

**The Christian Tradition**  
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This syllabus represents assignments for a one-semester history of Christianity, Jesus to last week, across the denominations. It was taught at the Florida State University in 1997. The class was taken by sophomore through senior students, some fulfilling a writing requirement, others out of interest in the topic. The internet project mentioned below was a small groups project in which students investigated one of several various Christian denominations through print and internet resources, visited at least one worship service of the denomination, and came up with an annotated list of the ten best internet sites for the denomination on which they worked. I spent some time discussing the reliability of internet sites. The happy result of this was an appropriate scepticism of students for both electronic and print media information on religion generally.

### **SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

In this schedule      C&E = *Atlas of the Christian Church* by Chadwick and Evans  
                                 T = readings from the packet of readings  
                                 Internet resources are indicated with a URL.

1. Introduction to the course. Video: *The Christians, Part I: A Peculiar People*

2. The Early Church C&E 14-30

3. The Church of the Martyrs and the Catacombs; T: *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*; slide presentation

\*4. Documents of Earliest Christianity

                                 Selections TBA from the Bible. Also read T: *The Didache*. In a two page (minimum) paper describe what it would have been like to live in the earliest Christians communities and, if you are familiar with contemporary ones, how early Christianity differs from the present. Look for such items as basic creed, rituals, division of resources, government, ethics. For this paper, you may insert biblical references and references to *The Didache* in parentheses. Other references should be indicated in a footnote or endnote.

**5. This class will meet in the Bibliographic Instruction Room of the Library.** During this class we will survey resources in the library and on the Internet for the World-Wide Web project. Students who have visited sites of pilgrimages including Israel and/or Rome or elsewhere are encouraged to contact the instructor regarding slides/photos/videos or narratives they may wish to share with the class at meeting #9.

6. The Medieval Church C&E 31-51 Some of the time during this class will be allotted to organizing groups for the World-Wide Web project.

## 7. The Medieval Church C&E 52-74

- \* 8. Read *The Rule of Saint Benedict* and C&E 188-191. Compose a two-page (minimum) essay on the way of life described by the *Rule*. The title of the essay is "Living in Christian Community: The Benedictine Experience." Review your notes from session #3. In this essay you will need to look for what is distinctively Benedictine, especially the items which contrast with the earlier community.

9. Pilgrimage C&E 75-83 & Make your own virtual pilgrimage to Jerusalem (<http://www.virtual.il.co/communities/jerusalem>) and/or to the monuments and museums of Rome (<http://www.roma2000.it/index.html>), Campostela de Santiago (<http://www.usc.es/~cdtec/doc/turist.html>), Trier ([http://www.dioezese-trier.de/hr1996/html\\_eng/hr96\\_0.htm](http://www.dioezese-trier.de/hr1996/html_eng/hr96_0.htm)) or a site of your choosing. You must bring the name of the site and its URL to class. Your journeys will provide the material for class discussion. Consider what you would bring, how you would get there, what you would see, and if you were a pilgrim, not a tourist, how would the experience affect you.

10. Reform . . . C&E 84-102 T: Luther's Ninety-five theses. From the Web, skim the Prologue to his commentary on Romans at <http://www.icelnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg-home.html> and then read the Westminster Confession (chapters 3, 7, and 20) at <http://www.met.tamu.edu/personnel/faculty/alcorn/WPCdir/westminster-conf-of-faith.html#chap3>

11. . . and Reaction C&E 84-123

12. Video: *The Mission* Part I; T Ignatius of Loyola, "Rules for Thinking with the Church"

13. Video: *The Mission* Part II; T "The Just War"

- \*14. Review your notes from *The Mission* and the accompanying readings. Write a two-page essay. Justify or attack the disobedience of both Jesuits to the orders of their ecclesiastical superiors. Be prepared to discuss the actions of the Portuguese, of Fr. Gabriel, and of Fr. Rodrigo in terms of just war theory.

## 15. MIDTERM EXAMINATION

16. Christianity in North America and in the 18th and 19th centuries C&E 124-145 and Jonathan Edward's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" at <http://home.navisoft.com/outreach/Edwards.html>

- \*17. Read the materials on John Wesley in the Target packet and write a two-page essay discussing Wesley's approach to Christian spirituality. Compare and contrast it with what you know of post-Reformation spirituality, especially Ignatius of Loyola and

Jonathan Edwards.

18. Africa, Asia, and Orthodoxy C&E 146-170.

19. Christian architecture: slide lecture C&E 170-177

20. Christian art: slide lecture C&E 192-194

21. Christian music: audio demonstration C&E C&E 178-187

\*22. During the weeks previous to this class, students will have attended a minimum of one service of a Christian denomination. If at all possible, this should be one of the groups on which they are reporting, preferably the one with which they are less familiar. During this class, students will turn in a two-page essay on the service. See Target packet for instructions. Class time will be spent discussing similarities and differences among Christian forms of worship.

23. The Christian World Today C&E 195-211

24. Christianity and Secular Modernism C&E 212-215 and 217column B. **Drafts of the internet pages are due in this class.**

25. Christianity in Latin America & the Philippines C&E 216-217 column A and 221

26. Afro-Caribbean religions: slide presentation

27. Women and Christianity. Read *Inter insigniores* at <http://listserv.american.edu/catholic/church/vatican/women.priests> and **submit final copy of pages for the internet guide (2 copies) and report on participation.**

28. THANKSGIVING. NO CLASS

29. Ecumenism & Modern Creeds C&E 222-225

30. Overflow/Review