HSTY 5210: Christian History 1:
The Early Church to the Early Reformation
North Park Theological Seminary
3 credit hours | Monday 7:00-8:30pm Online
draft syllabus

INSTRUCTOR
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course offers a survey of Christian history and theology from the apostolic times through the early Reformation. Course material pays balanced attention to Christianity's intellectual and social history, with sustained consideration of the church's evolving relationship to political and social structures and the question of unity in diversity.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Expand Historical Knowledge: Accumulate both factual knowledge (events, figures, ideas) and interpretive skills (how events, figures, and ideas are related and develop through history).

Develop General Historical Understanding: Apply relevant practices in locating and discerning historical questions according to context and method. Understand and identify the difference between a question that points to a fact (a verifiable event) and a question that instigates further analytical research (interpretive claims).

Practice Cross-Cultural Fluency: Exercise flexibility of interpretive frameworks in encountering new material, incorporating sensitivity to contextual factors in multiple scales (i.e. language difference, cultural difference, accessibility difference, technological difference, etc.). This includes understanding hermeneutics, recognizing and challenging biases and assumptions, and practicing a posture of generosity and curiosity when approaching the texts.

Integration: Digest the above objectives into application in the student's context through active reflection.

This course contributes toward the following MDiv learning outcomes:

(1) Interpret the Christian historical and theological tradition for appropriation in the life and mission of the church;

(2) engage diversity and exhibit growth towards inter-cultural competence for ministry reflective of God's global redemptive work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The secondary source texts will be:

Irvin, Dale T. and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. Maryknoll, New York: Obis Books, 2001.

and

Papandrea, James L. *Reading the Church Fathers: A History of the Early Church and the Development of Doctrine*. Manchester, New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 2022.

The primary source text will be:

Coakley, John W. and Andrea Sterk, edit. *Readings in World Christian History Volume I: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004.

ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING SCALE

Note: This is a hybrid course, which means 1.5 hours of class lecture time is supplemented with 1.5 hours of asynchronous instruction.

Assignment	**Points**	**Percentage**
Discussion Board Posts	200 (best 10 out of the 11 Discussion Board Prompts will be scored, i.e. lowest score will be dropped)	20
3 Mini Exams	150 (50 points each)	15
Essay 1	150	15
Essay 2	200	20
Essay 3	200	20
Timeline Project	100	10
Total	1000	100

Reading Assignment: Each week, students will be assigned readings from each required text.

Video Lectures: Each week, students will be assigned video lectures for additional instructional material. The links can be found on Canvas.

Discussion Board Posts: Each week, students will post a 300-word response to the Weekly Discussion Board prompt on Canvas. Each prompt is based on the reading material assigned for that week. The following week, students will respond to two of their peers' posts, each reply at least 150 words.

This means that other than the first and last weeks, each week, students will be replying to the Discussion Board Post from the previous week **and** submitting their initial Discussion Board Post for the current week's prompt.

There are a total of 11 Discussion Boards, out of which only the top ten scores will contribute to the final grade.

The 3 Mini Exams: Each mini exam will be a list of 10 terms from the coursework. The exam will ask the student to identify the term and explain its context. Each exam is 50 points, each term is worth 5 points. The terms will be compiled through our lecture sessions so there are no surprises. All terms will be provided beforehand.

3 Essays: Every five weeks, students will submit an essay based on the reading material, lecture and discussion, of the unit.

The **first essay (ESSAY ONE)** will include four parts:

1**)** Identify a thesis based on the reading material.
2) Supporting Evidence from the reading material (The student must use a primary source and at least one secondary source).
3) Method: Identify and articulate any methodological considerations relevant to parts 1 and 2.
4) Reflection.
1200 words.

The **second and third essays** (**ESSAY TWO AND THREE)** will include five parts:

1) Identify a thesis based on the reading material.
2) Supporting Evidence from the reading material (The student must use a primary source and at least one secondary source).
3) Counter-Argument: Identify a counter-argument to your thesis above, or an alternative approach, or any evidence that you did not include that would affect your thesis.
3) Method: Identify and articulate any relevant methodological considerations.
4) Reflection.
Essay 2 is 1600 words.
Essay 3 is 2000 words.

All essay assignments should be submitted as a Word document, Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced with the filename of your last name, first initial, and the assignment. For example, John Doe's Essay 1 will be named DoeJEssay1. Please use Turabian/Chicago Style footnotes for all citations. No bibliography required.

Essays are due on the day of class at 11:59 pm.

The aim of these assignments is to help build a progressive step-by-step pattern of developing the students' understanding and engagement with the material. The goal of each discussion post is to help guide the student engage with the primary and secondary source texts in addition to the lecture material. The essays will then build on what the student has already practiced through the discussion posts.

This course is outlined in three major arcs of historical development in the early church. The First Essay and Exam (along with corresponding discussion posts) will be based on introduction to history, the context of the early church from the post-apostolic era through the apologists and early

theologians up to the time of Constantine and the Council of Nicaea with notes on methodology and historiography. The second arc and the Second Essay and Exam (along with corresponding discussion posts) will be based on the first four ecumenical councils, the development of doctrine, church structure, the shift from persecution to empire, and the end of antiquity. The final arc and the Third Essay and Exam (along with corresponding discussion posts) will be based on the Medieval Era and the developments leading up to the Early Reformation.

Thesis examples and possibilities will be readily discussed in lecture and through discussion posts.

Timeline: Throughout the semester, each student will compile their own timeline as a way of organizing the events and notes for the material covered in the course. The timeline should be roughly outlined for the first 16 centuries of the common era, with at least 5 events listed for each century. The final timeline will be submitted at the last day of the semester.

The format for these timelines is up to you! You may use the example format posted on Canvas as a Word document, or you may use any other format available to you, including hand-drawn timelines uploaded digitally for submission.

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

In hyflex classrooms, our learning community combines in-person students and students joining the classroom by Teams. Toward cultivating a respectful, accessible environment for mutual learning, we commit to the following:

- All students are expected to come prepared for active, informed participation.
- Students attending virtually: Think of your physical space as an extension of the classroom. Ensure that you are in a private, stable location that is free of visual and audio distractions. It's important that we all respect the integrity of classroom discussion. (For this same reason, please do not record class sessions or take screenshots without permission.) Please keep your camera and microphone on through the class session. Consider purchasing a microphone/headset to improve the quality of your sound. (Attendance in class assumes that you are present in this way.)
- Students attending in person: Remember that the class and classroom extend to colleagues attending virtually; it's important to remain visible as well. Please engage the full learning community. Registering for the campus section entails a commitment to joining the class in person. If you are too sick to come in person, or if you have an unavoidable scheduling conflict, please use one of your excused absences for the semester rather than joining by Teams.

Attendance: Only two class sessions can be missed without penalty to your final grade; five absences will result in failure.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
5. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

TITLE IX & EQUITY

In accordance with Title IX, North Park employees who become aware of any incident of discrimination, harassment or retaliation based on sex, gender, including pregnancy or related medical conditions, and other protected classes are required by law to notify North Park University's Title IX & Equity Team by submitting a report here. The Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about students. The Senior Director of Human Resources and Deputy Title IX Coordinator will respond and manage concerns about employees. More information can be obtained here: NPU's Discrimination and Harassment Policy.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see the Seminary Academic Catalog.