

Bexley Seabury

HT 310: History of Christianity, New Testament to Present (3 credits) Fall 2022

Meeting Dates: This is a fully online course. Instruction begins September 6, 2022 and ends December 12, 2022. There are no required synchronous sessions, but I will have “office hours” at various times through the semester where studies may sign up to talk about course content or expectations.

Instructor: Thomas Ferguson, PhD
he/him/his

Contact information: tferguson@bexleyseabury.edu

Office hours: I am available to talk by telephone or videoconference, please be in touch if you would like to schedule a time to ask any questions or discuss any matters of concern. You may also sign up to speak with me during the “office hours” which will be posted.

Course Description: This course is intended to further Bexley Seabury’s commitment to addressing global contexts and diversity in race/ethnicity, gender and culture. This course is an Introduction to the History of Christianity from the New Testament period the present, and addresses global contexts and diversity by looking at the ways in which Christianity has always been a multi-cultural, diverse, globalized movement.

The emphasis in pedagogy is to have students reflect and integrate their own current experience of ministry within the historical and contemporary contexts that have shaped and created Christianity.

This course is also intended to be a foundational course and a prerequisite for the Anglican and Episcopal History course, which explores the development of Anglican Communion and Episcopal Church from the Reformation to the present.

This is a fully online course. There are no required synchronous sessions.

Each course “session” begins on a Monday of a given week and concludes on a Sunday. These sessions are grouped into three units, with a Reflection Paper due at the end of each unit.

Participants will be responsible for completing the assignments for a given week **during that week**. The online discussion forum will be posted on Wednesday of each week, and

you will have until Sunday to post a response to the discussion question, and to respond to one other student's post.

Each student will be **required** to participate in the weekly online discussion forum, as described in the section on course requirements.

Course Goals and Outcomes:

Goal: Be familiar with major events, concepts, and significant figures in the development of Christianity from the New Testament period (ca. 30 CE) to the present, with specific emphasis on understanding Christianity as a diverse, globalized, multi-cultural phenomenon.

Outcome: General knowledge of significant developments and persons in church history; and an ability to bring historical insight to bear on contemporary ecclesial, communal, and public issues. (MDiv Curricular Outcome 1.2)

Assessment: Final Exam

Goal: Examine how themes from the history of Christianity and shape and influence current lived practice of faith and ministry settings.

Outcome: An understanding of how the intersection of historical experience, social identities (such as race, class, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation), and related systems of privilege, power, discrimination, and oppression shape, sustain, and transform the social contexts in which mission is articulated and in which ministry takes place.

(MDiv Curricular Outcome 3.3)

Assessment: Three reflection papers.

Learning Methodology

While history does not necessarily repeat itself, as is often said, history does rhyme: we often see similar issues, challenges, and dynamics come up again and again over time. The methodology in this course will be to look at major issues and elements as they emerge and develop in the history of Christianity, and reflect on how we can see how some of these recurring aspects and elements shape our current contexts.

We will in particular look at how issues of race, gender, globalization, and efforts to define identity and draw boundaries, among others, have shaped Christianity from its very beginning and continue to do so. Christianity has constantly dealt with issues of globalization, race and racism, systems of power and oppression, and defining boundaries.

The emphasis is on identifying patterns and recurring issues, and reflecting on how we may discern them at work in our current, lived experience of Christianity. Students will be asked to complete three reflection papers that identify an historical issue and apply to it a contemporary situation.

There is an integrative, comprehensive final examination which will ask students to track themes as they have developed throughout the course and reflect on a contemporary

context. This examination is based on the format used in the General Ordination Examination of The Episcopal Church to allow students practice in answering questions in that format.

In addition, there are weekly, online student discussions as outlined in the course requirements where will lift up significant developments week by week throughout the course.

Required Readings

Henry Bettenson (ed.), Documents of the Christian Church. Oxford: Clarendon, 2011. ISBN 978-0199568987. ***Do not purchase any edition prior to the 2011 edition. I have included the ISBN number of the 2011 edition.***

Nancy Koester, History of Christianity in the United States. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. ISBN 9781451472059.

Diarmaid MacCulloch, Christianity: the first three thousand years. New York: Penguin, 2010. ISBN 9780143118695.

Any other articles or readings are posted to the course site as indicated in the course outline. There are no other additional texts needed for purchase other than the three above.

