REL 3505

Introduction to Christianity

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Spring Term 2027

Course Time Zone | Eastern Time (ET). Course due dates are according to this time zone.

Professor Information

Eric Isaac

Roles: Primary Instructor

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Office Hours: zoom AND by appointment

Office Location: Zoom AND by appt

Department or Academic Unit: Religious Studies

Course Prerequisites

Course prerequisites, if any, are listed below.

Course Description

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.

Textbook and Course Materials

Christian History: An Introduction. Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Alistair E. McGrath

Publisher: Wiley-Blackwell

Publication Date: 2013

Copyright Date: 2013

ISBN 10: 9781118337837

ISBN 13: 9781118337837

Chapters/Pages: All

Panther Book Pack

Get all required course materials for $22 per undergrad credit hour through Panther Book Pack. You'll be charged automatically unless you opt out within 3 days after the add/drop deadline.

For more details, to compare costs, and to learn how to access your course materials, visit the Panther Book Pack information page on FIU OneStop.

Readings, Materials, and Open Educational Resources (OER)

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.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Evaluate, contrast and analyze the historical development and the cultural influence of Christianity.
- Evaluate, contrast and analyze the wide variety of Christian traditions, denominations, theologies and religious behavior and attitudes.

- Demonstrate professional or scholarly writing regarding the Caribbean.
- Identify, compare and contrast Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal religious expressions in contemporary Christianity.

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course. Expectations for performance in online courses are the same as in a traditional course. Online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

Students are expected to:

- **review the getting started** page located in the course modules;
- **introduce yourself to the class** during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion;
- **take the practice quiz** to ensure that your computer is compatible with the learning management system, Canvas;
- **interact** online with instructor and peers;
- **review** and follow the course calendar and weekly

outlines;

- **respond** to discussions by the due date specified. **No late work will be accepted;**
- **submit** assignments by the corresponding deadline.

Policies & Resources

Before starting this course, please review the Policies & Resources Page in Canvas which includes comprehensive information on various University and Course Level Policies such as:

- University Policies
- Accessibility and Accommodations
- Online Etiquette
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Computer & Digital Literacy Skills
- Course Technology Accessibility Statements and Privacy Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Statement
- Core Principles of This Course
- Nondiscrimination Statement

- Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Fair Use Policy

Assignments & Assessments

Discussion Forums

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.

All Discussions can be found by clicking on the Discussions link located on the left-hand side ofthe course.

- View "How do I reply to a discussion ."
- View "How do I upload and embed an image in the New Rich Content Editor as a student ?"
- View "How do I create hyperlinks to user files in the New Rich Content Editor as a student ?"

Participation in the discussion forums is critical for maximizing student learning in this course, both because your participation is graded and because it's a chance to engage in a dialogue about course material. In this course, students are required to be a part

of a community of learners who collectively interact,through discussion,to enhance and support the professional performance of each other. Part ofthe assessment criteria for the course includes evaluating the quality and quantity of your participation in the discussion forum. Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members ofthe course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

Some characteristics I consider to be part of excellent discussion contributions are outlined below. I will consider these characteristics when assessing the quality and level of student participation.

- Posts and responses should be thorough and thoughtful. Just posting an "I agree" or "Good ideas" will not be considered adequate. Support statements with examples, experiences, or references. Be brief — keep each post and response to one or two
  short paragraphs.Keep in mind that fellow learners will be reading and responding to you,too.
- Posts should be within a range of 250-300 words. **Do not use headings, subheads, numbering or bullet points.** These formatting items raise suspicion of the use of AI.
- Make certain that all posts and responses address the question, problem, or situation as presented for discussion. This does not mean you should not extend the topic, but do not stray from the topic.

- Discussions occur when there is dialogue;therefore, you need to build upon the posts and responses of other learners to create discussion threads. Make sure to revisit the discussion forum and respond (if necessary) to what other learners have posted to your initial responses.
- When relevant, add to the discussion by including prior knowledge, work experiences, references, web sites, resources, etc. (giving credit when appropriate). Contributions to the discussions (posts and responses) should be complete and free of grammatical or structural errors.
- Three replies to other student's posts constitute twenty percent of the grade. Please avoid using headings, subheads, numbered paragraphs or bullet points. These all raise suspicions of the use of ChatGPT or some other AI to write the posts.
- See individual discussion assignments for prompt and grading criteria

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					

Writing Assignments

- There are two major writing assignments of a minimum of 1200 to 1500 words in this class. You will receive a prompt at least three weeks prior to the deadline for submission. The writing assignments are formal history papers that must meet the Gordon Rule Standards for writing college-level papers. Each ofthese papers requires thesis-driven writing that is supported by cited evidence. Full details, prompts, and rubrics are available in the assignment details on Canvas.

  Each writing assignment needs to cite sources in footnotes (or short form, in-text citations) according to theChicago Manual of Style format, and follow the layout specifications provided on the assignment prompts. Technical issues are not acceptable excuses for failing to submit papers by the deadline, which means that you must leave yourself enough time to successfully submit your paper with extra time to account for technical problems.Always triple check to ensure that you successfully submitted your assignment. [always keep the receipts!] Note: all writing assignments must be submitted in either Microsoft Word, Rich Text Format orAdobe PDF format (.docx, .doc, RTF, or .pdf) Submissions of any other file type will not be accepted and will be counted as missing with appropriate late penalties applied until the correct format is submitted.

