

Church History

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Page 1: Church History

Sacred Heart Theological Seminary

Syllabus

Church History:

The history of Christianity mainly concerns the Christian religion and Church denominations from the ministry of Jesus Christ up to contemporary times.

Goal: To become familiar with the collective universal Church and the historical Christian experience.

Learning Objectives:

1. Raise awareness of the important stages and periods of the 2000-year history of Christianity.
2. Recognize how and why Christianity spread and became the world's largest religion.
3. To raise awareness and recognize the main Christian beliefs and practices of the major world religions.
4. To gain basic knowledge of Christianity from the time of Jesus and His Apostles to the current period.
5. To develop a deeper understanding of how God works in human history and in our lives.
6. Gain insight into the social, cultural and political dynamics of Church growth and development.
7. Conduct independent research responding to discussion questions presented.
8. Complete weekly assignment successfully and timely.
9. Complete a formal paper on selected sections of Church history
10. Pass a comprehensive examination on assignments and readings.

Why study Church history?

God's word tells us to search out and remember the past. Uncovered in historical study is the record of people of faith determined to live and die for Christian doctrine. This is important because we tend to be working from our own limited Church experiences and lack the continuous dimension of the entire teachings of the universal Church and the Bible. Our awareness to church history is vital to helping us understand the Christian Church, as well as to avoid the errors of the past and the patterns that precede errors. Also, history of the church is not just a study of the past to understand the present, but, it is also an attempt to understand and even predict the future. In the study of history of the Church, we discover successes and failures enabling us to seek out a guide to correct conduct. When we understand the history of our Christianity, we have a better opportunity to follow and preach the example of Jesus and His apostles. Those who do not study history are condemned to repeat it!

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Exercise # 1

Early Christianity

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christinity

Read PP 1-4

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Christian_History

Read P. 1

1. What is the time period and main concern in studying the history of Christianity?
2. Specifically how does Christianity differ from other Abrahamic religions?
3. What do the vast majority of Christians believe?
4. Name the largest branches of Christianity.
5. Where specifically did Christianity begin?
6. Where did Christianity spread to?
7. Trace the North East spread of Christianity and the time period.
8. What identity did Christianity have in its beginning during the 1st century?
9. Explain the two distinct phases that the early Church.
10. Discuss what prompted the First Council of Nicaea?
11. Explain what is meant by the "Apostolic Church.
12. Explain what is meant by the "Great Commission."
13. What is the primary source of information for the Apostolic Church?
14. What was the ethnical background of the first Christians?
15. Explain the difficulty of Gentiles converts to become part of the Christian community.
16. Name the two Christians that the Book of Acts records as being killed because of their Christian faith.
17. Explain where and when the name "Christian" was first applied to the disciples.

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Exercise # 2

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Early Christian beliefs and Creed

Read PP 4-6

1. What were the sources of the beliefs of the apostolic community?
2. What were some of the earliest accounts of belief found in the Gospels and New Testament epistles?
3. Explain what is meant by the "Post-Apostolic" period.
4. Summarize the persecutions of Christians by the Roman Empire beginning with the year 64.
5. What is the reported time frame that Christians suffered from sporadic persecutions for refusal to worship the Roman emperor?
6. What was the role of the Church Bishop in post-Apostolic times?
7. What did Bishop Clement call the various leaders of the Corinthian Church?
8. What did the New Testament call the Corinthian leaders?
9. Name the three Post-Apostolic bishops of importance who were called the Apostolic Fathers.
10. Who did the Apostolic Fathers personally study under?
11. Discuss the titles of leaders who assisted Bishops and how their role developed over time.
12. When did an Episcopal structure become visible in the Church?
13. Explain the term "Apostolic succession."
14. Who created the first document of what is now called apostolic succession?
15. Name the two sorts of works produced by the well-educated circles of the Hellenistic world.
16. What is the study of the Church Fathers known as?
17. Name at least seven of the Church Father in Post-Christianity.