Course Requirements

(1) Required contribution to online discussions. Each student is required to participate by **posting at least once** in the weekly online discussion, **and by responding at least once** to another student's post. Your posts/comments should be **no more than 150 words**: they are not meant to be essays, but your thoughts and reflections on the discussion question posted. Think of them as the kind of comment you would make in class. **Students are expected to complete their online discussion during the week that particular session takes place.** Students who fall behind need to be in contact with the instructor. You must both post and respond to another's post by 11:59 PM Central Time on Sunday evening of that week's session in the syllabus.

(2) **Three reflection papers, due when indicated in the course outline.** Each reflection paper is due at the end of one of the three units of the course. Late papers will not be accepted without permission of the instructor, which must be requested in advance of the due date to be considered.

These reflection papers should be on a topic of your choosing, covered in that particular section of the course. In your reflection paper, you should a) explain why you chose this

topic; b) set this topic in its historical context by giving a brief summary and overview; and c) cite its relevance in your own current, lived experience of Anglicanism.

For example: in Section 2 of the course, you could choose the development of the Papacy as the topic of a reflection paper. In keeping with the goals of the assignment, I would explain that I chose it because I was raised Catholic; then briefly outline the history and development of the papacy during the Part 2 of the course; and then conclude by noting how I see this as relevant because development in the medieval period shaped an understanding of the Papacy that still remains an issue of division between Catholics and non-Catholics currently.

Each reflection paper **should only cover issues related to that section of the course**. Thus if you chose the Papacy as your topic in Section 3, you would not give its history cumulative to the whole time period, but only for Section 3.

Your reflection papers should be no more than 1250 words, and are due by 11:59 PM Central Time on the days indicated in the syllabus.

(3) **Take home final examination.** This will be a timed, open-book, open-resource exam. This examination will be cumulative, and will cover the entire semester. This examination will be a single question, and will be in the same format as a question for the General Ordination Exam of The Episcopal Church, in order for students to be able to practice in advance of required canonical examinations for ordination. You will have 3 ½ hours to complete the final exam once you begin taking it, and the length of your answer should be no more than 1250 words.

The reflection papers and final examination should be within 10% of the word limit on either end, that is, between 1125 and 1375 words.

The take-home final examination is due by 11:59 PM Central Time on the date indicated in the syllabus.

The three reflection papers and the final exam will be submitted through the Canvas course site.

Online discussion will count for 20% of your grade in the course.

Each reflection paper will count for 10% of your grade for the course.

The final exam will account for 50% a student's grade and will be the assessment artifact for this course.

CEU students need to participate in weekly discussion and complete the final exam to receive credit. Auditors are not required to complete any of the requirements.

Participation in worship, while not required, is an integral part of students' formation.

Course evaluations are an important part of the educational process. They help instructors understand what is working well for a course and what might benefit from some changes.

Students taking the course for credit are expected to complete the evaluation as part of their participation in the learning experience. Auditors are encouraged to complete the evaluation as well. Evaluations will be available in Populi near the end of the course and will remain open until the grade deadline for each term. Evaluations should be completed based on your experience of the course and should not be based on your final grade. For this reason, during the grading period, you will not be able to see your grade in Populi until you have completed the evaluation. After the grade deadline, you will be able to see your grade in Populi, but you will no longer be able to share your voice through the course evaluation.

Course Grading and Feedback:

Please be aware that the Canvas gradebook reflects cumulative grades for assignments for your course, but the final official grade for the course will be recorded manually by the instructor in Populi.

Bexley Seabury requires a minimum grade of C to pass a course.		
Grade	Points	Description
A (4.00)	96-100	Superior/Mastery
A- (3.67)	90-95	Excellent
B+ (3.33)	87-89	Very Good
B (3.00)	84-86	Good (high)
B- (2.67)	80-83	Good (low)
C+ (2.33)	75-79	Acceptable (high)
C (2.00)	70-74	Acceptable/Adequate
F (0)	< 70	Unacceptable (Fail)
A grade of "P" in a Pass/Fail course is equivalent to a grade of C or above.		

The rubrics for Online Discussion, Reflection Paper, and Final Exam are attached at the end of this syllabus.

I respond normally within 24 hours to posts to online discussion forums, and return assignments within a week of the due date.

A Word about Assessment:

Bexley Seabury Seminary regularly evaluates the quality of our programs using a variety of data, including documents that are deposited into student portfolios. These portfolios consist of designated student work (artifacts) from each course, along with the instructor's

graded artifact and a scored rubric that assesses the work in light of desired curricular outcomes.

