

Fall 2011
University of Houston
Department of Religious Studies
T/ Th 2:30-3:50 pm

David M. Gustafson PhD (Dr. G)
dmgustafson@uh.edu
281.940.9615 (cell)
113 Bruce Religion Center (box)

RELS 3330: Christianity SYLLABUS

Course Description

Christianity from the post-biblical era to the present, including church fathers, heresies, medieval Christian philosophy, Greek and Latin churches, the Reformation, modern and American Christianity. Three semester hours

Course Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Summarize major events, personalities, and teachings of Christianity from its origin to today.
- Discuss similarities and differences of Christian traditions including Eastern, Roman, and Protestant.
- Describe the value of Christian identities and religious pluralism in America.
- Compare and contrast specific Christian traditions.

Course Instructor

The professor serves as Lecturer at the University of Houston, and Associate Professor at Houston Graduate School of Theology. He received degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M.Div.; Th.M.) in Chicago, Fuller Theological Seminary (D.Min.) in California, and Linköpings universitet (Ph.D.) in Sweden.

Course Textbook

Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity: An Introduction*. Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
ISBN-10: 9781405108997

Course Grade

1. Reading "Clicker" Questions	15%
2. Two papers on church visits (10% each)	20%
3. Two hourly exams (20% each)	40%
4. Comprehensive final exam	25%

Grading Scale

94-100 A	84-87 B	74-77 C	64-67 D
90-93 A-	80-83 B-	70-73 C-	60-63 D-
88-89 B+	78-79 C+	68-69 D+	0-59 F

Course Guidelines:

Religion can be a sensitive subject. A variety of viewpoints *from an academic perspective* will be represented in the class, and an open environment is encouraged by careful listening, dialogue, and respect of others' views. No question, idea, or position expressed should be equated with a person's own viewpoint or personal beliefs.

Course assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated on the syllabus. Only paper copies will be accepted. **ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED UNLESS APPROVED BY THE PROFESSOR BEFORE THE DUE DATE.** Papers will be lowered one letter grade for each day of class late.

If any assignment has been copied from a classmate or plagiarized, the grade will be lowered severely, possibly to an F. To avoid plagiarism, all written assignments must be in your own words; cite the ideas of others, and place direct quotes in quotation marks with a parenthetical note showing the source.

Attendance at scheduled classes is required (from the beginning of class time) and necessary in order to achieve class objectives. Absences due to college activities, emergency or extended illness may be excused. Other absences are unexcused. Excuses must be supported by documentation such as: doctor's note, traffic ticket, letter from coach, etc. If absent, students are responsible for making up missed work, requesting hand-outs and already returned assignments, and getting notes from other students.

Come to class having completed the reading assignments. Turn cell phones off or to vibrate. Use of the internet on laptops and texting on cell phones is not permitted during class. *Not respecting and following these class guidelines will result in the reduction of the course grade.* All students who have a learning disability, physical handicap and/or any other possible impediment to class participation and requirements should schedule an appointment with the instructor during the first week of class to discuss any accommodations.

If at some point during the semester you must discontinue the course, due to poor performance, illness or some other cause, be sure to follow proper procedures for withdrawal.

Course Requirements

1. **Fifteen (15) Reading "Clicker" Questions** It is expected that students will complete the assigned reading and come to class familiar with the material and ready to answer the questions. A **limited amount of time** will be given for the questions presented on Turning Point. **Each student must bring a clicker to every class session.** Reading questions will be announced during the class session. If you have read the assigned reading, you should be able to answer correctly. **15%**

2. **Two papers** of three church visits (10% each). Each paper must be **3-4 pages in length** (not less than 3, not more than 4), double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, written after visiting a church in the Houston area. You must attach (staple) a **worship bulletin from the church** to each paper for credit for the assignment. The churches visited must be from different Christian traditions, for example: Roman Catholic and Baptist. Each paper should include an

introduction, brief history of the church, a summary of beliefs (what creeds they confess), and distinguishing marks of the church (style of worship, church polity, sacred space, demographics of the congregation, liturgical or free-worship, etc.). The **second paper** should include a 1-2 paragraph analysis of similarities and differences between the churches and their traditions. (e.g. "While New Life Assembly has a rather spontaneous flow in the worship service, the mass at Christ the King was very programmed." "While Unity Congregation embraces broader American culture, First Fundamental warns their people to flee from the world.") Each paper should include a paragraph on your *personal thoughts* after visiting the church. What struck you as different? Familiar? What did you learn about the church? About yourself? **20%**

3. **Two exams** (20% each) over lectures, films, and readings. Bring a pencil, blue Scantron (form 4521), and your Peoplesoft ID. DO NOT WRITE ON THE EXAM. Exams are multiple-choice. You will have 60 minutes for each exam. **40%**

4. **Comprehensive final exam** over lectures and readings. Bring a pencil and blue Scantron (form 4521). **25%**

5. A student's initiative **to participate in class** and answer questions, as well as his/her attitude toward the subject matter and other students will be considered in the final course grade.

