comparable project.

- **Final Exam**

Students will have the option of choosing either a written exam (“open-book,” to be completed and e-mailed to instructor according to the course schedule), or an oral exam, conducted with the instructor in person, or via *Adobe Connect*, on Friday, August 5.

EVALUATION

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| • Participation in Discussion Board | 20% |
| • Quizzes (4 x 5%) | 20% |
| • Short Essay | 20% |
| • Field Trip & Reflection Paper | 10% |
| • Self-Evaluation | 5% |
| • Final Exam | 25% |

SCHEDULE

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS
Week I – Part 1 June 27-29	The Apostolic Age: Christianity Spreads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 1-4 • <i>Didache</i> • <i>The Shepherd of Hermas</i> (excerpts) • Clement, <i>Epistle to the Corinthians</i> (excerpts) • Ignatius, <i>Epistle to the Philadelphians</i>
Week I – Part 2 June 30-July 2	The Age of Persecution: The Church of the Martyrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 5-6 • <i>The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna Concerning the Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp</i> (excerpts) • Pliny the Younger, <i>A Letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan</i> (& Trajan's Reply) • Eusebius, <i>An Account of Diocletian's Edicts of Persecution</i> • <i>The Martyrdom of Saints Perpetua and Felicitas</i>
Week II – Part 1 July 4-6	Apologists and Gnostics: Articulations of the Rule of Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 7-9 • Justin Martyr, <i>First Apology</i> (excerpts) • Eusebius, <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (excerpts) • Irenæus, <i>Against the Heretics</i> (excerpts)
July 7 (Thurs)		✓ QUIZ #1
Week II – Part 2 July 7-July 9	Later Persecutions; Early Christian Worship and Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 10-12 • D.B. Hart, <i>The Story of Christianity</i>, Excerpt 1 (pp. 1-6) • <i>The Georgian Life of St. Nino</i> (excerpt) • <i>The Anaphora of Addai and Mari</i> (excerpts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Recommended: Robert Taft, "Mass without the Consecration?" • Cyril of Jerusalem, <i>Fourth Mystagogical Catechesis on the Body and Blood of Christ</i> • Ephrem the Syrian, <i>Hymns</i>, excerpts
July 11 (Mon)		✓ <i>Outline of Field Trip Due</i>
Week III – Part 1 July 11-13	The Church Established: Constantine, New Rome & the Council of Nicaea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 13-14; 17-18 • Galerius, <i>Edict of Toleration</i> • Constantine I, <i>The Edict of Milan</i> • Eusebius, <i>The Conversion of Constantine</i> • Arius, <i>Letter of Arius to Eusebius</i> • Alexander, <i>Encyclical Letter on the Deposition of Arius</i> • The Council of Nicaea, <i>The Nicene Creed</i> • Constantine I, <i>On the Keeping of Easter</i>
July 14 (Thurs)		✓ QUIZ #2

Week III – Part 2 July 14-16	The Rise of Monasticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 15-16; 19 • Sayings of the Desert Fathers, <i>Sayings of Abba Moses</i>, excerpts • Athanasius the Great, <i>The Life of Antony</i>, excerpts • Sophronius, <i>The Life of Mary of Egypt</i>
July 18 (Mon)		✓ <i>Outline of Short Essay Due</i>
Week IV – Part 1 July 18-20	Saints and Teachers of the East; the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 20, 22 & the first part of 28 (pp. 295-302) • Athanasius the Great, <i>On the Incarnation</i>, excerpts • John Chrysostom, <i>Homily on Eutropius</i> • Basil the Great, <i>On the Holy Spirit</i>, excerpt • Gregory of Nyssa, <i>Life of Macrina</i> • The Council of Chalcedon, <i>The Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon</i>
July 21 (Thurs)		✓ QUIZ #3
Week IV – Part 2 July 21-23	Saints and Teachers of the West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 21, 23-24 • Ambrose of Milan, <i>On the Mysteries</i> • Augustine of Hippo, <i>On the Creed</i> • Bede, <i>Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i> (excerpts)
July 25 (Mon)		✓ <i>Field Trip Reflection Paper Due</i>
Week V – Part 1 July 25-27	The Advent of Islam & the Iconoclastic Controversy; Eastern Christianity Beyond the Empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 25-26 & the second part of 28 (pp. 302-313) • D.B. Hart, <i>The Story of Christianity</i>, Excerpt 1 (pp. 7-10); Excerpt 2 • The 2nd Council of Nicaea, <i>The Letter of the Synod to the Emperor and Empress</i> • John of Damascus, <i>On the Holy Images</i>, excerpts • Timothy I, <i>The Debate on the Christian Faith</i>, excerpts • <i>The Nestorian Tablet</i>
July 28 (Thurs)		✓ QUIZ #4
Week V – Part 2 July 28-30	Popes, Kings and Monks: The West to the Treaty of Verdun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • González, chapters 27, 29 • Gregory the Great, excerpts from his <i>Letters</i> and <i>The Book of Pastoral Rule</i> • Benedict of Nursia, <i>The Rule</i>, excerpts • Einhard, <i>Life of Charlemagne</i>, excerpts
Aug. 1 (Mon)		✓ <i>Short Essay Due</i>
Aug. 5 (Fri)		✓ <i>Oral Final Exams (or Written Final Due)</i>