The designated assessment artifact for this course is the take home final examination.

We use your portfolio to assess student learning (in the aggregate) and the effectiveness of our curricula in reaching desired goals and objectives. This process does not involve any further evaluation of your work for grading purposes. No identifying information will be included in any evaluation or report provided to our accreditors or other outside parties. For further information, see the Student Handbook. You may also talk with your instructor, your advisor, the Assessment Coordinator (Lelia Fry, lfry@bexleyseabury.edu), or the Academic Dean, (Jason Fout, jfout@bexleyseabury.edu).

Course Outline and Schedule:

Unit 1: Beginnings

September 6-11 Session 1: Backgrounds to Christianity: Israel and Empire

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 1-2
Excerpts from Roman sources on Judaism, posted to course website.

September 12-18 Session 2: Jesus and the Formation of Christianity

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 3-5

Bettenson, Documents: Letter from Pliny to Trajan, pp. 3-5; Didache, pp. 67-70; Martyrdom of Polycarp; pp, 9-12; Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/perpetua.asp>

September 19-25 Session 3: Expansion of Christianity

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 6, 7
Bettenson, Documents: Letter of Arius to Eusebius, pp. 41-42; Julian on Toleration, 20-21; Theodosius on Catholic and Heretic, 23-24; "Heresies" (my scare quotes) Concerning Person of Christ, pp. 37-46

September 26-Oct. 2 Session 4: Collapse and Renewal in the West

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 9-10; Bettenson, Documents: Rule of St. Benedict, pp. 122-134; Gregory, Letter to Eulogius and to Augustine, 160-162.

Unit 1 Reflection Paper Due October 2

Part 2: Development & Expansion

October 3-9 Session 5: Byzantine Christianity and the Rise of Islam

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 8, 13, 14; Bettenson, Documents: Iconoclastic Controversy, Decree of Second Council of Nicaea, pp. 97-98

Pact of Umar, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/pact-umar.asp>

October 10-16 Session 6: Medieval Christianity in the West

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 11-12, 16

Bettenson, Documents: Anselm on Atonement, pp. 145-158; Aquinas on Belief, 148-149; The Episcopal Inquisition, 140-142

Book of Margery Kempe, Excerpts. To be posted to course website.

October 17-23 Session 7: Reformations of the 16th Century

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 17-18

Bettenson, Documents: Luther, pp. 204-209; Calvin, 226-228; Ignatius of Loyola, 261-264; Canons of Council of Trent, 264-269

Oct. 24-30 Session 8: Early Modern Christianity: Expansion and Challenges

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 19-20

Bettenson, Documents: Deistic Controversies, 330-335; Bartolome de las Casas, Excerpts; account of Martyrs of Japan; to be posted to course website.

Unit 2 Reflection Paper Due October 30.

Unit 3: Modernity and its Challenges

Oct. 31-Nov. 6 Session 9: American Christianity, Colonial America to Civil War

Read: Koester, Ch. 1-4

Trial of Anne Hutchinson; Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom; Richard Allen, "Address to Free Persons of Colour"; Jarena Lee, "Life and Experience of Jarena Lee"; all to be posted to course website.

Nov. 7-13 Session 10: American Christianity, Civil War and Afterwards

Read: Koester, Ch. 5-6

Read: Rauschenbusch, "Theology of the Social Gospel,"; W.E.B. DuBois, "Litany for Atlanta,"; Mabel Potter Daggett, "Heathen Invasion of America"; all to be posted to course website.

Nov. 14-20 Session 11: Collapse of Christendom and Global Expansion

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 21-23
Bettenson, Documents: Keble's Assize Sermon, pp. 336-339; Doctrine of Papal Infallibility, pp. 277-278; Roman Catholic Church and Social Problems, pp. 278-285; Alumni Newsletter, New York Deaconess Training School (to be posted to course website).

November 21-25: Thanksgiving Week / No Class

Nov. 28-Dec. 4 Section 13: Christianity in Time of Transition: the 20th Century

Read: MacCulloch, Ch. 24-25; Koester, Ch. 7-8
Bettenson, Documents: Barmen Declaration, pp. 357-359; Letter from a Birmingham Jail, pp. 360-362; Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Sexism and God-talk," pp. 375-377; Letty Russell, pp. 375-377

Part 3 Reflection Paper Due December 5.

