

Syllabus, SSC 521

Location: St. Stephen's College, 8810-112 Street
University of Alberta Campus, Edmonton

Introduction to Church History, SSC 521

May 31- June 4, 2021, 8:30 – 4:30

Instructor

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[Note: You are welcome and encouraged to discuss your ideas and interests and your thinking about the course material with the instructor.]

The Intensive Course Model

All registrants in week-long intensive courses are reminded that these courses involve extensive preparation, pre-readings and the completion of specific pre-assignments. To fully benefit from these courses you are expected to arrive on the course dates well prepared as per the course outline specifications given to you at the time of registration. You are also expected to keep your day and evening schedule free during these courses in order to carry out the expected classroom work assigned as the course unfolds. Because of the extensive amount of preparation, all participants have to register one month in advance.

Non-credit Participants: Please note that those taking the course on a non-credit basis are encouraged to do the required reading beforehand and be ready and able to contribute to the course. No grades will be given to any participatory assignments.

Title

“Continuity and Change: the Two Millenium Dance of Church and Culture”

*Regardless of what anyone may personally think or believe about him,
Jesus of Nazareth has been the dominant figure in the history of Western culture
for twenty centuries. If it were possible, with some sort of super-magnet,
to pull up out of that history every scrap of metal bearing at least a trace of his name,
how much would be left?*

*It is from his birth that most of the human race dates its calendars,
it is by his name that millions curse
and in his name that millions pray.*

■ Jaroslav Pelikan

Introduction

This course is open to all interested graduate learners. It is required of those in the CCS (Diaconal ministry), Master of Theological Studies degree (MTS), Graduate certificate in theological studies and those taking the new stream in Faith and Culture as well as the new streams being developed.

The public is invited to audit the course and participate fully in the conversation.

Objectives

It has become common-place to speak of the end of Christendom and a post-denominational church. Thinking again about the history of the church from epoch to epoch, from the 1st century when Jesus was the “Light of the Gentiles” to the 20th century when “Jesus was the Man for All the World” provides a rich ground for considering the shape of the church in the century coming to greet us. The course objects are:

1. to understand how each epoch of the church drew on the images of Jesus Christ in the Gospels to speak to an emerging spiritual need and cultural aspirations;
2. to appreciate the ways in which a living tradition holds together both a sense of continuity with the past while engaging the changes in each epoch;
3. to restore a regard for the beautiful, the forgotten sister, of the good and the true, central to the Christian tradition;
4. to consider how the church may speak across ideological and cultural boundaries in a time of deep pluralism and globalization.

Course Description

In this introduction to the history of Christianity we will do two things by taking the history of the church more seriously than cultural historians normally do and taking culture more seriously than church historians normal do. First, we will explore how the various epochs of Christian history (Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries*) drew from the pallet of the Gospels an anchoring image of Jesus Christ (for example, “the Rabbi”, “The Light of the Gentiles” “The King of Kings”, “The Divine and Human Model”, “The Poet of the Spirit”, the “Liberator” and “The Man Who Belongs to the World”) to shape and reshape the presence of the church within the culture(s) of the period. A wide variety of cultural creations, art, architecture, music, poetry, along with philosophical and theological works and writings on the spiritual life will be drawn forth. Second, responding to recent historical studies that argue theology can no longer be written solely from the perspective of Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Wittenberg, Geneva, and Canterbury, we will engage the reshaping of the tradition and the church that has emerged from Asia, Africa, Latin America and various other indigenous communities of faith (Martin Marty, *The Christian World*). Our thinking will endeavor to hold together themes of continuity and change and explore what is meant by the doctrine of the Church, the *Ecclesia*, in all its dynamism.

Required Reading

Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries, His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

Martin Marty, *The Christian World, A Global History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2007).

Tom Holland, *Dominion, How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2019)

Academic guidelines for a Master's level course require approximately 1000 pages of reading. This total can include book(s) and articles.

Lecture & Discussion Themes

[Goa's lectures will emphasise 10 of the following themes. Each student will choose from the other noted themes and be prepared to lead a seminar on the theme on an appointed day. The choice of theme is on a first come basis with up to two students working on a given theme. Contact the instructor ahead of the course and identify your chosen theme and be notified for the day of your presentation.]

The Rabbi [Goa, day 1]

- Jesus as teacher and prophet in the setting of 1st c. Judaism
- The Jewishness of the New Testament in relation to the tradition of Israel

The Turning Point of History [Student]

- The significance of Christ for human history
- Apocalypse, prophecy, and ethics in the 1st and 2nd c.
- The implications of the life of Jesus for biography and historiography

The Light of the Gentiles [Goa, day 1]

- Pagan "anticipations" of Christ, especially Socrates and Vergil
- The message of Christian missionaries and apologists in the Greco-Roman world

The King of Kings [Goa, day 2]

- The lordship of Caesar verses the lordship of Christ in the 2nd & 3rd c. Empire
- The triumph of Constantine as Christian Caesar and a Christian Empire in 4th c.

The Cosmic Christ [Student]

- Christ the Logos as the mind, reason, and word of God and as the meaning of the universe in the 4th and 5th c.

The Son of Man [Goa, day 2]

- The incarnate Son of God as the revelation of both the promise of human life and of the power of evil, according to the Christian psychology and anthropology worked out above all by Augustine in the 5th c.

The True Image [student]

- Christ as the inspiration of a new art and architecture in Byzantine culture
- The artistic and metaphysical meaning of the icon in the 8th and 9th c.

