

REL 3505 U01 1228 - Introduction to Christianity

Professor Information

Dr. Joseph Holbrook



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| Email | Canvas Inbox |
| Office Phone | (305) 348-7283 |
| Office | DM 350 |
| Virtual Office Hours | 2 pm on Mondays |
| Class Twitter Account | @REL_FIU |
| Class Blog | https://www.facebook.com/drjholbrook/ |
| YouTube channel: | https://www.youtube.com/user/MrJosephholbrook/featured |

Getting Started

1. Read the [Syllabus](#)
2. Holbrook's video Overview of the Syllabus
3. Complete the [Start Here](#) module
4. Review the [Student Resources](#) module
5. Proceed to the first scheduled content in the [Modules](#)

Technical Support

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the [FIU Canvas Help Team](#). Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

Course Description and Purpose

This course offers an overview of the Christian tradition, from the times of Jesus to the contemporary period. It is intended to provide students with knowledge of the history, the major branches and theological developments, emphasizing its diversity, complexity, and its influence on Western culture.

Introduction to Christian History will also encourage the study of the entire body of the Christian tradition as well as a critical examination of contemporary Christian expressions using a variety of social science disciplines and methods. This course includes both an historical examination and study of current issues of religion in the public square such as “faith and politics” and church and state. It gives a historical overview of various branches of Christianity such as Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, mainline Protestantism, as well as a variety of nonconformist sects and evangelical denominations such as diverse Baptists and Methodists, and the global Pentecostal movement both within Protestantism and the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal. In addition, with the rise of politicized religious movements in many if not most world religions, it becomes more important than ever to provide balanced, academic analysis in the study of Christianity in all of its myriad permutations, and its influential role in the public sphere.

In summary, the course will cover the following topics:

- A brief history of Israel and overview of the Old Testament.
- The historical context of the birth and life of Jesus of Nazareth.
- The early spread of Christianity and the role of women.
- Christianity in the Roman Empire and the Greek-speaking world.
- Christian monasticism.
- The imperialization of Christianity and rise of ‘Christendom.’
- The development of New Testament Canon.
- Theological debates and the origins of the Creeds.
- Western Christianity and the Middle Ages.
- The Crusades, women mystics, and the rise of the Mendicant orders.
- The Christian Arts in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.
- Portuguese and Spanish global expansion.
- The Reformation and the origins of Protestantism.
- The Doctrine of Justification by Faith.
- The “Priesthood of All Believers” and the use of the vernacular.
- Martin Luther; Calvin and the Reformation at Geneva.
- The Catholic Counter-Reformation.
- The Enlightenment and the Age of Reason.
- The United States and the Great Awakening.
- Christianity and Slavery: William Wilberforce.
- Human Origins: Darwin’s Origin of the Species.
- The Challenge of Modernism; Church and State, secularism.
- The Second Great Awakening and American Revivalism.
- Pentecostalism: The American Origins of a Global Faith.
- Missions and Colonialism, to Asia, Africa and the Americas.
- Billy Graham and the New Evangelicalism; the Second Vatican Council.
- The Charismatic movement, and Global Christianity.

Course Objectives

In addition to providing an engaging introduction to the topic, *Introduction to Christianity* has four specific objectives.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CLO1 Evaluate, contrast and analyze the historical development and the cultural influence of Christianity.
- CLO2 Evaluate, contrast and analyze the wide variety of Christian traditions, denominations, theologies and religious behavior and attitudes.
- CLO3 Demonstrate professional or scholarly writing regarding the Caribbean.
- CLO4 Identify, compare and contrast Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal religious expressions in contemporary Christianity.

Course Modality

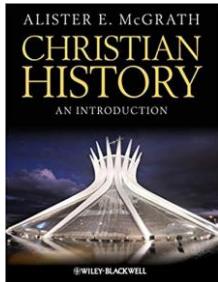
This is an in-person, classroom course. Class time will involve presentations, lectures and class discussion. Some of the course work will be conducted online. The syllabus, assignments, and some readings will be available in Canvas.

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Proctored Exam Policy

This course does not require proctored exams.



Textbook:

Alistair E. McGrath, *Christian History: An Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Additional Recommended Readings:

Sensbach, Jon F. *Rebecca's Revival*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780674043459

The Interior Castle: Study Edition / Second Edition, Revised [includes Full Text of St. Teresa of Avila's Work, Translated by Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD]

Stepic, Alex, Sarah Mahler, and Terry Rey. *Churches and Charity in the Immigrant City*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780813544601

There will also be a variety of PDFs which will be supplied to the students.