December 5-12 Session 14: Final Examination

The final exam will be available on the course website beginning December 5. You have until 11:59 PM Central Time on December 12 to upload it through the Canvas course site.

ALL STUDENTS IN BEXLEY SEABURY COURSES ARE EXPECTED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION THAT IS PROVIDED ON CANVAS:

- ACADEMIC POLICIES AND FORMS;
- REQUESTS FOR WITHDRAWALS, EXTENSIONS, AND INCOMPLETES;
- TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSISTANCE,
- WRITING GUIDELINES AND ASSISTANCE;
- COURSE NETIQUETTE;
- PROHIBITION OF PLAGIARISM

Assignment Rubrics:

Online Discussions

Curricular goal or class element	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
Comprehension and critical thought	Shows evidence of comprehension of material Shows evidence of critical engagement with material Relates material to other aspects of the course, larger course topic, larger relevant topics and issues	Shows evidence of understanding of material Shows evidence of ability to analyze, interact with material Relates material to immediate topic	Summarizes material briefly Mistakes of understanding Does not deal with material	
Responsiveness	Builds from prompt to initiate or expand discussion Responses to other student(s) post(s) relate post to larger topic Response moves discussion forward	Follows prompt and engages assigned topic Responses to other student(s) post(s) address point(s) made by poster Response continues discussion	Ignores or mistakes prompt Responses to other student(s) post(s) are cursory ("I agree.") or otherwise do not engage points Response contributes little to discussion	
Clarity	Writing is consistently clear, accessible, and organized References to materials are clear and easy to follow Writing shows command of written language and ability to use language to persuade, explain, respond, etc. No errors of grammar and syntax	Writing is generally clear, accessible, and organized References are made to other materials Writing shows ability to use written language to persuade, explain, respond, etc. No errors of grammar and syntax	Writing is unclear, hard to understand, and/or poorly organized or difficult to follow No reference to other materials Writing skills are poor Errors of grammar and syntax	
Interaction with peers	Takes care to acknowledge value of other's contributions Poses constructive questions, offers further thoughts that build on peer's contribution Critical response is respectful and open to further discussion	Acknowledges other's contribution Responds directly to other's contribution Shows respect for other	Ignores or mistakes other's contribution Does not respond to other's contribution Tone, language, etc., are dismissive, disrespectful, or heedless of likely effect	
Timeliness	Initial post and response to other student(s) posted on or ahead of schedule Initial post and response to other student(s) are posted on different days	Initial post and response to other student(s) posted on schedule Initial post and response to other student(s) are posted on same day	Initial post and/or response posted late Initial post not made Response not made	
			Total score	

Reflective writing

Class Element	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
Engages the reader by establishing a context and analyzing a personal situation	Effectively identifies a condition, situation, or issue in order to analyze a personal situation. Insightful analysis conveys significance of the condition, situation, or issue.	Clearly identifies a condition, situation, or issue in order to analyze a personal situation. Analysis conveys significance of the condition, situation, or issue.	Identifies a context, a situation, or an issue but does not engage in analysis.	
Creates a coherent organizing structure.	The response is skillfully organized from beginning to end; opening, body, and closure are appropriately complex.	The response is clearly organized from beginning to end; opening, body, and closure are appropriately complex.	Produces an organization that is incomplete or one or more elements causes confusion.	
Demonstrates understanding of English language conventions and uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Demonstrates control of grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Infrequent errors do not interfere with meaning. Uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Did not proofread essay. Essay demonstrates little control of usage, grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Numerous errors interfere with meaning.	
			<i>Total score</i>	
			<i>Average score</i>	

Final Exam

Class Element	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
Identifies relevant historical issues and events	Correctly lifts up appropriate historical events that answer the question posed and provides a thorough range of examples to support the response.	Identifies elements that support a minimal but adequate response to question posed.	Does not identify relevant examples, or does not provide examples sufficient to support the response.	
Relates events and concepts to current context	Skillfully and deliberately integrates these historical events and concepts into a reflection on contemporary situations, thoroughly noting how they shape current context.	Properly makes connections between historical events and concepts and a current, contemporary context.	Does not relate events and concepts to current context; or, improperly or incorrectly applies events and concepts; or applies them to something other than a current, contemporary context.	
Demonstrates understanding of English language conventions and uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Infrequent errors do not interfere with meaning. Uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Did not proofread response. Response demonstrates little control of usage, grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Numerous errors interfere with meaning.	
			Total Score	
			Average Score	