Christ Crucified [student]

- The cross in literature and art
- The crucified Christ as "the power and wisdom of God" in the Middle Ages
- Metaphor for the saving work of Christ in the language of the 11th and 12 c.

The Monk Who Ruled the World [Goa, day 3]

- The Benedictine definition of “love for Christ” and denial of the World
- Monastic conquest of the world and of the church
- Monasticism and politics in the medieval West of the 11th and 12th c.

The Bridegroom of the Soul [student]

- Christian and non-Christian sources of Christ-mysticism
- Sacred and profane love in the allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs
- The problem of the relation between secular and sacred in mystical thought

The Divine and Human Model [Goa, day 3]

- The rediscovery of the full humanity of Jesus through Francis of Assisi
- The Franciscan image of Jesus as the inspiration for demands in the 13th and 14th c. that society and the institutional church be radically transformed

The Universal Man [student]

- The Renaissance of the 15th and 16th c, with the image of Jesus as the rebirth of the Christian gospel
- The “sacred philology” and “the philosophy of Christ” in Erasmus and humanists

The Mirror of the Eternal [Goa, day 4]

- Reformation images of Christ
- Christ as the Mirror of the True in the new vernacular, as the Mirror of the Beautiful in Reformation art and Catholic literature, as the Mirror of the Good in the Christian politics of Calvin and the Reformed tradition

The Prince of Peace [Goa, day 4]

- The Reformation and the Wars of Religion
- “Just war” as justified by the teaching and example of Jesus
- Crusades as “holy war” sanctified in the name of Jesus
- The resurgence of pacifism in the spirit of Christ as Prince of Peace

The Teacher of Common Sense [Goa, day 5]

- The quest of the historical Jesus in the philosophy of the 18th c Enlightenment
- The effort to go beyond or behind the Christ of dogma to the system of morals he represented

The Poet of the Spirit [student]

- Idealism in the philosophy of 19th c Romanticism in its art and literature; and their portrayal of the beauty and sublimity of Jesus as the “bard of the Holy Ghost”

The Liberator [Goa, day 5]

- Throughout the 19th and 20th c., from Tolstoy to Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King, the use of Jesus’ prophetic opposition to the economic and social

injustice of his time as the dynamic for revolutionary change in the ordering of human relations, public as well as private

The Man Who Belongs to the World [student]

- The unprecedented circulation of the message of Jesus in 19th and 20th c. Asia and Africa
- The relationship between Jesus and other “Teachers of the Way”
- Jesus as a world figure, also beyond the boundaries of the Christendom

Additional Selected Readings & References

Based on your interest and curiosity, choose from the following in order to fulfill the total reading goal for a Master’s level course (approximately 1000 pages of reading). Your pre-course reading will factor into the pre-course assignment grade. If you wish to consider an alternate book please discuss it with the instructor.

John Chryssavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert, the Spirituality of the Desert Fathers & Mothers* (2008).

Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, editors, *Christianity, World Christianities, c. 1815- c. 1914, The Cambridge History of Christianity*, Vol. 8 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company, the Church as Polis* (1995).

James Davidson Hunter, *American Evangelicalism, Conservative Religion and the Quandary of Modernity* (1983).

Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom, The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002),

_____. *The Lost History of Christianity*, (New York: HarperOne, 2008).

Kosuke Koyama, *Waterbuffalo Theology* (1975).

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity, The First Three Thousand Years* (New York: Viking, 2008).

_____. *Silence, A Christian History* (New York: Viking, 2013).

Amy Oden, editor, *In Her Words, Women’s Writings in the History of Christian Thought* (1994).

Aylward Shorter, *African Christian Theology* (1975).

Huston Smith, *The Soul of Christianity, Restoring the Great Tradition* (2005).

Nya Kwiawon Taryor, *Impact of the African Tradition on African Christianity* (1984).

Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years, A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012).

_____, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought, Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

Course Requirements and Due Dates

1. Pre-Course Work (totalling 30% of grade; due date: May 31st, 2021)

Reflection paper of approximately 10 manuscript pages addressing one or more of the following themes: (1) What surprised you (and why) as you read Jaroslav Pelikan’s *Jesus Through the Centuries* or Martin Marty’s *The Christian World?*; (2) Discuss one epoch of the eighteen in Pelikan’s book and explore the theme of continuity and change or church and culture; (3) Based on your reading of Pelikan and Marty discuss possible trajectories of the church in the 21st century.

2. Course Participation (totalling 20% of grade; May 31st – June 4th, 2021)

Course participation including class and group discussion & discussion with the instructor. A portion of this grade will be assigned to each student class presentations on a chapter from Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries*.

3. **Post-Course Integrative Paper (totalling 50% of grade; due date: July 31st, 2021)**
An Integrative Paper of approximately 20 manuscript pages (double spaced and properly formatted in keeping with your degree requirement – APA for the MPS degree or Turabian for the MTS degree). You are required to prepare a thesis statement and outline the exploration you wish to undertake, including a bibliography, and discuss this with the instructor during the week of the course or no later than June 10th. You are welcome to shape this in service to your overall educational goals building on your interests and gifts. **This paper is an opportunity to integrate all aspects of the course including lectures, assigned and other reading, your research work and the thinking throughout the course.** [Grade rubric: 5% for style; 15% for integration of course learning; 30% for research and thinking on your particular thesis.]

If you wish to have a transcript, please access the College website for a transcript request form at

<http://stephen.srv.ualberta.ca/student-log-in/forms>