Course Schedule

Part One: Introduction to Christianity

- T, Aug. 23 Hebrew background; Greco-Roman world
- Th, Aug. 25 Messianic expectations; Jesus of Nazareth; Messianic claims
 Reading: McGrath 1-21
 Glossary: Incarnation, *Logos*, Soteriology
- T, Aug. 30 Jesus of Nazareth's Death, Burial, and Resurrection
 Reading: McGrath 22-35
 Glossary: Eucharist, Liturgy

Part Two: Early Christianity

- Th, Sept. 1 Spread of Christianity; Conflicts with state
 Reading: McGrath 84-99; 171-185
 Glossary: Apostolic era; Catechism, Fathers, Orthodoxy, Patristic, Trinity
- T, Sept. 6 Christian Faith and Culture; Orthodoxy; Heresy; Apostles' Creed
 Reading: McGrath 114-133; 185-188
 Glossary: Alexandrian School, Antiochene School, Apologetics, Arianism, Catholic, Christology, Creed, Docetism, *Homoousian*, Modalism

- Th, Sept. 8 Constantine, Council of Nicea; Early Monasticism; Anthony, Basil Eastern Church
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 133-143; 188-189; 289-296
 □ **Glossary:** Cappadocian fathers, Chalcedonian Definition, Hypostatic union, Monophysitism, *Perichoresis*, Theotokos
- T, Sept. 13 Augustine of Hippo, Pelagius, Patrick of Ireland; Augustine of Canterbury
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 143-154; 189-192
 □ **Glossary:** Anti-Pelagian writings, Donatism, Manicheism, Pelagianism
- Th, Sept. 15 Benedict; Growth of the Papacy; Division of East and West
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 154-159; 192-195
 □ **Glossary:** Ecclesiology, Schism

Part Three: Medieval Christianity

- T, Sept. 20 **EXAM # 1**
- Th, Sept. 22 Charlemagne, Medieval Monasticism
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 195-196; 198-199
 □ **Glossary:** Vulgate
- T, Sept. 27 Scholastic Theology, Anselm, Abelard, Crusades, Assisi
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 167-170; 196-198; 299-303; 342-345
 □ **Glossary:** Atonement, Exemplarism, Five Ways, Ontological Argument, Sacrament, Scholasticism
- Th, Sept. 29 Aquinas; Sacramental System, Wycliffe; Sacred Space, Liturgical Year
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 159-162; 304-316; 320-335
 □ **Glossary:** Transubstantiation
- T, Oct. 4 Papal Schism; Renaissance Papacy
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 199-206
 □ **Glossary:** Conciliarism, Humanism,

Part Four: Protestant Reformation

- Th, Oct. 6 *Luther: The Movie* 2003 DVD
- T, Oct. 11 *Luther: The Movie* 2003 DVD
- Th, Oct. 13 Zwingli, Anabaptists, Calvin, Henry VIII
 □ **Reading:** McGrath 206-210; 211-218; 268-270
 □ **Glossary:** Anabaptism, Calvinism, Consubstantiation, Evangelical, Justification by faith, Lutheranism, Protestantism, Radical Reformation, Reformed, Scripture principle, Zwinglianism

- T, Oct. 18 Catholic Reformation, Council of Trent, Roman Catholics, Lutherans in America
 Paper on Church Visit #1 due
 Reading: McGrath 210-211; 223-229; 239-250; 271-272
- Th, Oct. 20 Puritans and Pilgrims, American Congregationalists
 Reading: McGrath 218-219; 229-231; 336-342
 Glossary: Confession

Part Five: American Christianities

- T, Oct. 25 **EXAM #2**
- Th, Oct. 27 State-church colonies, Massachusetts, Roger Williams, Anabaptists, Baptists, Anglican-Episcopalians; American Religious Pluralism,
 Reading: McGrath 162-167; 270-271
- T, Nov. 1 Great Awakening, Methodists, Presbyterians
 Reading: McGrath 219-223; 272-273; 296-299; 335-336
 Glossary: Pietism
- Th, Nov. 3 Separation of Church and State, Deism, Civil Religion
 Reading: McGrath 232-234
 Glossary: Deism, Enlightenment
- T, Nov. 8 Revivalism, Slavery, Mormonism
- Th, Nov. 10 New Evangelicalism, Moody;
 Reading: McGrath 273-275
 Glossary:
- T, Nov. 15 *Amazing Grace* with Bill Moyers DVD
Paper on Church visit # 2 due
- Th, Nov. 17 Eastern Orthodox, Vatican II; American Religion and Women
 Reading: McGrath 261-266
 Glossary: Feminism
- T, Nov. 22 Modernists, Fundamentalists, Darwin, Pentecostals
 Reading: McGrath 234-239; 251-261; 266-268; 316-320
 Glossary: Charisma/ charismatic, Eschatology, Fundamentalism, Historical Jesus; Historical critical method; Liberal Protestantism, Neo-orthodoxy, *Parousia*
- T, Nov. 24 Religious Diversity, Culture War, Postmodernism, Emerging Church, Missional Church
 Reading: McGrath 275-288
 Glossary: Postmodernism

Thanksgiving Holiday, Nov. 23 – 26

T, Nov. 29 Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: Comprehensive, Thursday, December 15, 2:00 p.m. (35%)