Course Communication

Check out the [Canvas Conversations Tutorial](#) to learn how to communicate with your instructor and peers using Announcements, Discussions, and the Inbox.

Canvas Inbox

Use the Canvas Inbox if you need to contact me directly. I will do my best to respond to all inquiries within 48 hours (excluding weekends). But please have patience with me: since messages are the central communication process in the classroom, I may occasionally be overwhelmed with messages and it takes me a bit to sort through them.

General Discussion Forum

Post to the general discussion forum in the Discussions course section when you need to ask general questions that other students might be able to answer.

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct virtual office hours. Office hours will be on Mondays at 4:00 PM for 30 minutes. We will also be using Slack as a chat forum for questions and answers and communications with your peers.

[Zoom Test Meeting Room](#)

Use this link to access the Zoom Test Meeting Room. This meeting room is available to test out the software before joining an actual session.

Reference the provided links to access Zoom student tutorials to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

- [Download Zoom](#)
- [Login to Zoom through Desktop Application](#)
- [Enable and Test Audio & Webcam](#)
- [Schedule a meeting](#) or [Join a Zoom meeting](#)
- [Invite others to join meeting](#)
- [Chat \(Professors\) - Students look at attendees section for instructions](#)
- [Share My Screen](#)
- [Record a Local Zoom meeting](#)
- [Host Control in Meetings](#)

- [Getting Started with iOS](#)
- [Getting Started with Android](#)

Assignments

This is a writing-intensive course. Some of your participation comes in the form of written reflections on what you have read or otherwise engaged. There will be several types of assignments:

- Class Participation and discussion.
- Weekly reading quizzes.
- Forum Discussions.
- Mid-term and final exams.
- Two writing assignments and one option for revision.

Reading Reviews (Forum Discussions)

During this semester, you will be required to participate in online discussions with your peers to reflect on films or primary source readings related to the material. A minimum of ten forum discussion grades are required; any discussions beyond ten will be dropped by the lowest grades.

General Guidelines for forum discussions

- *Initial Response:* These should be around 300-350 words in length (about 3 paragraphs).
- *Responses to Peers' Posts (3):* Respond to the posts of at least three of your fellow classmates. Each response should be between 50-100 words in length (about 1 paragraph).

Grading Criteria

The discussions will be graded 20% summary, 20% personal and critical reaction, 20% on analysis and discussion of how it relates to the course themes, and 20% on length, content, grammar and punctuation.

Another 20% of the grade will be for at least three REPLIES of a minimum of 50 words or 3 complete sentences to other students. At the end of the semester, the two lowest discussion grades will be dropped.

Reading Reviews (Discussion forum) rubric:

ONLINE FORUM DISCUSSIONS RUBRIC

| Required elements | Poor (1-3) | Fair (4-5) | Good (6-7) | Excellent (8) | Total |
|--|--|--|--|--|-------|
| (20%) Brief Summary | Missing forum post or is less than 50 % of the minimum word count. | Too short, fails to meet the minimum word count. Factual errors. | Factually accurate but too long and wordy. Shows that the student read or viewed the source. | Factually accurate, concise and brief. Shows that the student read or viewed the source. | |
| (20%) Significance and relevance and reaction. | No mention of significance or relevance | Significance mentioned in passing but minimally. | Significance mentioned but could be amplified. | Good clear explanation of importance of topic. | |
| (20%) Personal and critical reaction. | No reaction is mentioned | Brief and indirect mention of reaction. | Brief but clear mention of reaction. | Good, clear statement of reaction. | |
| (20%) Mechanics – grammar, word choice, spelling, sentence structure | Unacceptable. | Many errors of grammar, spelling, word choices, vague or confusing sentences | Some few errors of grammar, spelling, word choices, poor sentence structure. | No errors of grammar, spelling, word choices or sentence structure. | |
| (20%) Replies. | No replies. | Only one reply. | Only two short replies/incomplete sentences. | 3 substantial replies of more than 50 words. | |
| Total score | | | | | |

Make-ups/Extra Credit

Although only ten discussions are required for grading, there will be several additional films and/or primary source discussions suggested to serve as “**make-ups**” or **extra credit** (late submissions of up to 2 days are allowed for the Reading Reviews (forum discussions). After that, no make-ups are allowed). Only 3 extra credit points are allowed on the final grade. **Absolutely no extra credits or make-ups will be accepted after the last day of class.**

Participation

Participation (100 points or 10 percent of the overall final grade): Attendance will be taken for each class. Arriving on time and staying for the whole class earns 3 points per class (6 points per week). Participating verbally in class discussions gives 1 more point for a potential 4 points per class session. Office hours will be held on Mondays at 2:00 PM. Additional participation points may be awarded for meeting with the professor during office hours and giving an oral presentation of your research at the end of the semester.