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Exercise # 3

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Read PP 6-8

Early heresies:

1. Discuss one of the main roles of the Bishops in the early Church.
2. Define the term “heresies.”
3. What was the greatest source of controversies in the early Church?
4. Compare and contrast Docetism and Deity controversies.
5. Discuss Arianism and Trinitarianism beliefs.
6. Explain the theology of the “incarnation.”
7. Discuss some of the competing groups and beliefs in the early Church.
8. Discuss how the New Testament developed over time.
9. What canon did the early church use as a basis for the Old Testament?
10. Discuss the writings attributed to the apostles that were circulated in collected form by the end of the 1st century.
11. Name the Bishop who gave the list of the earliest preserved books that would be used by the New Testament.
12. What is the significance of the African Synod of Hippo in 393?
13. Name the person who commissioned the Latin Vulgate edition of the Bible.
14. Were the Bishops and Council bringing something new to the people in the New Testament documents?
15. What council made a full dogmatic articulation of the canon for Roman Catholicism?

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Exercise # 4

Christianity during late antiquity (313-476)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Read PP 8-10

1. Discuss the role played by Galerius in 311 in the establishment of the Roman orthodoxy.
2. Discuss what The Emperor Constantine in fighting on the side of Christianity.
3. Why was the accession of Constantine a turning point for the Christian Church?
4. Describe the active role Constantine played in the Church in 316.
5. What position did Constantine's son successor know as Julian the Apostate take regarding Christianity?
6. Name at least six of the later Church Fathers who wrote volumes of theological texts.
7. Discuss what several Ecumenical council concerning Christological disputes.
8. Discuss the Trinitarian Christianity under Theodosius I.
9. Discuss the organizational boundaries adopted from the Empire and what they were called when adopted by the Church.
10. Name the five sees that held special eminence in the early Church.
11. What special role did the Bishop of Rome have had was he placed with Constantinople in precedence?
12. Why did Theodosius authorize the first case of capital punishment of Priscillian?

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Exercise # 5

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christinity

Nestorianism and the Sassanid Empire

PP 10-11

1. What was the consequence of the School of Edessa teaching that Christ's divine and human nature were distinct persons?
2. Explain why there was a major schism in the Roman Church about the Nestorian viewpoint.
3. After the Nestorian churches were persecuted where did the followers fled to and accepted?
4. What evolved by the end of the 5th century when the Persian Church became independent of the Roman Church?
5. What resulted from the schism created by the Council of Chalcedon?
6. What was the popular viewpoint of the 4th century espoused by the Egyptian presbyter Arius?
7. Who spread Arian Christianity among the Goths establishing the faith among many of the Germanic tribes that separated them from the Romans?
8. Define "Monasticism, and its roots."
9. Discuss the two forms of monasticism.
10. Who were the central figures in the development of monasticism?

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Exercise # 6

Discussion Paper

1. **Summarize** how the New Testament developed or evolved over the course of the first 250-300 years of Christian history.
2. Discuss four major purposes for the Book of Acts.
3. Discuss your personal reaction to the Jewish background and mission of Jesus in the following statement:

Jesus was a first century Palestinian pious Jew, worshiping the Jewish God, preaching the interpretations of Jewish law and accepted as the Jewish Messiah by his disciples.

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Exercise # 7

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Early middle ages

Read PP 11-20

1. Name three prominent 5th century missionaries.
2. What religious order dominated monasteries in the West?
3. Discuss the significance of the Cluniac reform with the Cistercian Movement.
4. Discuss the most significant conflict between secular and religious powers in medieval Europe in the 11th century.
5. What was the intent of the decree *Dictatus Papa* issued by Pope Gregory VII?
6. Discuss the excommunication of Henry IV and the conditions for absolution.
7. In the controversy between King Henry I and St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, what were the compromising signs/symbols used to separate secular authority from ecclesiastical authority?
8. Discuss the Medieval Inquisition and its effect on heresy.
9. Name the four earliest medieval universities.
10. Name the Archbishop who began the early evangelization in Scandinavia?
11. Discuss the basic problems and the ensuing controversy and Crusades that divided East and West.
12. Why did the Photian schism take place?
13. Explain why the East-West Schism or Great Schism occurred.
14. What is the meaning of the word "crusade" and what is its purpose?
15. What was the last crusade sponsored by the papacy?