General Guidelines

- Each essay must be written with a thesis statement and supported with evidence.
- Each essay should draw evidence from primary sources, secondary sources, and class lectures.
- All source material must be cited correctly using MLA or Chicago Style and long quotes should be avoided.
- You may use ChatGPT as part of your research as long as you write the ideas in your own words and provide citations as well as a citation and reference for ChatGPT.
- **DO NOT use subheads, numbered paragraphs, or bullet points.** Points will be deducted for posts with flawless writing and any of the above-mentioned formatting elements.
- The essay must follow proper formatting guidelines. It is standard for college essays that body text be double spaced, there must be a proper title page with complete information such as author, course number and name, names of the institution (or department) and instructor. Also, the semester or date.
- The essay must draw from at least four sources (including the textbook and YouTube videos) and provide properly formatted in-text (short form) citations or footnotes, and a List of

References at the end of the essay.

- Writing should demonstrate knowledge and awareness of standard written English.
- Essays must be submitted in the Assignments section via **Turnitin** for plagiarism prevention. Papers with an originality score of over 35% similarity will be subject to additional scrutiny and may incur additional penalties, up to and including receiving an F (0 points). No essays or written work will be accepted via email. If you have technical difficulties, document your issue and contact the student help desk or your professor immediately for assistance.

Essay Rubric

100 point, 10-part Essay Rubric

Assessments

There 15 quizzes, one for each chapter, worth 10% ofthe total course grade. These quizzes are designed to help you study the course material and will help you prepare for the Civic Literacy Exam. Each quiz is composed of multiple choice questions (usually 15).

Quizzes are normally due on Fridays by midnight

Mid-Term and Final Exams

The the midterm and final exams consists of multiple-choice and true/false questions taken from the reading quizzes. The final is comprehensive, covering readings from the entire semester.

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the Practice Quiz from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams.

The above represents the maximum you will be required to do, it is likely that it will be reduced.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points of Each	Total Points Available	Weight

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Points of Each	Total Points Available	Weight
Discussion forums	15	40	400	40%
Reading Quizzes	14	10	100	10%
Midterm/ Final	2	100	200	30%
Writing Assignments	2	100	200	20%
Participation (Extra Credit)	5	1	3	3%
Total	**10**	**N/A**	**1000**	**100%**

Letter Grade Distribution Table

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
A	95 - 100

Letter Grade	Sample Range %
A-	90 – 94.99
B+	87 – 89.99
B	83 – 86.99
B-	80 – 82.99
C+	77 – 79.99
C	70 – 76.99
D	60 – 69.99
F	0 – 59.99

Schedule of Topics

Weeks	Topics	Reading
Week 1	Introduction: Overview of Christianity, history of Israel & the Old Testament.	• Read: McGrath Ch1.1

Weeks	Topics	Reading
Week 2	Early Christianity / Roman and Greeks	• Read: McGrath Ch1.2-3
Week 3	Imperial Christianity / Orthodoxy and Heresy.	• Read: McGrath Ch1.4-5
Week 4	Middle Ages	• Read: McGrath Ch2.1-2
Week 5	Medieval religious thought and scholasticism/late Middle Ages	• Read: McGrath Ch2.3-4
Week 6	Renaissance and Reform	• Read: McGrath Ch2.5
Week 7	Reformation and Protestantism	• Read: McGrath Ch3.1-2
Week 8	Mainstream and Other Reformativos	• Read: McGrath Ch3.3-4
Week 9	Post-Reformation/Modernity, Age of Reason	• Read: McGrath Ch3.5-4.1
Week 10	Age of Revolutions, 19th century & Second Great Awakening	• Read: McGrath Ch4.2-3
Week 11	Protestant Missions / Rebecca's Revival	• Read: McGrath Ch4.4

Weeks	Topics	Reading
Week 12	The Twentieth Century	• Read: McGrath Ch5.1
Week 13	Post War: New Evangelicalism and Vatican II, Civil Rights and the Religious Right	• Read: McGrath Ch5.2
Week 14	1960s, Civil Rights, the Religious Right and Liberation Theology.	• Read: McGrath Ch5.3
Week 15	Post-colonial Christianity and the rise of global Pentecostalism	• Read: McGrath Ch5.4
Week 16	Final Exam, final writing assignment	• Review and final assignments

Nondiscrimination Statement

The **Office of Civil Rights Compliance and Accessibility** (CRCA) is responsible for ensuring that FIU maintains a workplace and learning environment free from discrimination, where current and prospective faculty, staff, and students are treated equitably. If any student, employee, or applicant has a sincere and reasonable belief that they have been discriminated against or harassed based on age, color, disability, marital status, ethnic or national origin, race, religion, retaliation, sex, or any other protected category, they can report their concerns to the CRCA team through report.fiu.edu.