Quizzes and exams.

There will be weekly quizzes on assigned readings. Although there may be more quizzes offered, only 10 quizzes for 10 points each will be required for a total of 100 points and 10 percent of the final grade. The lowest quiz grades beyond 10 will be dropped.

Assessments in this course are not compatible with mobile devices and should not be taken through a mobile phone or a tablet. If you need further assistance please contact [FIU Online Support Services](#).

Important Information

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- [Policies](#)
- [Technical Requirements and Skills](#)
- [Accessibility and Accommodation](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Statement](#)

Third-Party Tools Used

- Turnitin
- Zoom

Lateness Policy

I do not have the time to grade late work or assign alternative assignments. So do not turn things in late. Please turn everything in 24 hours ahead of time in case your computer crashes or the entire neighborhood loses electricity.

Difficulties can arise during a semester: a car accident, a death in the family, relational stress, sickness, or simply a case of summertime college burnout. Sooner or later, these things inevitably happen to everyone. When you have a problem, the best thing is for you to do is message me right away. I will work with you to the best of my ability. If you are proactive (e.g., let me know what is going on before a deadline), I can help you strategize so that you can still make the deadlines as best as possible, instead of missing them completely.

Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic

misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Statement of Understanding between Professor and Student

Every student must respect the right of all to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students must adhere to a standard of academic conduct, demonstrating respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. As a student taking this class:

- I will not represent someone else's work as my own
- I will not cheat, nor will I aid in another's cheating

Students are expected to understand the definition of plagiarism. **Offenders will receive a grade of F (0 points) for the plagiarized assignment**, and possibly for the course. Please be aware: Previously submitted papers are not allowed, even if it is your own work and even if you are retaking this class. You may not “reuse” papers.

Course Grade Distribution

| Course Requirements | Number of Items | Points | Total Weight |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Class attendance and discussions | 30 | 100 | 10% |
| Discussion Forums | 10 | 400 | 40% |
| Weekly Reading Quizzes | 10 | 100 | 10% |
| Midterm Exam | 1 | 100 | 10% |
| Final Exam | 1 | 100 | 10% |
| First Book Review and revisions. | 1 | 100 | 10% |
| Second Essay or Book Review | 1 | 100 | 10% |
| Total | 30 | 1000 | 100% |

FIU Grading Scale

| Letter | Range% | Letter | Range% | Letter | Range% |
|--------|-------------|--------|---------|--------|------------|
| A | 95 or above | B | 83 - 86 | C | 70 - 76 |
| A- | 90 - 94 | B- | 80 - 82 | D | 60 - 69 |
| B+ | 87 - 89 | C+ | 77 - 79 | F | 59 or less |

Weekly Calendar: Introduction to Christian History

| Weeks | Topics | Reading |
|---------|---|--|
| Week 1 | Introduction: Overview of Christianity, history of Israel & the Old Testament. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch1.1 |
| Week 2 | Early Christianity / Roman and Greeks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch1.2-3 |
| Week 3 | Imperial Christianity / Orthodoxy and Heresy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch1.4-5 |
| Week 4 | Middle Ages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch2.1-2 |
| Week 5 | Medieval religious thought and scholasticism/late Middle Ages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch2.3-4 |
| Week 6 | Renaissance and Reform | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch2.5 |
| Week 7 | Reformation and Protestantism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch3.1-2 |
| Week 8 | Mainstream and Other Reformations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch3.3-4 |
| Week 9 | Post-Reformation/Modernity, Age of Reason | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch3.5-4.1 |
| Week 10 | Age of Revolutions, 19 th century & Second Great Awakening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch4.2-3 |
| Week 11 | Protestant Missions / Rebecca's Revival | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch4.4 |
| Week 12 | The Twentieth Century | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch5.1 |
| Week 13 | Post War: New Evangelicalism and Vatican II, Civil Rights and the Religious Right | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch5.2 |
| Week 14 | 1960s, Civil Rights, the Religious Right and Liberation Theology. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch5.3 |
| Week 15 | Post-colonial Christianity and the rise of global Pentecostalism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: McGrath Ch5.4 |
| Week 16 | Final Exam, final writing assignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and final assignments |