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Exercise # 8

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Hesychast Controversy

Read PP 20-24

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Hus

Read PP 1-7

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wycliffe

Read PP 1-15

1. Define the term “Hesychasm,” and where the practice can be found.
2. Explain why the Roman Catholic Church has never fully accepted Hesychasm.
3. Why did Pope Clement V move to France in 1309, and what was the duration of his pontificate there?
4. For nearly forty years, why were there two Popes and two sets of cardinals.
5. How did the Council at Pisa resolve the confusion of two Popes?
6. What ultimately was decided about the two Popes?
7. What was John Wycliffe historically noted for?
8. Who was the Lollard movement
9. Explain John Wycliffe’s conflict with the Church.
10. Discuss the background on Jan Hus
11. Why and how did Jan Hus die?
12. What are some of the prevailing views about Hus’ efforts?
13. What did Pope John Paul II said about Hus’s death?
14. List Hus’s legacies in New York.
15. Discuss how the Renaissance had an affect on the Papacy and the City of Rome.

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Exercise # 9

[Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history_of_Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/history_of_Christianity)

Reformation and Counter-Reformation

PP 24-26

1. What two distinguished theologians in the early 16 century set out to reform the Church?
2. What is the origin of the word Protestant and what is its meaning?
3. What was the original term for Protestant?
4. Who is the beginning of the Protestant Reformation generally identified with?
5. Name thee most important traditions to emerge directly from the Protestant Reformation.
6. Compare and contrast the two distinct movements of the Protestant Reformation.
7. What is meant by the Counter-Reformation, or Catholic Reformation?
8. What were the 95 Theses concerned about?
9. What was Luther's occupation?
10. What was Luther charged with by papal bull and how did he die?
11. Explain what is meant by theology of justification?
12. How did Luther's doctrine of justification differ from the Roman Catholic Church?

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Exercise # 10

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Read PP 26-30

1. Explain how Ulrich Zwingli's theology was similar to Martin Luther or may have preceded the famous protest.
2. What was Zwingli's viewpoint on veneration of icons?
3. Discuss John Calvin's doctrine of predestination.
4. Explain why was Calvin referred by some as the Protestant Pope?
5. Discuss how the King Henry VIII came into conflict with the papacy.
6. What was the outcome of that dispute?
7. What denomination sect emerged when the English Church separated from Rome?
8. What was the response of the Catholic Church to the Protestant Reformation?
9. Which council produced the Roman Catechism?
10. What did the Council of Trent address in the Church?
11. Discuss the religion and science controversy over Galileo Galilei support of Copernican astronomy.
12. What was Galileo found guilty of in his trial?
13. Discuss the background of the most famous colonization by Protestant English Puritans.
14. Define the term "Revivalism."
15. Explain what the Great Awakening centered upon.
16. What was the final group to emerge from the great awakening?
17. Explain what the term "Restorationism" as it refers to Christianity.

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Exercise # 11

Modern History (1848-present)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Christianity

Read PP 31-40

1. What is the time period covered in describing contemporary times?
2. Describe the effort of an ideological objective of eliminating religion from the Soviet Union.
3. What particular church was the target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920's and 1930's?
4. What does the term "liberal" in liberal Christianity?
5. Discuss the Fundamentalist movement.
6. Along side Jews how many Catholic priests were executed in concentration camps in Dachau?
7. What is the Second Vatican Council best known for?
8. What does the term "ecumenism" mean?
9. What has blocked the final resolution of a schism between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches?

10. What if anything has been done to promote an ecumenical movement within Protestantism?

11. Write out the Centuries of Christian History Chart P. 35.

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Exercise # 12

Formal Paper Due

Essay Question:

History has a strange way of repeating itself. If we don't take the time to learn the lessons of the past, and moreover act upon them, we will continue to commit the same costly mistakes. If we are to learn from the mistakes of the past, what will be required of us in the Church to fulfill God's mission?

Please limit your paper to five pages.